

# LEAVING NO CHILD BEHIND

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President Bush and Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, have created an incredible project for the children of public education, called “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB). I, too, have created a project based on theirs called “No Child Left Behind, Phase Two” (Phase 2). Everyone tells me that my proposal is preposterous, that I must be crazy. If I’m crazy, so must be the members of the Department of Education, the Secretary of Education, as well as the President. And, that my friends, is not a possibility.

I’m a California educator and have experienced the tip of this twelve-year-long iceberg called NCLB, where by 2014 every last public school student in our great nation will be at, or above, proficiency levels on our state mandated tests.

Lets’ do the same for summer sports and future Olympics. As NCLB is determined to advance our public school children above and beyond where they have previously scored, Phase 2 will catapult our public school youngsters to the forefront of international summer athletics.

For the sake of this piece let us just focus on the fourth grade 100-meter goal, 14.9 seconds to be considered “proficient”. And, using the NCLB methods, we **will** have 100% of our nation’s fourth graders running 14.9 seconds by the year 2016.

Yet, people tell me, “You’re crazy. You can’t expect 100%, every single fourth grader in our public schools to be able to run a race faster than the current national average. There’s an average for a reason. Some will run faster. Some will run slower.”

I say, “If Secretary Paige and President Bush can expect excellence in academics, why should we have lower standards for the 100 meter sprint?”

Like NCLB, we’ll start slowly. Each year we’ll expect more students to reach proficiency, until by the year 2016 every last student in America can beat every last Russian student in the 100-meter sprint.

Year one’s goal of 11% proficiency won’t just be carried by the male jocks of each school. There needs to be at least 11% proficiency in each subgroup. If even one of the subgroups is unable to reach the goal, the entire site will be considered at risk. The subgroups include boys, girls, short, tall, fit, obese, and physically challenged. It’s this last subgroup that seems to get the biggest reaction. So allow me to show how NCLB 2 mirrors NCLB and students with special needs:

**Everyone is expected to reach “proficiency”, children with...**

NCLB  
ADD, ADHD, fetal alcohol syndrome,  
Down Syndrome, Aspergers, autism,  
mental retardation, etc...

NCLB 2  
cerebral palsy, muscular dystroph  
etc.

**But, we'll accommodate their special needs...**

more time on the test, questions read aloud  
inhalers, braces, crutches, walkers,  
wheelchairs

With these special accommodations, like NCLB, students will be able to reach proficiency (cross the finish line in 14.9 seconds).

**Similarities between NCLB and NCLB 2 if children do not make the goals**

- Bad instructors. Result: fire them and hire ones less experienced
- Bad site. Result: site will be state run with "corporate instructors" training  
The youth
- Leads to: students who are bound to learn more and run faster

Some parents have expressed their concern with regards to exclusive focus on this 100-meter race. They fear that in Phase 2 coaches won't give equal instruction to the other summer events. But, if you know NCLB, this is just ridiculous.

**Areas not covered annually**

NCLB  
science, social studies, technology, physical  
education, art, writing

NCLB 2  
volleyball, basketball, relays,  
swimming, high jump

The state mandated tests focus on language arts and mathematics (the 100 meter dash of academics).

Would teachers neglect the other important academic areas, areas not on the state tests, but areas that will help their students succeed in life, regardless how they scored on the tests? Why would they neglect these? It's not like administrators and districts are feeling the pressure from the government. We all know that 100% of public school students will be proficient by 2014. So, there's no extra emphasis given to the tests. No teachers would be caught dead teaching to the test rather than teaching a well-rounded, interesting, and exciting curriculum. It's not as though public education is becoming a prep course for the end-of-the-year, state test. Public schools always have been, and always will be a place to exchange knowledge, not a place to exclusively teach language arts, math, and test taking strategies.

And, our tracks and sports fields won't merely become 100-meter sprint courses. The other events carry as much weight as the 100-meter sprint. It's just that we'll be focusing on that event, because we've discovered that when students run the 100 meters quickly, they tend to do better at all other events... even the javelin. So, to

respond to the naysayers, I say that other events will not be neglected.

Opponents ask about slow runners “If they want to drop-out of track, why should the coaches stop them? Wouldn’t trimming the slow students help reach the target more easily, thus benefiting the coaches? And what about the honesty of the coaches and record keepers? Couldn’t they manipulate outcomes in favor of themselves?”

My response: “Just look at the educational system. There’ve always been students who have contemplated dropping-out of school. But administrators and teachers have fought to convince them to stay. These professionals would never minimize their professional integrity, and let low-achieving students just drop-out without a fight. Sure, keeping these students who have trouble reaching the NCLB targets could jeopardize their schools. The institutions could be reorganized. The professionals could lose their jobs. But, what’s more important to a public school teacher, keeping a low-achieving student in school, or the teacher’s financial well-being, paying the rent or mortgage, family health care, and putting food on the table?”

The same goes for Phase 2 coaches. They will certainly put their athletes before themselves, and never let, or encourage, a child to drop-out of their programs.

As for issue two, distortion of the truth, once again it comes down to integrity. I’ve had some suggest that coaches might “unknowingly” start their clocks a little late, or that 100 meter courses may “inadvertently” be cut to 85 meters, or that record keepers may “accidentally” write wrong times in their books. In essence, the fear is that some may cheat to reach targets and keep their jobs.

Just like in NCLB, no one could ever imagine a teacher or administrator giving students correct answers on their state tests, change their answers for them, or manipulate their scores in any way. For goodness sake, these are children’s lives we’re talking about. These scores go on their permanent records. How could anyone imagine an adult toying with a child’s future just to save his/her professional career and the school in which they work, as well as the routine of hundreds, maybe thousands, of children at that school? The coaches of Phase 2, also wouldn’t think of manipulating times or courses. The truth is what counts, and Phase 2, like NCLB, will be nothing but honest.

So, people of America, I certainly hope you’ll support me with this new program, the offshoot of NCLB, Phase 2. In this nation we can’t hold low expectations for even one of our youngsters. We need to let them know that we believe in them, and if they don’t meet our goals, we must punish their instructors. Although the children are all different (race, gender, economic level, language acquisition, size, health, etc...) they must all be held accountable for the same thing, running at, or above, proficiency times on the 100 meter sprint. Our coaches will not allow runners to leave the program without a fight. Coaches will be honest, even at the expense of

their institutions, their programs, and their careers. And, soon, we will have the fastest runners in the world. The Summer Olympics will always belong to the United States. We will leave behind every other nation on the track, but, as God as my witness, we will have no child left behind.