

No Child still leaves some behind

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showed positive results under NCLB

Under the NCLB, states can decide which tests to use for accountability and proficiency. In turn, states are required to look at their results and sanction low-performing schools.

NCLB requires yearly progress of all groups of students toward state proficiency levels. In Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, results from End of Grade examinations showed the district is closing achievement gaps in reading between blacks and whites as both demographics showed improvement. Reading scores went up among third-, fourth- and seventh-graders and were unchanged in the fifth and sixth grades.

"The EOG reading results indicate that not only are reading scores going up in

some grades, but CMS is making steady progress in narrowing achievement gaps," said Muffet Garber, the district's associate superintendent. "The results show CMS's efforts to close achievement gaps while ensuring all students improve."

The gap between CMS students receiving free and reduced lunch — a barometer of poverty — and their affluent classmates also narrowed.

The Harvard report demonstrated how over the past few years since the NCLB's inception, state assessment results show improvements in math and reading, but students aren't showing similar gains on the NAEP — the only independent national test that randomly samples students across the country.

"Students should perform well on both tests because they cover the same sub-

jects," said the study's author Jaekyung Lee, professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo. "What we are seeing is the higher the stakes of the assessment, the higher the discrepancies in the results. Based on the NAEP, there are no systemic indications of improving the average achievement and narrowing the gap after NCLB."

The report also shows that federal accountability rules have little to no impact on racial and poverty gaps. The NCLB act ends up leaving many minority and poor students, even with additional educational support, far behind with little opportunity to meet the 2014 target.

"This report is depressing given the tremendous amount of pressure schools have been under and the damage that a lot of high poverty racial schools have

undergone by being declared as failing schools," said Gary Orfield, director of the Civil Rights Project at Harvard and professor of education and social policy at Harvard Graduate School of Education. "We have not focused on the kinds of serious long-term reforms that can actually produce gains and narrow the huge gaps in opportunity and achievement for minority students."

Researchers found NCLB's attempt to scale up the success of states that adopted test-driven accountability policy prior to NCLB, so-called first generation accountability states like North Carolina, Florida, and Texas didn't work. It neither enhanced first generation states' earlier improvement nor transferred the effects of a test-driven accountability system to those that adopted test-based accountability under NCLB.

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Caucus split over troubled lawmaker

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Committee.

"Mr. [Mel] Watt certainly ably and with great distinction, speaks for the Congressional Black Caucus," says House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), who spearheaded the movement to force Jefferson from the committee after he refused to voluntarily step down. "But, quite frankly, a number of members of the Black Caucus have given me moral support on this."

Some have provided more. Among Pelosi's chief allies in the attempted ousting is Congressman John Lewis (D-Ga.) sources have confirmed. In a closed door meeting of the 50-member Democratic Caucus Steering Committee

last Thursday, sources say that Lewis made the motion to have Jefferson stripped from his seat on the House Ways and Means, which has oversight on key fiscal matters, such as tax hikes, the minimum wage and military spending.

Because the session was private, some of those present agreed to discuss the meeting on condition that they be granted anonymity.

The sources say former CBC Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas) also spoke against Jefferson in the committee meeting. In addition, they said, Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-N.Y.), ranking member on the Ways and Means Committee, accepted an earlier assignment from Pelosi to try to

talk Jefferson into stepping down on his own, an overture rejected by Jefferson.

Rangel first won his seat in the House when he defeated the late U.S. Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, who was under fire for alleged financial improprieties. The House leadership stripped Powell of his powerful Education and Labor Committee chairmanship and Rangel defeated him in the 1970 Democratic primary.

Lewis' motion, seconded by Pelosi, passed by secret ballot.

The motion stated: "The Committee moves that Congressman William Jefferson's appointment to the Committee on Ways and Means be suspended, with his seniority intact, until

such time as a further recommendation to restore him to the Committee is made by the Steering and Policy Committee under the rules of the Democratic Caucus."

The entire 201-member caucus was set to vote on the issue June 15 if the Caucus passes the motion for the removal of Jefferson, the action will be taken to the floor for a full House vote.

Through their spokespersons, Lewis, Johnson and Rangel all declined to comment.

Watt (D-N.C.) defended the firmness of the CBC's position after the FBI raided Jefferson's congressional office two weeks ago, the first time in the nation's history that the executive branch has raided a legislative office.

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