



NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND



Choices for Parents: America's Opportunity Scholarships for Kids

February 2006

"Parents know what is best for their children. Expanding educational options for parents is one of the hallmarks of the No Child Left Behind Act and it remains one of the President's highest priorities."

-Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings

NCLB Benefits Children, Empowers Parents, Supports Teachers and Strengthens Schools

- NCLB gives parents more information and more options, such as free tutoring and school choice, to help them make the best choices for their children and ensure that they are receiving a quality education. Increased choices for parents means increased achievement for children.
- Under NCLB, schools identified as in need of improvement receive extra help and resources to raise student achievement.

Building on No Child Left Behind:

- In his Fiscal Year 2007 budget, President Bush renewed his commitment to helping students achieve who are trapped in under-performing schools by requesting \$100 million for the new America's Opportunity Scholarships for Kids. Students should not be left behind as schools are in the process of restructuring.
 - **NCLB and Restructuring.** Under No Child Left Behind, a school that has failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for 6 years is identified for restructuring. School districts are required to provide students who attend schools designated for restructuring with the option to attend a higher-performing public school.
 - **More Options Are Needed.** Many districts face obstacles in providing students with the opportunity to attend more effective schools. Most schools chosen to accept transfers do not generally have substantially higher achievement levels than the schools under restructuring. As a result few viable options are available to parents.

Expanding Options for Parents and Children:

- President Bush and the U.S. Department of Education have recognized the need for parents and children in schools identified for restructuring to have expanded options for improving their educational experience. America's Opportunity Scholarships for Kids would provide competitive grants to States, school districts, and non-profit organizations, including community and faith-based organizations, for:
 - Scholarships for low -income children to attend the private school of their choice or;
 - Scholarships to receive intensive, sustained tutoring.
- Tuition and Fee Assistance:
 - Parents of students attending schools in restructuring who choose to send their children to private schools would receive scholarships of up to \$4,000 to cover private school tuition, fees, and necessary transportation costs.
 - In making awards, grantees would give priority for scholarships to enable parents to send their child to the private school of their choice.
- Supplemental Education Services (SES):
 - The Opportunity Scholarships may also be used for intensive after-school tutoring assistance for low-income students attending a school identified for restructuring. These Supplemental Educational Services (SES) will build upon the current No Child Left Behind requirements, by increasing the amount of funds and number of hours a child can receive for tutoring and the costs associated with transporting children to the tutoring site or inviting SES programs to the school site. Under this option, parents could use the scholarships of up to \$3,000 for either after school or summer tutoring programs.