

Parent's Guide: New Education Terms & Abbreviations

You may hear some of the terms below used in school discussions from time to time. They relate to provisions of education legislation – called The No Child Left Behind Act – passed by Congress last year. Here's a quick reference guide to what they mean:

AYP – This is short for Adequate Yearly Progress. It refers to an individual state's measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards. "Adequate Yearly Progress" is the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts and schools must achieve each year.

Assessment – Another word for "test". Under No Child Left Behind, tests are aligned with academic standards. Beginning in the 2002-03 school year, schools must administer tests in each of three grade spans: grades 3-5, grades 6-9, and grades 10-12 in all schools. Beginning in the 2005-06 school year, tests must be administered every year in grades 3 through 8 in math and reading. Beginning in the 2007-08 school year, science achievement must also be tested.

At-Risk – A term applied to students who have not been adequately served by social service or educational systems and who are at risk of educational failure due to lack of service, negative life events, or physical or mental challenges, among others.

Corrective Action – When a school or district does not make adequate yearly progress, the state will place it under a "Corrective Action Plan." The plan will include resources to improve teaching, administration or curriculum. If a school continues to be identified as in need of improvement, then the state has increased authority to make any necessary, additional changes to ensure improvement.

ESEA – This is short for Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which was first enacted in 1965, and is the principal federal law affecting K-12 education. The No Child Left Behind Act is the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA.

LEA – This stands for Local Education Agency. An LEA is a public board of education or other public authority within a state which maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state.

NAEP – this is short for National Assessment of Educational Progress. An independent benchmark, NAEP is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what American students know and can do in various subject areas. Since 1969, the National Center for Education Statistics has conducted NAEP assessments in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, geography, civics and the arts.

SEA – This stands for State Educational Agency. An SEA is the agency primarily responsible for the State supervision of elementary and secondary schools.

Title I – The first section of the ESEA, Title I refers to programs aimed at America's most disadvantaged students. Title I, Part A provides assistance to improve the teaching and learning of children in high-poverty schools to enable those children to meet challenging State academic content and performance standards. Title I reaches about 12.5 million students enrolled in both public and private schools.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, WWW.nclb.gov; and North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, www.ncrel.org. (March 2003 Principal Communicator)