



NCLB = 'incoherent mush'

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On January 6, the tenth anniversary of No Child Left Behind, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan [wrote in *The Washington Post*](#) that the act still has flaws that need fixing.

Duncan says he believes NCLB has improved American education in some ways, and in spite of its flaws, he believes it has held schools accountable for student performance. But Neal McCluskey of the [Cato Institute](#) thinks Duncan's reasons for criticizing the law are wrong.

"It doesn't actually provide meaningful accountability, in particular because states gain the standards in tests, and they gain the standards in tests in a large part because the system didn't make any sense," he explains.

Even though Duncan recognizes after ten years that NCLB is still flawed, he asserts that students will have the sort of education law that they richly deserve within the next decade. McCluskey, however, thinks the problems will just be compounded.

"The federal government simply won't ever make laws, can't ever make laws that make much sense in education because they're going to try and appease every interest group, which will lead to the same kind of incoherent mush that No Child Left Behind became," the former English teacher contends.

The Obama administration is currently offering states waivers from the requirements of the law, which mandates that by 2014 all students should show proficiency in reading and math.