



Highlights of [GAO-07-1035](#), a report to congressional requesters

## Why GAO Did This Study

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLBA) focused national attention on improving schools so that all students reach academic proficiency by 2014. In the 2006-2007 school year, about 4,500 of the 54,000 Title I schools failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for 4 or more years. Schools that miss AYP for 4 years are identified for corrective action, and after 6 years, they must be restructured. GAO examined (1) the characteristics of Title I schools in corrective action and restructuring; (2) the actions that schools in corrective action and restructuring implemented; (3) the assistance those schools received from districts and states; and (4) how Education supports states in their efforts to assist these schools. GAO administered two Web-based surveys to a nationwide sample of schools in corrective action and restructuring status and conducted site visits to five states.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Education provide guidance on when schools in corrective action may continue previously implemented corrective actions rather than implementing new ones; direct states to report information on activities taken by each school in corrective action or restructuring; and take additional steps to ascertain whether states are ensuring that districts provide the required assistance to schools. Education agreed with these recommendations.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-1035](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-1035).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Cornelia Ashby at (202) 512-7215 or [ashbyc@gao.gov](mailto:ashbyc@gao.gov).

# NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

## Education Should Clarify Guidance and Address Potential Compliance Issues for Schools in Corrective Action and Restructuring Status

### What GAO Found

Nationwide, the 2,790 Title I schools that were in corrective action or restructuring status in the 2005-2006 school year were more frequently located in urban areas and in a few states. These schools served higher percentages of minority, poor, and middle-school students than other Title I schools, and many report that factors such as neighborhood violence and student mobility pose additional challenges to improving student academic performance. As state proficiency targets continue to increase to 100 percent in 2014, the number of schools in corrective action and restructuring may increase.

A majority of schools in corrective action or restructuring status implemented required activities. However, in some cases, schools may not be meeting NCLBA requirements. GAO estimates that 6 percent of schools did not take any of the required corrective actions and that about a third continued corrective actions implemented during earlier years of school improvement but did not take a new action after entering corrective action status. While this course of action may be an appropriate path for some schools to take, the Department of Education has not provided guidance to districts delineating when continuing a corrective action is appropriate and when it is not. In addition, about 40 percent of schools did not take any of the five restructuring options required by NCLBA. While states are required to report annually to the Department of Education the measures taken by schools in improvement status, Education does not require states to report on the specific measures taken for each school.

GAO estimates that 42 percent of the schools in corrective action or restructuring did not receive all required types of assistance through their school districts, although most received discretionary assistance from their state educational agencies. Districts are required to ensure that several types of assistance are provided to all schools in improvement status, including those in corrective action and restructuring status. This assistance includes help in analyzing students' assessment data and revising school budgets so that resources are allocated to improvement efforts. NCLBA generally does not require states to provide specific kinds of assistance to schools in corrective action or restructuring; however, they are required to develop a statewide system of support, including school support teams to provide technical assistance to schools and districts. Most schools received some type of assistance from the state educational agency.

Education provides technical assistance and research results to states primarily through its Comprehensive Centers Program. Education also has provided more material in its Web-based clearinghouse to address a greater number of topics and is developing an initiative to outline practical steps for schools in improvement, including those in restructuring.