ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Accuracy and Effectiveness of Adequate Yearly Progress, NCLB's School Evaluation System

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

by

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Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is the key element of the accountability system mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This report reveals that AYP in its 2006 form as the prime indicator of academic achievement is not supported by reliable evidence. Expecting all children to reach mastery level on their state's standardized tests by 2014, the fundamental requirement of AYP, is unrealistic. The growth model and other improvement proposals now on the table do not have sufficient power to resolve the underlying problems of the system. In addition, the program, whether conceived as implementation costs or remedial costs, is significantly underfunded in a way that will disproportionately penalize schools attended by the neediest children. Further, the curriculum is being narrowed to focus on tested areas at the cost of other vital educational purposes.

It is therefore recommended that:

- AYP sanctions be suspended until the premises underlying them can be either confirmed or refuted by solid, scientific research and unintended, negative consequences can be avoided.