

## No Child Left Behind needs flexibility

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- A loophole in a U.S. education reform law, No Child Left Behind, allows schools skirt penalties, but points to the broader challenge with the law, critics says. A "safe harbor" provision in the education law allows schools avoid penalties for low tests scores in one group of students if that group shows marginal improvement and the school as a whole does well in general testing. No Child Left Behind was meant to bring schools in poor districts to the same educational level as the overall school population, but the "safe harbor" provision is a loophole in the law that allows schools to lag behind the general scoring trend. But nobody seems to mind, as critics of No Child Left Behind see it as providing some wiggle room in an otherwise inflexible law, The Washington Post said Monday. Educators say the education reform law unfairly targets schools that fall behind the national average and forces costly restructuring measures in schools that repeatedly fall behind the national test average. The U.S. Department of Education launched several pilot programs to allow schools a little more flexibility, including a measure assessing the improvement of individual students and a "differentiated accountability" measure that repairs a part of the federal law that applies a general penalty regardless of the degree of failure.

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