

We have designed each “White Paper” to explore a fundamental educational principle and key issues engaging the education community we serve. It is our goal to partner with our readers as they meet the challenges they face.



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## No Child Left Behind (NCLB) & Castle Learning Online

The movement toward standards-based education and assessment that began with the 1983 report from the National Commission on Excellence in Education, **A Nation at Risk**, became a national movement with the passage of the **Improving America's Schools Act of 1994** (IASA) and the **Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994**. IASA reauthorized the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965** (ESEA), first enacted as part of President Lyndon Johnson's **War on Poverty**, and designed to focus federal funding on poor schools with low achieving students. On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001** (NCLB), which reauthorized ESEA. According to Rod Paige, former U.S. Secretary of Education, the stated focus of NCLB was to “see every child in America—regardless of ethnicity, income, or background—achieve high standards” (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2003a).

What were the overall goals and impact of NCLB?

- It brought considerable clarity to the value, use, and importance of achievement testing of students in kindergarten through high school.
- A new era began in which accountability, local control, parental involvement, and funding what works became the cornerstones of the nation’s education system.
- If our children aren’t *learning*, the law required that we find out why.
- If our schools aren’t *performing*, options and help were to be made available.

*Castle Learning Online* is designed to support state and local efforts to set challenging content that can impact performance standards and to carry out the school reforms that will raise the achievement levels of all students. As a web-based review, testing, and assessment service for teachers, students and their parents, *Castle Learning* has successfully brought technology into the classroom, making it a primary supplement to goals the teacher has set.

The reaction of teachers using *Castle Learning* emphasized that they have an immediate way to access the weaknesses of students. In a field study of educators, one educator explained that he can “**self-check my own effectiveness.**” Others had this to say:

- “I can find out what topics I need to review in class before state tests.”
- “I can assess the areas that need to be re-taught or reviewed.”
- “I can tell quickly and easily which students are having troubles with a topic.”
- “I can learn what is working and what isn’t with regards to how I present material.”
- “Any student who uses this tool does better.”
- “It helps throughout the year, not only on state assessments, but definitely in preparing for Regents exams.”
- “It is my experience that students who make use of Castle Learning Online perform better overall throughout the year than those who do not.”

When teachers have a technology solution, through *Castle Learning Online*, they know when students are learning and can see results in their performance. Good pedagogy just gets better when a teacher can lift the shroud of mystery that surrounds accountability by addressing head-on the content and state standards that can help students meet the challenging curriculum that ensures their success.