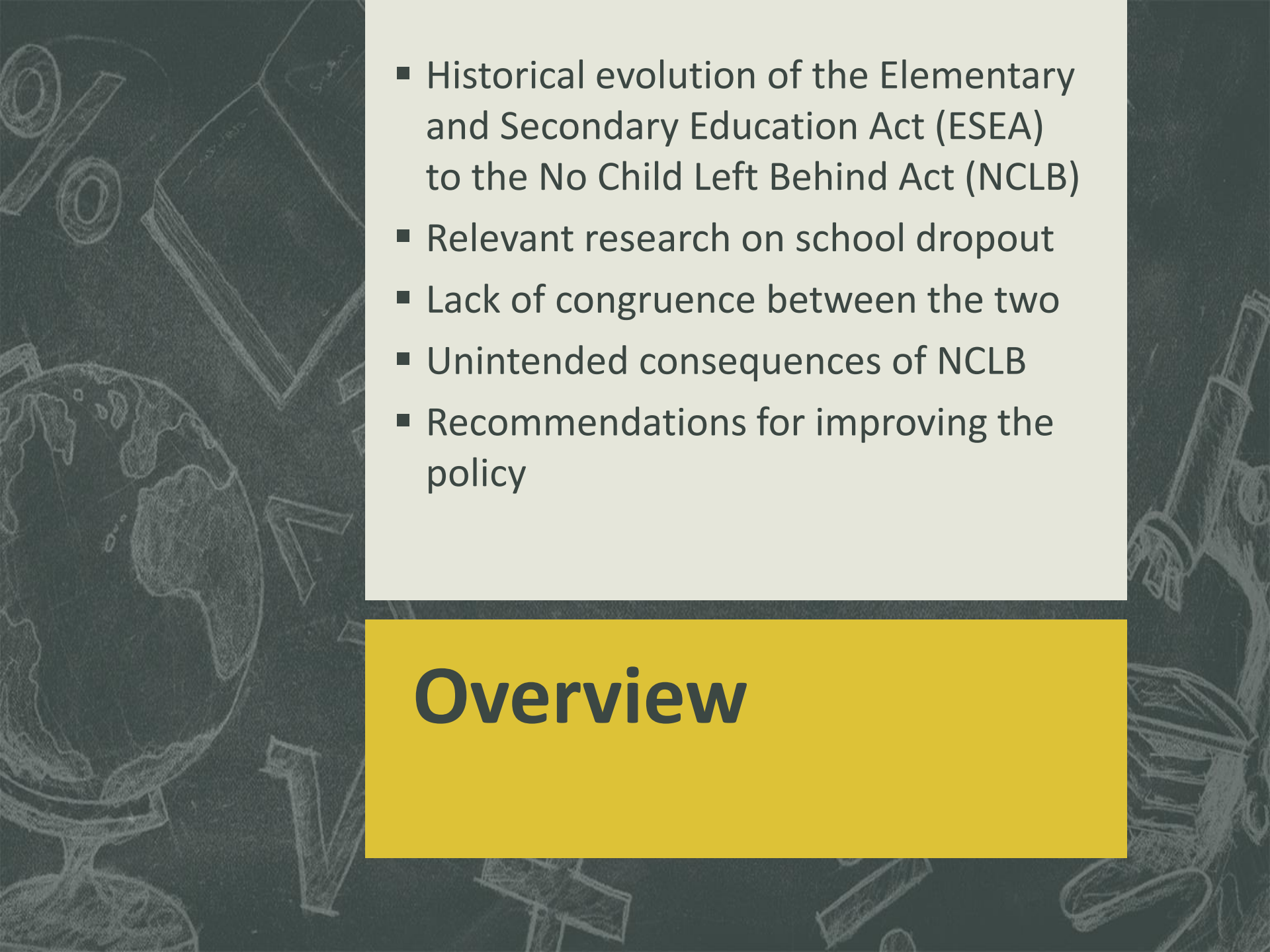


Education Policy and School Dropout Prevention: Working in Concert or as a Solo Act?

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- Historical evolution of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)
 - Relevant research on school dropout
 - Lack of congruence between the two
 - Unintended consequences of NCLB
 - Recommendations for improving the policy

Overview

- 7,000 students dropout of school every school day (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011)
- 5% of White youth, 7.3% of Black youth, and 13.6% of Hispanic youth
- 13% of youth from low-income families vs 2.3% from wealthier families (Snyder & Dillow, 2013)

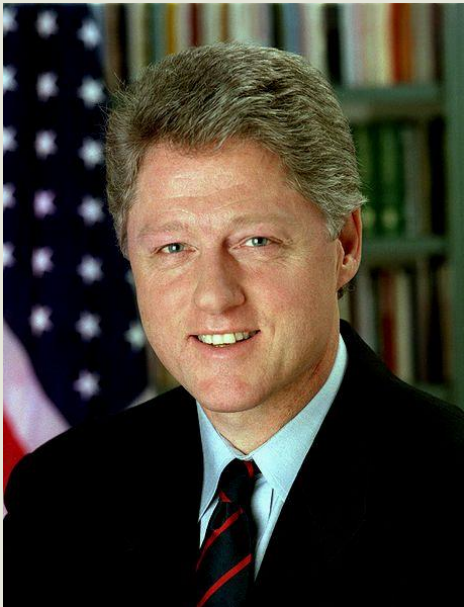
The Problem

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965



- War on Poverty in the classroom
- Title I funding to schools that served high concentrations of children from low-income families
- Accountability
 - “Carefully evaluated using objective measures to determine what children had learned” (Hess & Petrilli, 2007, p. 10)

Improving America's Schools Act of 1994



- Focus on the needs of all children

Requirements:

- Content and performance standards
- Create assessment measures aligned to those standards
 - Administer assessments to low-income children in one grade of each span (grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12) (Hess & Petrilli, 2007)
- Develop an identification and accountability system for schools that were not helping all students perform according to established measures (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003)

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

- “Meeting the educational needs of low-achieving children in our Nation’s highest-poverty schools, limited English proficient children, migratory children, children with disabilities, Indian children, neglected or delinquent children, and young children in need of reading assistance”
- “Closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers” (115 USC § 1440, section 1001, 2002)





Requirements for states:

- Set standards for grade-level achievement
- Measure the progress of all students and 10 distinct subgroups of students (e.g. race/ethnicity, poverty level, English language proficiency, and presence of disabilities)
- Implement a statewide accountability system to document whether schools and school districts achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP)
 - Steadily increasing test scores for both aggregated students and each subgroup
 - AYP objectives for high school graduation rates (U.S. Department of Education, 2002)
- States are sanctioned for not meeting AYP

What's Missing from NCLB?

- Shift in priority from providing resources to low-income students to school-wide effectiveness
- Attacks the symptoms, but not the causes of the problems it seeks to solve
 - Only addresses school domain
 - Fails to address barriers for children who live in poverty



Unintended Consequences of NCLB

- Diversity penalty
- Students are “pushed out”
- Reliance on high-stakes testing
 - Shifted focus to meeting NCLB standards
- Evidence the achievement gap has not lessened



Literature on School Dropout

- Lloyd, 1978
- Barrington & Hendricks, 1989
- Ensminger & Slusarcick, 1992
- Rush & Vitale, 1994
- Ensminger, Lamkin, & Jacobson, 1996
- Janosz, Le Blanc, Boulerice, & Tremblay, 1997
- Battin-Pearson, Newcomb, Abbott, Hill, Catalano, & Hawkins, 2000
- Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carson, 2000
- Gleason & Dynarski, 2002
- Balfanz, Herzog, & Mac Iver, 2007


Why Do Students Dropout of School?

During the 1960s

- Unemployment
- Urban poverty
- Dropping out as a form of juvenile delinquency
- Psychological defects
- Parallel between the focus of ESEA and the research literature

1980s to Current

- Risk factors classified into four levels of ecology: individual, family, school, and community
- No single risk factor
 - Cumulative risk
- End result of a long-term process that may have begun even before a child entered school
- Iterations of ESEA do not reflect complex and multidimensional problem

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- *Blueprint for Reform*
 - Increased resource equity
 - Expand data collection to include school climate, student, teacher, and parent perceptions
 - Recognize progress and growth
 - Incorporate body of research on dropout prevention

Recommendations

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