In 2001, former President George Bush achieved a solid bipartisan domestic achievement with the No Child Left Behind bill, saying he wanted to end the “soft bigotry” of low expectations for poor and minority children. Since then, the law’s required standardized testing has been a controversial and much debated issue.

We have outlined some pros and cons below.

\section*{What Proponents Say:}

- Data from standardized tests has promoted the accountability of public schools to the public.
- Standardized tests help identify students’ strengths and weaknesses.
- Benchmark testing helps to monitor student progress throughout the school year.
- Standardized tests measure individual student progress as well as the progress of schools and school districts.
- NCLB/standardized testing requires that state-mandated curriculum is taught and tested.
- NCLB and its testing requirements show the progress of every group of students and make it impossible for schools to hide the achievement results for minority and poor children.
- Testing of basic skills emphasizes that all students must achieve this skill level in order to go on to higher level skills.

\section*{What Opponents Say:}

- Standardized tests promote “teaching to the test.”
- Over-use of standardized tests narrows the curriculum and only tests basic skills.
- Over-testing is pushing students out of school and driving teachers out of the profession.
- Standardized tests contain culture bias and are unfair to some groups of students.
- Standardized tests discourage creativity, innovation, problem-solving and higher level thinking skills.
- Over-use of testing for specific subjects limits the emphasis on other untested subjects like art, music and history.
- Standardized tests as required by NCLB have become a punitive measure rather than diagnostic tool.