

Calif. test scores tied to attendance, not proficiency

By Sharon Noguchi, San Jose Mercury News

For more than a decade, the release of federal scores indicating California public school students' progress – or lack of it – has incited alarm, anxiety and anguish among educators.

But when those marks were ever so quietly posted this month, barely anyone noticed. And it seemed few cared. For the first time in years, California schools met federal standards – but only because the yardstick had been replaced with an easier-to-meet measurement.

It's the sign that the federal No Child Left Behind law, an effort to hold schools accountable for students' failure to learn, has lost its muscle a year before it expires. That retreat enrages reformers like former state Sen. Gloria Romero of Los Angeles. "There is an effort to minimize, whitewash and scrub the file so that parents don't have information," she said. "If you can kill the data, you can't have the reform."

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