

Dr. Martin Luther King African-American Immersion Elementary School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory and the Chicago Public Schools (1992) describe the cultural relevance program at Dr. Martin Luther King African-American Immersion Elementary School:

"African-American culture provides the basis for developmentally appropriate curricula and instructional practice. Students learn skills for effective communication, problem solving, social and action skills, reflection and analysis, and active citizenship. The core curriculum comprises art, visual and performing arts, language arts, mathematics, computing, science, social studies, music, health and fitness, dance and drama, and gender socialization. Support systems include advising systems, parent advocacy, peer mediation, and buddy systems.

Students learn in two-hour blocks of time, and the school day is extended to facilitate the support structure for homework and advanced coursework. The program operates year-round, to alleviate the problem of the 70-75 percent academic retention loss that occurs for students over the summer. About 100 community members have established long-term commitments and mentor relationships with students. All students devote at least one hour to community service per quarter. All parents sign a contract stipulating one hour of volunteer time per semester, such as fundraising, field trips, dances, tutoring, classroom visitation, Saturday supervision, telephone calls, and clerical assistance.

Teachers are expected to acquire 18 graduate credits above a doctorate or master's degree in African or African-American history, culture, or learning styles. Those credits are earned in increments of 3 credits for the first year, then 6, 6, and 3 over the five-year program. Teachers also make 36 home visits a year." (p. 17)



References



Lincoln School, Mundelein, Illinois

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Lincoln School in Mundelein, Illinois, is a K-5 multiage school that operates on a year-round calendar. It is a choice school, meaning that all parents living within the boundaries for Mundelein Elementary School District 75 have the choice of enrolling their children in either Lincoln School or the designated neighborhood school for their area. Currently, Lincoln School is nearing its enrollment capacity of 425 students.

The 1997-98 school year marked Lincoln's second year of operation as a multiage school. Classes are configured with first and second grades combined in the primary classes, and third, fourth, and fifth grades combined in the intermediate-level classes. Kindergarten is a self-contained class. The school's statement of beliefs contains a statement on the efficacy of multiage groupings:

"We believe in the concept of multiage groupings. This concept allows children to experience a variety of roles within the school setting. Having students for more than one year allows the teacher to better understand the needs of the individual students and to more effectively provide for their continuous progress. Comfort and security are provided for the students when they are with the same teacher for more than one year."

The Lincoln School model was developed by a District Advisory Research Team (DART) consisting of principals, teachers, the superintendent, parents, and community representatives. DART began to research best practices in education, including multiage practice, in the fall of 1995. The full year was devoted to reading, discussion, visitations to a variety of schools, and guest speakers. A great deal of thoughtful planning and preparation went into the development of Lincoln School's multiage program. A three-year professional development plan was created for Lincoln staff and supplemented by grants. Lincoln school opened as a multiage school in the 1996-97 school year.

The school newsletter, *Lincoln News* (Lincoln School, 1997), describes Lincoln School's approach to learning:

"The Lincoln School model is comprised of eight interrelated components. The model for learning includes: **multiage classrooms, thematic and integrated teaching, multiple intelligences, problem-based learning, and performance-based assessment.** This learning model is support by the seamless integration of **technology** as well as a **continuous learning calendar** that allows for additional learning opportunities for our children. The Lincoln School model is supported by a highly energized **parent involvement team** that believes that parents, the school, and the staff are true partners in the educational process." (p. 2)

- **Multiage Classrooms.** "The organizational foundation of Lincoln School is multiage classrooms. A multiage grouping means that children of a two- or three-year span are grouped together heterogeneously in one classroom and stay with the teacher for that period of time.... This concept decreases transition times in the beginning of the school year as only one-half or one-third of the students are new. Teachers spend less time diagnosing student needs and setting up classroom procedures. Learning begins at the beginning. Students are grouped for instruction by skills rather than by grade levels. Students are then able to work at their own pace, increasing the opportunity for challenging learning activities and learning based on their own instructional level.

Our school is arranged by families. Families are comprised of Kindergarten, Primary, and Intermediate classes. Families meet weekly for a variety of learning experiences. This extends the benefits of learning, nurturance, and leadership." (p. 2)

- **Thematic/Integrated Curriculum.** The educational process at Lincoln emphasizes schoolwide themes that are supported by integrated learning models. There is a three-year cyclical curriculum based on the district's learning goals for student achievement in language arts, math, social studies, and science.
- **Multiple Intelligences.** The concept of multiple intelligences (verbal-linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal) is emphasized in lesson plans, instruction, and assessment. Children at Lincoln School can identify these seven intelligences, and their awareness of a variety of intelligences helps increase self-esteem and appreciation for others.
- **Problem-Based Learning.** Problem-based learning requires students to do authentic, real-world tasks in the classroom. As students solve problems, they engage in collaborative groups and use primary resources as well as technology.
- **Performance-Based Assessment.** Performance-based assessments are used to measure students' learning and understanding. These assessments include student presentations and demonstrations, writing projects, and portfolios.
- **Technology.** At Lincoln School, technology is considered an essential tool for learning. An interactive network of classroom-based computers, Internet accessibility, and educational software are available to all students.
- **Continuous Learning Calendar.** The school follows a year-round calendar, but Lincoln students actually attend school the same number of days as those following a traditional calendar. Students attend school for nine weeks followed by three weeks off, with a six-week break in the summer months.

Research has documented the following benefits of the continuous learning calendar: It decreases significant learning loss, which often occurs during long summer breaks; it increases attendance; and it reduces stress.

- **Parental Involvement.** Parents are invited to join Lincoln School staff by participating on design teams or action teams or by volunteering in the classroom.



References

Prisoners Of Time - April 1994

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

April 1994

The Honorable Albert Gore
President
United States Senate

The Honorable Thomas S. Foley
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Richard W. Riley
Secretary
United States Department of Education

Gentlemen:

Public Law 102-62 (The Education Council Act of 1991) established the National Education Commission on Time and Learning as an independent advisory body and called for a comprehensive review of the relationship between time and learning in the nation's schools. The legislation created a nine-member Commission (three each to be appointed by the Secretary of Education, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives) and directed the Commission to prepare a report on its findings by April 1994. We are pleased to present that report for your consideration.

In the 24 months since the Commission was established, we have met 18 times to discuss the issues outlined in our statute. We visited 19 schools and education programs across the United States. We listened to more than 150 teachers, administrators, parents, students and other experts on education. We worked with school officials in Japan and Germany to complete two fact-finding visits to schools and research institutes in those countries.

Our conclusions and recommendations speak for themselves. Time is the missing element in our great national debate about learning and the need for higher standards for all students. Our schools and the people involved with them—students, teachers, administrators, parents, and staff—are prisoners of time, captives of the school clock and calendar. We have been asking the impossible of our students—that they learn as much as their foreign peers while spending only half as much time in core academic subjects. The reform movement of the last decade is destined to founder unless it is harnessed to more time for learning.

We want to thank each of you for your confidence that we could complete this challenging assignment. Your support helped us complete the task on schedule. We tried to be straightforward in our discussions with each other and in our recommendations about what needs to be done. Although each of us may harbor minor reservations about details of this report, we are unanimous in supporting its broad themes and recommendations.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the work of our staff under the able leadership of its executive director, Milton Goldberg. Amidst the pressure of deadlines and honest differences of opinion about how to proceed on these complex issues, the staff unflinchingly came through as the professionals they are.

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Prisoners Of Time



Prisoners Of Time - April 1994

DIMENSIONS OF THE TIME CHALLENGE

There is an urgency about the issue of time and learning that is felt by the public but not yet reflected in the responses of many education officials. On these issues, the American people may be ahead of their schools.

Opinion polls reviewed by the Commission reveal a revolution in public attitudes about time, schools, and the role of schools in the community. According to recent polls findings:

- After nearly 40 years of opposing a longer school year, 52 percent of Americans today favor students' spending more time in school.
- A plurality favors increasing the number of days in the year as opposed to the number of hours in the day (47 versus 33 percent).
- A large majority (62 percent) supports providing after-school care for the children of working parents.
- Americans have reached a national consensus on the importance of pre-school programs to help low-income and minority children get ready for school (85 percent support).

Public opinion experts also report that when Americans are asked to identify their worries about elementary and secondary education, their primary concern is the quality of education provided to their children. Harnessed then, in the public mind, are two powerful forces for reform: a belief that the paramount issue in American education is quality and a dawning consensus, just now being articulated, that school time, broadly conceived, is quality's ally.

The response of America's education leaders to the imperative for school reform is impressive. Both Presidents Bush and Clinton were early advocates of adopting ambitious National Education Goals (see sidebar, next page). These goals enjoy bipartisan support in the Congress and in state houses. The National Council on Education Standards and Testing called in 1992 for the development of new learning standards for all students and voluntary national tests to reinforce them. The content standards movement sweeping American education promises to revolutionize learning.

Based on its 24-month investigation, however, the Commission is convinced that five unresolved issues present insurmountable barriers to these efforts to improve learning. They define the dimensions of the time challenge facing American schools:

- The fixed clock and calendar is a fundamental design flaw that must be changed.
- Academic time has been stolen to make room for a host of nonacademic activities.
- Today's school schedule must be modified to respond to the great changes that have reshaped American life outside school.
- Educators do not have the time they need to do their job properly.
- Mastering world-class standards will require more time for almost all students.

THE DESIGN FLAW

Decades of school improvement efforts have foundered on a fundamental design flaw, the assumption that learning can be doled out by the clock and defined by the calendar. Research confirms common sense. Some students take three to six times longer than others to learn the same thing. Yet students are

caught in a time trap-processed on an assembly line scheduled to the minute. Our usage of time virtually assures the failure of many students.

Under today's practices, high-ability students are forced to spend more time than they need on a curriculum developed for students of moderate ability. Many become bored, unmotivated, and frustrated. They become prisoners of time.

Struggling students are forced to move with the class and receive less time than they need to master the material. They are penalized with poor grades. They are pushed on to the next task before they are ready. They fall further and further behind and begin living with a powerful dynamic of school failure that is reinforced as long as they remain enrolled or until they drop out. They also become prisoners of time.

What of "average" students? They get caught in the time trap as well. Conscientious teachers discover that the effort to motivate the most capable and help those in difficulty robs them of time for the rest of the class. Typical students are prisoners of time too.

The paradox is that the more the school tries to be fair in allocating time, the more unfair the consequences. Providing equal time for students who need more time guarantees unequal results. If we genuinely intend to give every student an equal opportunity to reach high academic standards, we must understand that some students will require unequal amounts of time, i.e., they will need additional time.

One response to the difficulty of juggling limited time to meet special needs has been the development of "pull-out programs," in which students needing reinforcement or more advanced work are "pulled out" of the regular classroom for supplemental work. Attractive in theory, these programs, in practice, replace regular classroom time in the same subject. They add little additional time for learning. Students deserve an education that matches their needs every hour of the school day, not just an hour or two a week. Pull-out programs are a poor part-time solution to a serious full-time problem.

ACADEMIC TIME AND NONACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The traditional school day, originally intended for core academic learning, must now fit in a whole set of requirements for what has been called "the new work of the schools"-education about personal safety, consumer affairs, AIDS, conservation and energy, family life, driver's training-as well as traditional nonacademic activities, such as counseling, gym, study halls, homeroom, lunch and pep rallies. The school day, nominally six periods, is easily reduced at the secondary level to about three hours of time for core academic instruction.

Most Americans believe these activities are worthwhile. But where do schools find the time? Within a constrained school day, it can only come from robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Time lost to extracurricular activities is another universal complaint of educators. A 1990 survey of Missouri principals indicated that student activities can deny students the equivalent of seven school days a year. According to these principals, the academic calendar falls victim to demands from athletics, clubs, and other activities. Who is to say that these pastimes are not beneficial to many students? But how much academic time can be stolen from Peter to pay Paul?

OUT-OF-SCHOOL INFLUENCES

Over the last generation, American life has changed profoundly. Many of our children are in deep trouble.

Family structure has changed dramatically. Half of American children spend some portion of their childhood in a single-parent home, and family time with children has declined 40 percent since World War II.

The workforce is different. Of the 53 million women working in the United States in 1991, 20.8 million had children under the age of 17, including nearly 9 million with children under age six.

Society is more diverse and rapidly becoming more so. By the year 2010, 40 percent of all children in this country will be members of minority groups. The nation's big city schools are already coping with a new generation of immigrant children, largely non-English speaking, rivaling in size the great European immigrations of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Income inequality is growing. One fifth of all children, and nearly half of all African-American children, are born into poverty today. The United States leads advanced nations in poverty, single-parent families, and mortality rates for those under age 25. Poverty is not simply an urban phenomenon. The number of rural children living in poverty far exceeds the number living in cities.

Technology threatens to widen the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots." The wealthiest 25-30 percent of American families have a computer at home today, leading to a new phenomenon, preschoolers who can use computers before they can read a book.

Anxiety about crime-ridden streets is a daily reality in many communities. Suicide and homicide are the leading cause of death for young men. For some students, the streets are a menace. For many, the family that should be their haven is itself in trouble. Still others arrive at school hungry, unwashed, and frightened by the plagues of modern life-drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, and AIDs

According to a 1992 study completed at Stanford University, veteran teachers are well aware that today's students bring many more problems to school than children did a generation ago. Today's students receive less support outside school and increasingly exhibit destructive behavior ranging from drug and alcohol abuse to gang membership and precocious sexual activity. According to a recent Harris poll, 51 percent of teachers single out "children who are left on their own after school" as the primary explanation for students' difficulties in class. The same poll reports that 12 percent of elementary school children (30 percent in middle school and nearly 40 percent in high school) care for themselves after the school day ends.

But the school itself is a prisoner of time. Despite the dedication of their staffs, schools are organized as though none of this has happened. It is clear that schools cannot be all things to all people-teachers cannot be parents, police officers, physicians, and addiction or employment counselors. But neither can they ignore massive problems. It is time to face the obvious. In many communities, when children are not with their families, the next best place for them is the school.



TIME AS A PROBLEM FOR EDUCATORS

The corollary to Murphy's Law holds in schools just as it does in life- everything takes longer than you expect. School reform is no exception. While restructuring time, schools need time to restructure. Perversely, according to a recent RAND study, the reallocation of time collides directly with forces of the status quo-entrenched school practices; rules and regulations; traditions of school decision-making; and collective bargaining. The greatest resistance of all is found in the conviction that the only valid use of teachers' time is "in front of the class;" the assumption that reading, planning, collaboration with other teachers and professional development are somehow a waste of time.

In light of this, the following findings are particularly troubling:

- According to a RAND study, new teaching strategies can require as much as 50 hours of

instruction, practice and coaching before teachers become comfortable with them.

- A study of successful urban schools indicates they needed up to 50 days of external technical assistance for coaching and strengthening staff skills through professional development.
- Resolution of the time issue "remains one of the most critical problems confronting educators today," according to the National Education Association. "For school employees involved in reform, time has become an implacable barrier."

As a representative of the American Federation of Teachers said at a recent Teachers Forum on GOALS 2000 sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, "We've got to turn around the notion that we have to do everything without being given the time to do it."

Teachers, principals and administrators need *time* for reform. They need *time* to come up to speed as academic standards are overhauled, *time* to come to grips with new assessment systems, and *time* to make productive and effective use of greater professional autonomy, one hallmark of reform in the 1990s. Adding school reform to the list of things schools must accomplish, without recognizing that time in the current calendar is a limited resource, trivializes the effort. It sends a powerful message to teachers: don't take this reform business too seriously. Squeeze it in on your own time.

EMERGING CONTENT AND ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

As 1994 dawned, calls for much more demanding subject matter standards began to bear fruit. Intended for all students, new content frameworks will extend across the school curriculum-English, science, history, geography, civics, the arts, foreign languages, and mathematics, among others. Their purpose is to bring all American youngsters up to world-class performance standards.

The American people and their educators need to be very clear about the standards movement. It is not time-free. At least three factors demand more time and better use of it.

First, subjects traditionally squeezed out of the curriculum now seek their place in the sun. Additional hours and days will be required if new standards in the arts, geography, and foreign languages are to be *even partially attained*.

Second, most students will find the traditional core curriculum significantly more demanding. Materials and concepts formerly reserved for the few must now be provided to the many. More student learning time and more flexible schedules for seminars, laboratories, team teaching, team learning, and homework will be essential.

Finally, one point cannot be restated too forcefully: professional development needs will be broad and massive. Indispensable to educated students are learned teachers in the classroom. An enormous change is at hand for the nation's 2.75 million teachers. To keep pace with changing content standards, teachers will need ongoing coursework in their disciplines *while they continue to teach their subjects*.

The Commission's hearings confirmed the time demands of the standards movement:

- **Arts.** "I am here to pound the table for 15 percent of school time devoted to arts instruction," declared Paul Lehman of the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations.
- **English.** "These standards will require a huge amount of time, for both students and teachers," teacher Miles Myers of the National Council of Teachers of English told the Commission.
- **Geography.** "Implementing our standards will require more time. Geography is hardly taught at all in American schools today," was the conclusion of Anthony De Souza of the National Geographic Society.
- **Mathematics.** "The standards I am describing are not the standards I received as a student or that I

taught as a teacher," said James Gates of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

- **Science.** "There is a consensus view that new standards will require more time," said David Florio of the National Academy of Sciences.

STRIKING THE SHACKLES OF TIME

Given the many demands made of schools today, the wonder is not that they do so poorly, but that they accomplish so much. Our society has stuffed additional burdens into the time envelope of 180 six-hour days without regard to the consequences for learning. We agree with the Maine mathematics teacher who said, "The problem with our schools is not that they are *not* what they used to be, but that they *are* what they used to be." In terms of time, our schools are unchanged despite a transformation in the world around them.

Each of the five issues - the design flaw, lack of academic time, out of school influences, time for educators, and new content and achievement standards - revolves around minutes, hours, and days. If the United States is to grasp the larger education ambitions for which it is reaching, we must strike the shackles of time from our schools.

National Education Goals



Lessons from Abroad



Prisoners Of Time - April 1994

VIII. SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY: FINGER POINTING AND EVASION MUST END

WE RECOMMEND that all of our people shoulder their individual responsibilities to transform learning in America.

No single recommendation can capture the essential point with which the Commission concluded the first chapter: learning must become a national obsession in the United States.

In America's great education debate we find too often a belief that the solution is up to government or "the system." Nothing could be further from the truth. It is up to us. Most of what needs to be done can only be done by the people most directly involved. There are no short-cuts. Lightning will not strike and transform American schools if each of us acts as though the task belongs to somebody else.

To put learning in America powerfully back on track everyone will have to do more, make sacrifices, and work harder. Great institutions like the American school do not fail simply because they collapse from within. Complacency within combines with public apathy to enfeeble institutions, leaving behind impressive but empty facades.

The implications are clear. Schools cannot do the job alone. All of us have to shoulder our responsibilities. If we think this transformation too difficult, we must again learn the wisdom of the African proverb, "It takes a whole village to raise a child."

It takes a family to raise a child. Parents are more than their children's "first teachers"-they are lifelong examples bearing witness to community norms and expectations, to the values that give meaning, texture, and a sense of purpose to life.

It takes communities to raise a child. But in place of healthy communities, too often we find neighborhoods deteriorating amidst the alienation, rootlessness, and despair of violent streets.

It takes schools to raise a child. But where there should be a shared sense of common purpose among school, family, and community, too often we find a circle of blame. Parents blame the community for the child's problems. Communities blame the school. And the school, too frequently, blames both. Then it closes itself off in its time-bound world.

The finger pointing and evasions must come to an end-up and down the line from the federal government to the family and student. Although concrete recommendations are difficult to make, several ground rules point the way ahead.

Government should focus on results, not red tape. The sheer number of rules and regulations hamstringing schools from federal and state governments has grown beyond reason. Their cumulative effect is to handcuff schools.

All federal programs should follow the larger intent of the Clinton administration's legislation, *GOALS 2000: Educate America Act*. This bipartisan legislation puts the National Education Goals into statutory language. It promises to free local schools from regulation in favor of accountability. It focuses on results, not red tape.

The federal government should encourage local schools to use categorical programs to supplement *learning time* for target students. Too often these programs have defeated their own purpose: funds have been used for programs that replace the school's learning time. They should support after-school, weekend, and summer programs.

At the state level, the Commission applauds states such as Kentucky and Washington which have adopted comprehensive education reform efforts, most of which promise to (1) limit regulatory oversight in return for demonstrated results in the schools; (2) offer additional time for teachers' professional development; and (3) provide sanctions and rewards for schools based on performance.

It is at the school district and local board level that we find the major possibilities for freeing schools of red tape in favor of accountability. A large number of promising experiments are underway around the country to free schools of burdensome district regulation. Many of these experiments revolve around time; many do not. We encourage school boards-through the local action plans suggested in Recommendation VII-to examine these experiments and adapt the most promising to their own needs.

Higher education needs to get involved. Colleges and universities, as institutions, have been bystanders for the most part in the school reform debate. It is time they got involved. They can help in at least four ways.

First, higher education already offers a model that holds learning fixed and makes time a variable. Students can earn a bachelor's degree in three, four, even eight years; the same is true of doctoral study.

Second, the school reform movement *cannot* succeed unless academic institutions honor the results of new standards and assessments. Admissions requirements should validate learning, not seat time.

Third, colleges and universities educating teachers must align their programs with the movement to higher standards. This will involve changing not only offerings in schools of education, but also the design of undergraduate programs in core disciplines.

Finally, a handful of colleges and universities across the country are struggling to reinvent local schools. There are 3,500 colleges and universities in the United States and there should be 3,500 examples. It is not necessary to operate a school or district or provide medical checkups and family counseling-although some academic institutions somewhere are doing each of these things. But it is necessary to do something.

The business world should keep up the pressure. Much of the impetus for school reform, at the national, state, and local levels, has been generated by business leaders insisting that changes in the workplace require radically different kinds of school graduates. Corporate and small business leaders have also been actively supporting reform coalitions, applying corporate techniques to school operations, and creating a variety of one-on-one school partnerships in which individual firms work directly with individual classrooms, schools, or districts.

Now is no time for timidity in the school reform effort. Leaders cannot blow an uncertain trumpet. Business leaders must keep up the pressure for comprehensive reform to improve student achievement.

Parents, students, and teachers must lead the way. Finally, we want to speak directly to the people with the greatest stake in the learning enterprise-parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, foster parents and guardians, and to teachers and students themselves.

To parents, grandparents, relatives and guardians: With your support for the agenda for reform outlined in this document, success is assured. Without it, we do not know how the agenda can be achieved.

You may worry that new academic standards will add to your children's stress. That is not our intent. In fact, that is why we insist that time be made a part of the standards discussion. Indeed, our hope is that schools will be more attractive, interesting, and lively places for both students and adults when time becomes the servant of learning. Schools should also be more hospitable to you, once teachers are released from the relentless treadmill of today's calendar and the academic day is more attuned to your family's needs.

We know that your aspirations for your children are unlimited, no matter your circumstances or the difficulties in which you find yourselves. You can bring those aspirations within reach. We have little to

offer other than the advice of experts. But their words bear repeating. Play with your children every day. Read to them every night. Make sure they see a doctor regularly. Take an active interest in the day-to-day activities of the school and the community. Check homework, turn off the television, and make sure that your teenagers are not working so long earning pocket money that they have no time for school. Above all, encourage your children.

What we ask, of course, takes time. But your reward will come as you watch your children become the kind of men and women you knew they could be.

To teachers: You are the inheritors of a tradition of service and scholarship stretching back through history. Your first obligation is to that inheritance.

If you accept minimal effort from students or colleagues or excuse shoddy performance, then you have fallen short, no matter how understandable your reasons. You cannot remain true to the tradition you bear by acquiescing to the social promotion of students who are not prepared for the next step.

Only parents and students have a greater stake than you in this debate. Clearly our proposals will make a huge difference in your working life. The nature of the change, however, remains to be worked out with your participation. This Commission consciously avoided specifying a precise number of days in the school year, or hours in the school day, because we believe those issues must be worked out district by district and school by school.

Although we insist on breaking down the prison walls, it is not our intention to impose new demands on you without providing the support we know you need. It is up to you and your colleagues to put muscle and sinew on the reform framework outlined in this document. We think you will-not because we recommend it, but because you know it is right. You best understand that we are correct when we say learning is a prisoner of time.

Your satisfaction will lie in a more professional working environment. It will also be found in a lifetime following the progress of adults who achieved their full potential because of what you were able to do with and for them in the classroom.

Last, we say to students: We know that in the midst of today's pressures, your classes, school, and homework often appear to be distractions from the business of growing up. We were once in your shoes. We, however, were lucky. When we left school, we expected to face a promising future, and for the most part our expectations were met.

You, too, can make good if you are prepared to work at it. You may think your academic success depends on whether or not you are "smart." But academic progress, as our international friends understand, depends on hard work and perseverance. It is your job to learn, to become the "worker" in your own education. You must understand that learning is never a passive activity; it is always active. Your success in school depends primarily on your own diligence. The returns on your efforts will be many, including the satisfaction of knowing that adults who complained about your generation were wrong-and you proved them wrong.

Develop Local Action Plans to Transform Schools



An Urban Elementary School for the Next Century



Prisoners Of Time - April 1994

IS THERE A BETTER WAY?

A School Year that Never Really Ends

At Beacon Day School (elementary) and Beacon High School in Oakland, California, the school year never really ends. At these private schools, the school day is over ten hours long. There is no set vacation period; parents plan vacations to fit family needs; students work in teams by achievement level, not age; letter grades are unknown in the elementary school; and students spend six to eight hours a week on art, music, dance, drama or martial arts. "There's no summer vacation, so there's extra time to learn," 10-year-old Colin Gage told the Commission.

Leslie Medine, co-director of the schools, described different approaches to the two levels of schooling. Based on students' developmental needs, she testified, Day School students attend school 240 days a year, whereas high school students attend 215. Both schools are open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 240 days a year, with teachers working on flexible schedules for 210 days. Every six weeks, at least two teachers are on leave throughout the year, their places taken by eight permanent, full-time, substitute teachers known as "flexes."

An Urban Elementary School for the Next Century



Meeting Student Needs in the Southwest



Prisoners Of Time - April 1994

IS THERE A BETTER WAY?

The Extended Day and Year: One Community's Experience with Public Demand

The Murfreesboro Schools in Tennessee may have the most comprehensive extended-day and -year program in the United States. In 1986, Murfreesboro decided that community concern about latch-key children was strong enough to justify extending the school year. The district announced that one elementary school would be open from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. with parents paying for the extended-day services. Four students showed up. Within two years, public demand forced the extension of the concept to every elementary school in the city. This year, 50 percent of the city's 5,000 elementary school students can be found in the program on any given day, all on a voluntary basis on the part of parents.

Plans are now well advanced to open Murfreesboro's first K-8 year-round school in August 1994. Parental freedom of choice will determine enrollment. Distinguishing between the "school day," "educational services," and "extended school services," the school will offer educational services from 8:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., and extended services before school from 6:00 a.m. and after school until 7:00 p.m. Extended services will be available five days a week, 52 weeks a year. Interim sessions will offer 40 extra days of academic time.

Parents choosing to take advantage of educational services for their children after 3:00 p.m. (or during the 40 days) will pay a small fee, as will parents opting for extended services. Students directed by school personnel to attend supplementary classes will do so at district expense. Murfreesboro expects to accomplish all of this within its regular per-pupil expenditures figures. Mayor Joe Jackson bristles at the suggestion that extended services undermine the family: "You've got it exactly backwards," he responds. "These services support the family by making it possible for people to work without worrying because they know their children are involved in constructive learning."

Developing a New Generation of Scientists, Scholars, and Leaders
Education"



"Year-Round



Prisoners Of Time - April 1994

IS THERE A BETTER WAY?

"Year-Round Education"

Principal Howard Lappin of Los Angeles' James A. Foshay Middle School showed the Commission an example of a "year-round education" program. Despite the name, most year-round schools are a reorganization of the 180-day school year; they do not provide additional time for either learning or nonacademic services. Nevertheless, their existence indicates that alternative calendars are feasible in many areas and year-round education is probably the most widely copied alternative to the traditional calendar. Nationwide, nearly 2,000 public and private schools, enrolling more than 1.4 million children, are on year-round calendars, with the lion's share of schools and enrollment in California-about 1,300 schools and 1.16 million children.

The year-round schedule creates four separate schools within Foshay's walls. Foshay operates four different schedules, each beginning and ending at a different time of the year with one quarter of the school's enrollment. Students normally spend only 180 days at school, but it is used year round, with three-quarters of the school's enrollment in the building at any given time. Two-week inter-sessions between school terms permit students to receive an additional 60 hours (ten days) of instruction if needed.

The school operates some Saturday classes for both students and parents, including a joint effort with the University of Southern California. The joint program enrolls 60 students who are guaranteed full assistance to attend USC if they persist and complete the Scholastic Assessment Test with combined math and English scores of at least 1000. The USC program also requires mandatory Saturday classes for the students and their parents.

The Extended Day and Year: One Community's Experience with Public Demand
Members of The National Education Commission on Time and Learning



Extending Learning Time for Disadvantaged Students - Volume 1 Summary of Promising Practices - 1995



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Secretary

August 10, 1995

Dear Fellow Educators:

Children who attend high-poverty schools often lack opportunities outside of school to extend their learning. It is time to make dramatic improvements in our nation's poorest schools, and the Title I program, the federal government's largest elementary and secondary school program, has been totally redesigned so it can contribute to this effort in new ways. Recognizing that students spend only a small part of their day in school, Title I encourages greater and more productive use of time outside the classroom. Title I, working in tandem with principals, teachers, school district and community leaders, and parents, can contribute to enhancing learning outside of the traditional school day, week or year.

Extending Learning Time for Disadvantaged Students: An Idea Book, one in a series the Department will issue, suggests numerous ways to extend learning time using available community resources. This idea book describes approaches that rely on a broad definition of learning time that includes traditional classroom instruction, community service, and extracurricular and resources activities. It is intended to serve as a resource for practitioners, policymakers and parents to use the new opportunities of improved federal education legislation to strengthen and expand local improvement efforts.

We encourage you to draw on the guidance in this idea book and the successes of the profiled schools to improve your schools, to help all children learn more, and to work hard toward higher standards.

Yours sincerely,

Richard W. Riley

400 MARYLAND AVE., S.W. WASHINGTON, D.C., 20202-0100

Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation.

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[\[Acknowledgments\]](#)

Extending Learning Time for Disadvantaged Students - Volume 2 Profiles of Promising Practices - 1995

Year-Round Education with Intersession Programs

Socorro Independent School District El Paso County, Texas

Key Characteristics

- Site-based management
 - Combination of acceleration, enrichment, and extracurricular activities
-

Overview

In 1990, the Socorro Independent School District began phasing in year-round education with intersession programs to improve academic achievement and better serve a rapidly increasing population. Every school now follows a schedule of 60 weekdays on, 20 weekdays off. Intersession activities occur during the first two weeks of each month-long break. Academic programs focus on tutoring, acceleration, and enrichment activities that use thematic, whole-language approaches; the shorter breaks between courses decrease the loss of English skills by many students with limited English proficiency. Participation in intersessions is voluntary, but students who have failed or fallen behind are encouraged to attend. About 33 percent--and in some cases as much as 70 percent--of all students participate in intersession programs. Most schools follow multi-track schedules to serve larger numbers of students.

School Context

The Socorro school district is located in El Paso County, which borders on Mexico and New Mexico. It serves about 17,900 students in the urban, primarily low-income communities of Socorro, Horizon City, and the eastern corridor of El Paso. Ninety percent of the students are Hispanic, 9 percent are Anglo, and 1 percent are African American. Many students come from low-income families; some live in homes with no interior plumbing. Approximately 300 students are from migrant families. The district has the lowest dropout rate in the county, however, due primarily to prevention programs established in the 1980s. The district ranks in the bottom 10 percent of districts in the state in terms of per-pupil expenditures and was one of the original plaintiffs in the school finance lawsuit filed against the state in 1989.

Major Program Features

- **Planning and design.** The impetus for year-round education in the Socorro school district was the rapid expansion of the student population, which increases between 8 percent and 10 percent each year. Planning began with a 60-member community task force that included students, parents, teachers, and administrators. The task force and school district staff studied year-round education by visiting schools, reviewing research, and interviewing administrators. The task force held 100 meetings to share information on year-round education and possible schedules with the community. The study and the meetings convinced school district staff and community members that a year-round schedule would benefit children from low-income backgrounds who had low

academic achievement scores. School staff also thought that the year-round model would better serve students trying to learn English, who typically lost much of their English proficiency during the long summer break.

The task force proposed a three-year phase-in of the year-round schedule, and in the 1991-92 school year the district offered a year-round option in addition to the traditional schedule in all of the district's schools except the high schools. At one of the middle schools, only 20 percent of the parents chose the year-round option, so school administrators waited until the next year to offer the new schedule. At the other schools, more than 60 percent of the parents chose the year-round program in its first year. Some schools had to establish multi-track schedules because the size of the participating student population otherwise exceeded their capacities.

A working group of teachers, parents, and administrators designed the intersession programs. The groups used the intersession component to explore new ways of teaching but allowed each school to adopt or adapt the suggested designs.

- **Academic focus.** Intersession formats vary by school, but most have acceleration and enrichment activities from approximately 8 a.m. to noon, followed by extracurricular activities in the afternoon, for one week at a time. For example, students spend two hours in language arts tutoring sessions in groups of 10 to 15, followed by two hours of mathematics tutoring. According to Socorro's course outline for extended learning, the morning period incorporates whole-language activities: "Begin with introduction of theme book and tie in other activities with spelling, literature response groups, vocabulary, and other activities.... Writing should be an important component in this reading adventure.... Also, poetry, letter writing, and essays could be explored. Writings should be related to [the] literature book being used. A [project] taken through the writing process should be an end product when the session is over. More than one writing could be completed in the week." At the end of this session, students may take quizzes or present their writings orally.

Throughout the day, other enrichment activities are available, including arts and crafts, music lessons, woodworking, and karate. A mathematics component uses board games, slates, hands-on manipulatives, and problem solving by writing descriptive story problems to emphasize higher-order thinking skills. Other recent activities introduced students to Southwestern literature, science fiction, and an environmental study based on the Rio Grande River and its impact on the community.

Some of the intersession programs are grade-specific; typically, this depends on the number of children who sign up in each grade. Two or more groups might be formed, with students from more than one grade in each. The year-round and intersession programs are open to all students who want to enroll in enrichment programs. The only selective groupings are for special needs students (e.g., students in English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual education programs).

- **Organizational management/structure.** Each campus has a school improvement team--composed of a teacher from each grade level, parents, community members (nonparents), administrators, and secondary or middle-school students--that determines the goals and objectives for the school and how inter-sessions can help meet these goals. The district has implemented site-based management at each campus, and these teams also are responsible for the overall management of the school. For example, if a school has high writing scores but low reading scores, the team may focus intersessions on building reading skills. This team also selects teachers for the intersessions.

Overall coordination of the intersessions varies among schools. At some campuses, teachers receive additional pay for coordinating that year's intersessions; at others, a teacher-coordinator is designated for each intersession. Other schools have appointed an administrator to oversee the intersessions.

- **Parent and community involvement.** Parents and community members were actively involved in designing the year-round and intersession programs through the task force and original working

group. Their involvement continues through each school's working group. Families coordinate with the schools to ensure that all children in a family follow the same track or schedule.

- **Professional environment.** The schedule change has increased cooperation among teachers and administrators. This is especially true for teachers on multi-track schedules, who share classrooms, equipment, supplies, and teaching strategies. In at least one instance, the intersession provided an opportunity for teachers to experiment with cooperative learning methods. At one of the high schools, the head of the history department had provided a staff development session on cooperative learning but could not get teachers to implement the new methods. During the fall intersession, three teachers tried the new techniques with small groups of students; the positive response led the teachers to use these methods in their regular classrooms. Teachers who volunteer to teach intersessions receive compensation.
- **Funding.** The district provides each school with intersession funding of \$30 per child per year. The district offers 120 intersession hours per year and about one third of the students attend each intersession; thus, the expenditure is about \$1.30 per student hour. The program provides breakfast to all intersession students and lunch to those who live more than two miles away and are bused to the program. The district funds intersessions through a variety of sources, including: (1) categorical federal funding (e.g., Title I, bilingual education, and migrant education funds); (2) general funds from the state and the district; (3) a special line-item appropriation established by the state for districts implementing year-round schedules, which resulted in \$1.5 million appropriated for the biennium across the state or \$300,000 for the Socorro district; and (4) increases in school budgets due to increased average daily attendance.
- **Cultural inclusiveness.** Because it serves a predominantly Hispanic student population, the school district has a strong bilingual, bicultural emphasis. Intersessions have reinforced this. At one school, parents requested that the intersession focus on teaching Spanish to monolingual English students and English to Spanish-speaking students. The program was so successful that the school offered similar classes during regular sessions. Other examples include exchange programs set up during intersessions, including one with students in a school in Juarez, Mexico.
- **Assessment and accountability.** Each campus is evaluated annually by a team of outside professionals. The teams survey parents, teachers, students, and community leaders and examine student test scores and progress toward stated objectives. In addition, evaluators collect data on attendance, discipline actions, and dropouts. This evaluation is shared with the School Improvement Team and is used to set the goals for the next year.

Implementation Issues

The challenge of balancing the increased academic needs of an expanding student population with inadequate funding generated by the property-poor district necessitated the three-year phase-in of a year-round schedule. The task force's comprehensive study and numerous community meetings before the program's implementation built a strong foundation of community support for the year-round schedule and intersessions. The program works very well in the "working poor" community because the schedule fits most families' lifestyles. According to district personnel, families typically did not travel during the summer and could not afford summer camps for their children, so they appreciated the added school activities during the summer.

Resistance to the year-round schedule appeared in only one neighborhood middle school, where campus administrators did not support the new calendar and did not promote it in their community. This reluctance was reflected in the first year's preregistration; less than 20 percent of parents signed up for the new calendar. Consequently, the district decided not to offer the year-round schedule at that site. The following year, the school was so crowded that administrators had no choice and had to implement a multi-track year-round schedule.

In addition to improving academic achievement, the year-round/ intersession program has helped ameliorate overcrowding in many schools across the district. In the second year of implementation,

multi-track year-round schedules were established at nine overcrowded schools, enabling the district to serve 2,000 more students than was possible with a traditional school calendar; now, 12 of the 18 schools use multi-track schedules. One school that is overcrowded even with multi-tracks offers intersessions off-site in partnership with the local YWCA. The YWCA was already holding before- and after-school programs, and when the school's multi-track schedule did not solve its crowding problems, the principal and YWCA director developed the off-site intersession arrangement. The YWCA pays for the cost of the afternoon programs and the school pays for morning academic sessions. Teachers hold classes at the "Y," and school buses transport the students.

Although the district allows students to attend intersessions at other campuses, about 99 percent of the students participate at their home campus. The program that typically draws students from other campuses is Science Camp and is only offered at certain schools. The district provides bus transportation for any student who lives two or more miles from the campus, and if students decide to attend other campuses for intersession, bus service is provided. In the first year of the program, Socorro published a booklet describing the intersessions at each campus, but so few students chose to attend another school that district officials decided it was unnecessary to continue such a publication. If students are interested in intersessions focusing on a particular subject, teachers help them locate the appropriate campus.

Evidence of Success

At the elementary level, where schools are in their third year of year-round schedules, the district has assembled several measures of success:

- **Test scores.** In 1993, more of the district's third-graders showed mastery of reading, writing, and mathematics on three Texas basic skills subtests than did their counterparts statewide. For example, 74 percent of the district's students mastered the writing test, compared with 68 percent of the students statewide; in mathematics, 88 percent of the district students showed mastery, compared with 85 percent statewide. "Demographically, we shouldn't do that. We are one of the only school districts with our demographics that has scored above the state average. We see that as an indicator that we're doing something right," the assistant superintendent said.
- **Attendance rates.** Attendance has increased in each year of implementation by as much as 2 percent, a trend that administrators link to the new schedule.
- **Class failure rate.** The district's class failure rate has dropped by half for middle schools, where a high percent of students were failing one or more courses. Discipline referrals have dropped by 50 percent at middle schools, where discipline and failure rates have been problems.

High schools are in their first year of the year-round schedule, so they have less evidence of success. However, in 1994, 64 percent of the district's eleventh-graders mastered all three subtests on the state assessment; traditionally less than half have done so. In addition, the rate of students failing one course during the first semester dropped from 60 percent to 40 percent.

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[Saturday School]



[Summer Enhancement Program]

Extending Learning Time for Disadvantaged Students - Volume 1 Summary of Promising Practices - 1995

A Continuous Search For Creative Funding

Extended-time programs that serve highly disadvantaged populations often are located in the very poorest urban and rural settings, where local school budgets must stretch to provide even the required amount of instruction. Some extended-time programs operate without any budget beyond that normally associated with the school or administering agency. For example, the after-school study centers operated by the Omaha Housing Authority benefit from space available at the public housing developments, curriculum materials from local schools, volunteer tutors from the community, and contributions from local businesses for computers, equipment, and software.

Most extended-time programs, however, require more funding than the general education appropriations that schools receive from states and local districts. Especially in the poorest locations, education funding is always subject to demands from many sources. In addition, grants expire--and even dedicated volunteers eventually move on. Extended-time program planners should search for funding continuously and creatively, looking to both new and traditional sources of education funding for support. Some options for funding used by the extended-time programs profiled here include reliance on federal categorical programs, special funding from state departments of education, funds from private educational organizations, and support from community agencies or organizations.

Federal Categorical Programs

Federal categorical funding, including Title I basic and migrant education, Title VII bilingual education, and the Job Training Partnership Act, supports a portion of many of the programs profiled here. Title I pays all or notable amounts of the funding for several programs: the Title I Summer Program for Private School Children, Florence's extended-day kindergarten, the summer enhancement program in Charleston, and the Summer Institute for At-Risk Migrant Students.

State Departments of Education

State departments of education also provide special funding for extended-time programs. Examples include a North Dakota state grant for educating homeless children, a Texas line-item appropriation for districtwide intersession programs, South Carolina's Educational Improvement Act funds, and the California Department of Education's fee waiver for 95 percent of the students at the Yuk Yau center in Oakland.

Private Educational Organizations

Other programs receive funds from private educational organizations, which usually fund local programs only partially; implementation of the programs may help districts or schools secure grants from foundations. For example, ASPIRA provides some funding to Chicago public schools that operate the after-school programs, while the school district and local schools provide space, supplies, and staff; private funding has eased the financial burden on the district and schools. Local Teen Outreach Projects (TOP) operate in a similar way. The national TOP program funds evaluation and technical assistance, and community sponsors at individual sites raise funds to cover operating costs. In Tuolumne County, California, the county office of education and a community agency solicited grants in 1993 to cover the \$32,700 annual budget.

In some instances, private organizations fully fund local programs, leaving the schools responsible only for providing space. Raising Hispanic Academic Achievement in Silver Spring, Maryland, does not require any contribution from local schools or the district--and in fact the program pays rent on its space in a school.

Community Agencies and Organizations

Community agencies and organizations can provide substantial support for extended-time programs. For example, the Kids Crew after-school, weekend, and summer programs are supported entirely by the Brooklyn Children's Museum (primarily through foundation funding). In the past, the Educational Program for Homeless Children and Youth in Devil's Lake, North Dakota, received half of its annual budget for salaries and transportation from a local child welfare reform agency. This program also benefits from community support in the form of access to activities offered by the local department of parks and recreation.

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[Cultural Sensitivity]



[A Willingness To Resolve Or Work Around Obstacles]

Title I Distinguished School

Student Schores Soar At Year-Round School

Changes at Fawcett Elementary School in Tacoma pay big dividends

At first sight, one cannot help but notice the 600 sunflowers growing on the school grounds at Tacoma's Fawcett Elementary School Center for Year-Round Learning. Planted by the student body of 600 as part of a study series on botany, these bright yellow faces are just a small sign of what's blossoming inside the school.

Recent changes in educational practice at Fawcett have resulted in a student population whose academic achievement is steadily growing. For the past three years, student scores have risen, and this year, Fawcett was the only school in Washington state to receive the coveted Distinguished School Award from the U.S. Department of Education.

Four years ago, Fawcett wouldn't have had a chance of receiving such an honor. Situated in a working-class residential community on the east side of Tacoma, Fawcett Elementary is a large urban school with a history of low student performance. More than 60 percent of the students at Fawcett receive free or reduced-price lunch. Nearly half come from one-parent families. A high percentage come from non-English speaking homes. For these at-risk students, low test scores were the norm. But Fawcett staff weren't willing to accept that. They decided to do something about it.

Four major changes ensued: establishing a year-round calendar, incorporating "multiple intelligences" training, instituting a cross-curriculum emphasis on literacy, and developing an early-childhood education program designed to help disadvantaged students.

The most drastic of these changes was reorganizing the school calendar to include four quarters, running from the beginning of September through mid-July. This was no easy task.

"We spent two to three years getting ready for it," says Stephanie Twigg, who teaches a multiage first- and second-grade class. Twigg credits then-Principal Kim Johnson with being a driving force for the change. "When the school district agreed to consider it, the whole faculty got involved in writing the proposal," which involved budgetary issues like additional transportation costs and janitorial services for the extended time period, Twigg explains.

Barbara May, now the principal at Fawcett, says it took a year to prepare the community for the change. "A year-long dialogue was carried on with parents," May explains. The discussion involved rounds of correspondence and a number of community forums. Because advocates strongly believed buy-in was necessary for the plan to work, staff had the option of staying and endorsing the change or transferring to another school. Eight of the 35 staff members chose to leave. The rest made an informal agreement to give the year-round calendar a three-year try. In the end, the extended calendar received an 80 percent approval rating from the community, and the new plan went into effect.

"It really provides a much better structure for learning," May says. "Kids are more focused. Teachers are more focused."

As an example, May describes a visit to a fifth-grade classroom on July 11, four days before summer break. In most schools, kids would be staring out the window, counting down the final hours to liberation. Instead, May found students completely involved in the

read-through of a play, part of a lesson on American playwrights.

"Every kid was involved," says May. "With smaller closures, the breaks are no big deal. The focus doesn't disintegrate. We are constantly working toward the next cycle."

With the advent of the year-round calendar came the arrival of intersessions, short breaks between the quarters which include optional five-day classes for students. These classes are structured to help students who need a boost and to make learning fun. Course topics run the gamut, from a class on fairy tales that includes exposure to cooking and architecture to a class on botany that involves herbal tea parties and the germination of 600 flowers. These sessions have been popular with students and with teachers, who receive additional opportunities to collaborate with other instructors, test new methods, or cover new subject areas, as well as earn extra income.

The second big change at Fawcett involved helping students to develop multiple skills in all areas of academic focus. Based on Howard Gardner's theory of "multiple intelligences," this approach emphasizes the education of the whole child, encouraging the use of multiple intelligence skills. Classrooms use centers, materials, and activities that draw upon the musical, kinesthetic, visual, verbal, logical, and interpersonal intelligence skills in learning. As part of a study on Native American history, a first- and second-grade class read historical accounts of Indian life and studied the cultural significance of animal symbols, incorporating that learning in the making of painted totem poles and button blankets. They built and played drums. They reenacted an Indian myth about a boy who exchanges dance lessons with a group of killer whales.

Fawcett's cross-curriculum literacy program encourages students to learn reading and writing skills in all their classes. Children are challenged to discuss, evaluate, and extend their reading experiences, whether the subject is history, science, or PE. In a class taught during one of Fawcett's intersessions, for example, a PE teacher decided to incorporate an emphasis on literacy. With a course focus on teamwork, students not only played team sports, but they also were required to do research and write a report on a famous sports figure who embodied good team sportsmanship. The instructor even managed to work this theme into the games the children played. Students were required to critique each other on sportsmanship and compare their behavior to that of their role models. In this and other classes, a written answer is preferable to a checked box, and process is emphasized as much as final output.

The last of Fawcett's major changes involved developing an early-childhood intervention program to help disadvantaged students as they enter school. As part of this program, the staff identifies students who may need extra attention and then employs accelerated teaching and learning methods to help them keep up with other students. Two afternoons a week, additional enrichment classes are offered in which students are grouped based on a successful educational inclusion model. Principal May explains: "For every three students, there's a model student. This exemplary student is teamed up with the needy students. Why? Because kids learn best from each other."

Parent involvement is an integral part of the childhood development program. In fact, on Friday afternoons, kindergartners are dismissed and parents attend school. At these Friday afternoon sessions, guest speakers make presentations on parenting skills, health issues, and other educational subjects. An evening program for the whole family supplements the Friday afternoon program and has become a popular fixture at Fawcett. Recent evening gatherings have featured visiting authors who read from their works, a play produced by the Parks Department, a humorist who delivered a lecture on parenting, learning games for kids, and a huge spaghetti feed to nourish bodies as well as minds.

Title I funding has helped to make all of the changes at Fawcett possible. Says May, "Title I is the backbone that helps support all of the programs." Direct delivery to students is key in the allocation of these funds, providing additional personnel in the classrooms as well as

enrichment programs at the school. For instance, Title I funding has been used to support the early-childhood development program. This includes not only the additional classroom activities and parent programs mentioned earlier, but a two-week Jump Start class for students who can benefit from a two-week refresher course before the normal school year begins. Additionally, costs associated with Fawcett's intersession program are offset by Title I funds so that these classes are accessible to all students.

If there was any doubt about instituting changes at Fawcett four years ago, little remains today. In 1996, the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) revealed that Fawcett fourth-graders had risen from the 30th to the 48th percentile in reading, from the 28th to the 45th percentile in language, and from the 19th to the 42nd percentile in math in just three years.

Student performance is up. Parents are pleased. And teacher morale is at an all-time high.

But Fawcett staff members aren't ready to sit back and rest on their laurels. This past year, the school not only continued the work begun in 1994, but it also initiated a long-term school improvement process developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Called Onward To Excellence (OTE), the process is "the glue that holds all the components together," May says. As part of the research-based OTE process, the school continues to monitor and assess progress in student learning to make sure that each and every student at Fawcett blossoms successfully.

—Joyce Riha Linik

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SCHEDULING ALTERNATIVES: OPTIONS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Year-Round Education

Year-Round Education

What's It All About?

Communities are often motivated to select year-round calendars due to booming student enrollment and a lack of funding to construct new school buildings. Even though year-round education may seem like an educational innovation, it has actually been around for quite some time. At the beginning of this century, population centers such as New York and Baltimore were sites of year-round education programs. A shift in societal needs, coupled with a largely agrarian society, altered the school calendar and made it what it is today (White, 1995; Dlugosh, 1994; Bradford, 1993). Because we are no longer bound to agrarian calendars, many educators now feel that rearranging or even extending the school year can increase opportunities and better achievement for all students (White, 1995). There are about a dozen districts divided among the Northwest states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington that have at least one school currently using a year-round/modified calendar, but it is not a widespread trend at this time.

To fully appreciate year-round education, it helps to understand some of the different formats it can accommodate. Generally, on a year-round calendar, students attend school for a prescribed length of time (this can be 45, 60, or 90 days), and then have a vacation, often referred to as an intercession. This break commonly lasts 15 days, but can be as long as 20, 30, or even 40 days. Some of the more common configurations are: 45 days on—15 days off, 60-15 (with most of July off), 60-20, and 90-30 (Serifs, 1990). Student tracks are another important aspect of year-round systems. Tracks are the groups students are divided into which share the same schedule rotation. A school can have up to four or possibly even more tracks, and as few as one, though it is the staggered rotation of multiple tracks that enable schools to combat overcrowding.

What are the Benefits of Year-Round Education?

Today, year-round scheduling is used largely to combat severe overcrowding as an alternative to expensive building plans that can cost taxpayers millions of dollars, though this is not always the case (Schnieder & Townley, 1992; Levine & Ornstein, 1993). Some districts choose year-round calendars because of the benefits it has for students. As with other schedule changes, educators have found that there are numerous advantages associated with year-round calendars. The following list details the common benefits of year-round programs to students, teachers, and the community.

Students:

- Benefit from a more continuous learning pattern, and a reduced need for review (Serifs, 1990; Dlugosh, 1994; Bradford, 1993; Morse, 1992; Levine & Ornstein, 1993; O'Neil & Adamson, 1993).
- Can benefit from optional remediation programs offered during intercessions as opposed to lengthy repetition during regular session that might put them behind other students. Intercessions can also provide a means for enrichment activities for all students (Serifs, 1990; Dlugosh, 1994; Bradford, 1993).
- May have a marked improvement in their overall school performance, especially if they come from a home environment that does not reinforce school learning (Morse, 1992).
- Often feel more enthusiastic and motivated about school (O'Neil & Adamson, 1993).

Teachers:

- Experience less burnout and fatigue, just as students do, as a result of the shorter instructional cycles (Levine & Ornstein, 1993).
- Are absent from school less (Serifs, 1990; Goldman, 1990).

- Spend less time reviewing material they have already taught.
- Can earn extra income by teaching during the intercessions (Serifs, 1990; Levine & Ornstein, 1993).

The School and Community:

- Save money by choosing the year-round model over new construction, and can increase the school capacity by 25 percent (Serifs, 1990; Dlugosh, 1994; O'Neil & Adamson, 1993).
- Experience less vandalism that can occur during long summer breaks (Serifs, 1990).
- See less incidence of juvenile delinquency (Serifs, 1990).

What Are the Concerns?

Of the three scheduling alternatives discussed in this booklet, year-round schedules are probably the most challenging to implement. Saving money by maximizing school building utilization should not be the sole motivation behind adopting a year-round schedule (Glines, 1987). Implementing a year-round calendar is a complicated process that requires the commitment not only from school staff and students, but from parents and the community as well. The whole community surrounding a year-round school or district will be affected. In order for educators to convince parents and the community that a year-round model should be implemented, they will need to counter many old arguments about time in school and present logical, compelling reasons about the benefits of modifying the traditional school calendar (Dlugosh, 1994). Just as important as knowing the benefits, however, is knowing about possible difficulties. Educators must be fully aware of the complications often associated with year-round scheduling in order to communicate effectively with the community and to create a successful program. Some of these are outlined in the following list:

- The initial cost of setting up a year-round program may be high. Renovations, such as extra storage and air conditioning, are a must in order for the program to run smoothly (Serifs, 1990).
- Some of the savings resulting from year-round programs will be offset by increased district costs, such as more school office staff or additional teaching staff (Serifs, 1990).
- There will be less time for large-scale cleaning and maintenance (Serifs, 1990).
- There will be more wear and tear on the building (Serifs, 1990).
- The scheduling process itself is quite complex and will need careful management (Goldman, 1990).
- Unless the school is using a single track plan, every school function that occurs, including parent conferences, faculty meetings, and open houses, will have to be done more than once because one segment of the school population will always be gone (Goldman, 1990; Moore, 1992).
- Careful coordination with district specialist services (i.e., speech therapists, occupational therapists, or other consultants) will be necessary, as most of them do not normally work with students over the summer (Moore, 1992).
- Parents may become frustrated if their children do not have common vacation times (Levine & Ornstein, 1993; O'Neil & Adamson, 1993).
- Multiple-track systems require extensive packing between sessions as classrooms are often shared (O'Neil & Adamson, 1993).
- Continuing education coursework may be difficult for teachers to pursue.

Implementation Ideas

Because of the complexity of implementing a year-round schedule, it is important to be aware of several suggested steps. They are as follows:

1. Become familiar with research and information on year-round calendars. Visit other year-round schools. Find out as much as possible about the pros and cons, and how these relate to current district needs.
2. Involve all local education stakeholders in the decision making process. This should include teachers, students, parents, classified staff, and the community. Keeping them informed throughout the process will minimize conflict (Serifs, 1990; Bradford, 1993; Schnieder & Townley, 1992).

3. Remember that it is most critical to have the support of teachers; if they are not in favor of the decision, there is little probability that it will be successful (Schnieder & Townley, 1992).
4. When designing the actual schedule, consider the following (White, 1995):
 - The configuration of the calendar; will it be 45-15, 60-15, or something else?
 - The number of student tracks that will work best with the chosen configuration
 - The number of holidays during the year
 - The unique needs of the school and community; build a schedule that best suits them
5. Provide ample time for staff development. The year-round schedule will require extensive changes in everything from facilities logistics to the pacing of classes (Serifs, 1990).
6. Be prepared to deal with curricula concerns such as course sequencing and continuity, and student remediation and enrichment (Serifs, 1990).
7. If possible, make the program voluntary during its initial stages. Also, let parents have a say in what track their children will be in; give them as many choices as possible (Serifs, 1990; Bradford, 1993).
8. Assure that the new schedule is in line with accreditation and teacher contract requirements.
9. Monitor the program continuously; be flexible and attentive to the needs of all involved.
10. Do not rush implementation and do not make any hasty evaluations. Accurate assessment of the program will take time (Serifs, 1990).

B A C K . . .

. . . N E X T



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Name: Paul Glastris
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From: Karl Alexander
Date: March 15, 1999
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continued from page 1

that occur over the summer months (June to September). They believe gains in test scores that occur during the school months can be thought of as "the school's contribution to achievement," while gains (or losses) that occur over the summer months are not likely to be related to schooling, but to children's individual family and neighborhood circumstances. Because the group of Baltimore children they studied included poor and non-poor children, Alexander and Entwisle also analyzed how school-year and summer test score gains related to children's economic circumstances.

Alexander and Entwisle found poor and non-poor children have very similar test score gains during the school year. However, more affluent Baltimore children continue to gain over the summer months, when school is not in session. Their test scores actually increase during the summer, while scores of less advantaged children typically decline or, at best, stay even over the summer. The authors argue that this pattern of year-round gains for advantaged children and school-year gains for less affluent children has profound implications for Baltimore and other urban school districts.² But while social scientists

know of these seasonal learning patterns, educators and the general public are generally not aware of these findings or of their importance for poor, urban school districts.

Separating Home and Community Influences on Tests Scores from School Influence

More than 30 years ago, the Equality of Educational Opportunity Report (now widely known as the Coleman Report) showed that the gap between the test scores of poor and more affluent children increased from first grade through high school. The Coleman report studied a large number of children across the nation and included both urban and suburban school districts. The report's authors concluded that family factors, not school factors, are mainly responsible for unequal educational performance. Given the longstanding findings of the Coleman Report, and the fact that 68% of Baltimore's public school population is poor enough to qualify for subsidized meals, it is not surprising Baltimore has lower test scores than the nation as a whole. Nor is it surprising that differences in performance grow as children continue in school.

Alexander and Entwisle see family circumstances as critical to children's achievement. However, they hold that the importance of family circumstances does not necessarily mean schools are unimportant or that schools are failing to teach America's poor children.

While schools are responsible for

children's academic learning, Alexander and Entwisle argue that experiences at home and conditions in the community contribute as well. They maintain out-of-school experiences explain why test scores of low-income and minority youths are already behind at the start of first grade, and why Baltimore's school children do not compare favorably with national testing norms. In their sample of Baltimore children, Alexander and Entwisle found that those from poor families scored well below their non-poor peers at the start of first grade. (See Table 1 below.)

The authors also argue that life circumstances that undermine school readiness don't "turn off" when children turn six and schools begin to influence learning. Instead, they believe home influences on children's school performance continue after school starts. Given that many of the home circumstances of Baltimore's school children are far from ideal for learning, Alexander and Entwisle structured their analysis to determine how much of the widening gap in school performance could be attributed to the schools and how much to out-of-school influences.

Typically, performance is assessed at the end of an academic year, and children's progress is measured by comparing achievement scores from the end of one year with scores from the end of the preceding year. The authors note that because this approach incorrectly assumes children's academic growth is supported by the same inputs year-round, the conclusions based on such annual comparisons are misleading.

The Abell Report

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ing. Rather than measuring achievement on an annual basis and using statistical adjustments to separate home and school influences,³ Alexander and Entwisle assessed children's achievement twice a year, which permitted them to compare the gains during the school year with those over the summer.⁴ They reasoned that children learn all the time, in school and out. But while children are in their homes and communities year-round, they are in school for only part of the year. It is the long summer recess that provides an opportunity to separate home/community influences from school influences, because all settings can contribute to achievement gains during the school-year, but only home and community can do so during the summer months.

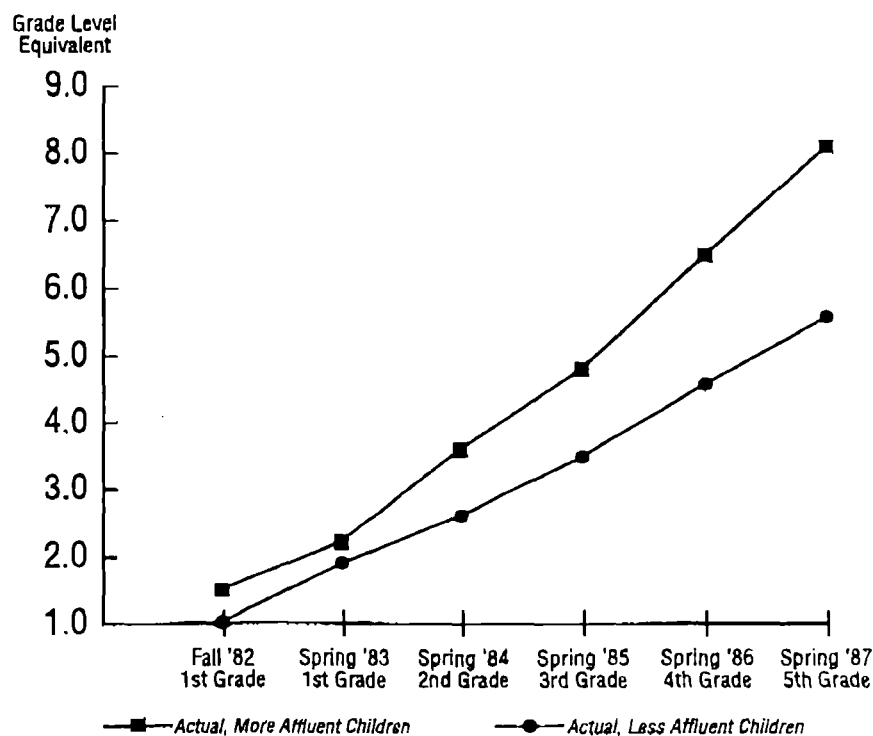
Annual versus Seasonal Testing Patterns: Results from the Beginning School Study.

Alexander and Entwisle's Beginning School Study (BSS) reveals important patterns that are hidden in annual testing data. The BSS is an ongoing study of a representative random sample of 790 children who began first grade in the fall of 1982 in 20 of Baltimore's public schools. Fall and spring test scores are available, so school year gains (fall to spring) can be separated from summer gains (spring to fall) for the first five years of the study group's schooling. This period covers all of elementary school for children

Table 1
Children's Standardized Test Scores
Grade Level Equivalent Scores

	Fall '82 1st Grade	Spring '83 1st Grade	Spring '84 2nd Grade	Spring '85 3rd Grade	Spring '86 4th Grade	Spmg '87 5th Grade
Verbal Test						
<u>Less Affluent</u>						
Grade Level Equivalent	1.0	1.9	2.6	3.5	4.6	5.6
<u>More Affluent</u>						
Grade Level Equivalent	1.5	2.2	3.6	4.8	6.5	8.1
Difference	.5	.3	1.0	1.3	1.9	2.5
% of Standard Deviation	66%	56%	72%	91%	80%	87%
Math Test						
<u>Less Affluent</u>						
Grade Level Equivalent	1.0	1.9	2.9	3.7	4.9	6.1
<u>More Affluent</u>						
Grade Level Equivalent	1.5	2.4	3.7	5.1	6.6	7.9
Difference	0.5	0.5	0.8	1.4	1.7	1.8
% of Standard Deviation	84%	57%	82%	94%	93%	81%

Chart 1
Actual Verbal Test Grade Level Equivalent Scores



continued on page 4

promoted regularly each year.⁵

In this analysis, Alexander and Entwisle use children's annual test averages on reading and math subtests from the California Achievement Test (CAT), a standardized test widely available during the 1980's. Mother's and father's educational levels (years of school attended), mother's and father's occupational status, and whether or not the youngster received reduced-price meals at school⁶ were used to assess family circumstances and divide the sample into two groups. In the first, mother's education averaged 14.6 years, father's education 15.1 years, just 13% received meal subsidies at school, and 72% were living in two-parent households as first graders. Most families in this group are not poor, and include two parents who have graduated from high school. The other ("less affluent") group includes children whose mothers attended school, on average, for only 10.7 years and whose fathers stayed in school 11.0 years. Only 51% of these children lived in two-parent households, and 81% of them were poor enough to qualify for subsidized school lunches.

Alexander and Entwisle's analysis includes only those children with complete testing data over the entire five-year period.⁷ Their results are shown in Table 1 as grade level equivalents. A grade level equivalent of 1.0, for example, means that a child is performing at the level of a beginning first grader, while a 1.5 indicates that a child is performing as a first grader in his/her fifth month of the school year.

"...all children learn more and learn more efficiently when they are in school."

As Alexander and Entwisle note, scores of less affluent children lag behind more affluent children even at the fall of first grade. Unfortunately, less affluent children fall farther back the longer they are in school. In both verbal and math skills, less affluent children score five months behind more affluent children at the start of first grade. By the end of the fifth grade, however, the difference in verbal achievement is more than two years; in math it is a grade and

half. Chart 1 plots these grade level equivalents; its diverging lines show graphically how far behind less affluent children fall as they continue in school.

Alexander and Entwisle argue that this growing gap is only part of the story of Baltimore children's learning patterns. Table 2 shows average monthly gains in school-year test scores and summer test scores separately for more and less affluent students. In presenting test scores in this way, Alexander and Entwisle identify three factors critical to understanding learning patterns of Baltimore City school children.

First, test gains are much larger when children are in school (top row of Table 2) than over the summer months, (bottom row of Table 2). Thus, the first major point brought home by this table is that "all children learn more when they are in school" (Alexander & Entwisle, 1998).

Second, verbal test gains over the summer are larger than math gains over the summer, which suggests that math learning may be more dependent on schooling than verbal learning.

Finally, while school-year gains in each year are similar for more and less affluent children, more affluent children's scores continue to improve during the summer, while less affluent children's scores do not. Less affluent youth tread water over the summer, sometimes gaining a few points, sometimes losing a few, with the largest losses in the first two summers. Thus, less affluent children start a new school

Table 2*

Children's Standardized Test Gains by Season and Economic Level

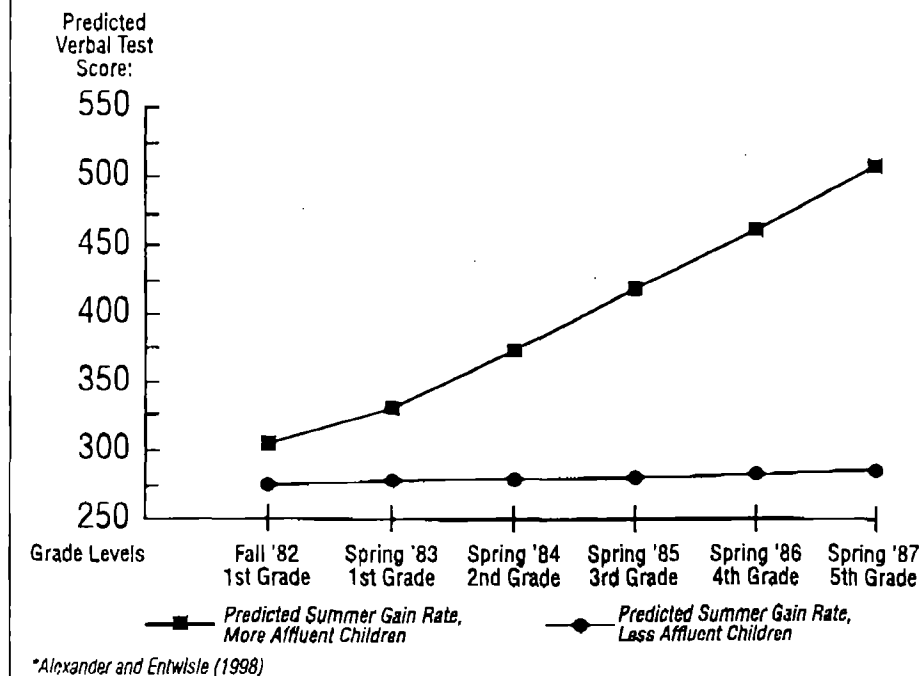
	<i>Verbal Test</i>		<i>Math Test</i>	
	<i>Less Affluent</i>	<i>More Affluent</i>	<i>Less Affluent</i>	<i>More Affluent</i>
School Year Gains:				
Average Gain/Month ^a	5.13	4.66	4.79	4.73
Summer Gains:				
Average Gain/Month ^a	0.11	3.59	-0.14	1.29

b) Scale scores based on 8 months winter (Oct-May), 4 months summer (June-Sept).

*Alexander and Entwisle (1998)

Chart 2*

Predicted Verbal Test Averages Over Five Years by Economic Level Projecting Summer Gains Year-Round:



Modeling the Time-Line of Cognitive Growth

Alexander and Entwisle used additional statistical modeling techniques to support patterns revealed by analyses of average test scores.⁸ These statistical models allowed the authors to separate effects due to gender and ethnicity from effects due to economic circumstances of children. The authors found that race and gender have "small and scattered effects on learning patterns,"

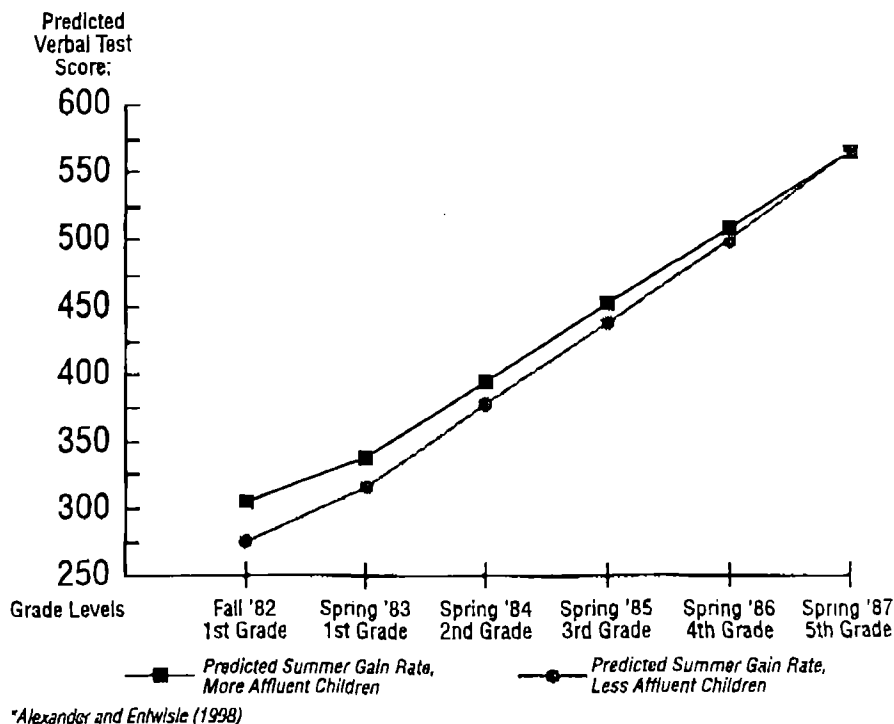
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year about where they ended the previous spring, while more affluent children have moved ahead. Alexander and Entwisle note that these summer differentials are very large: when added over the four summers, "they account for practically the entire gap in scores between less and more affluent children that emerges over the first five years of school." (1998) School-year gains do not contribute to the gap: all children progress at about the same rate during the school year.

Alexander and Entwisle make this pattern even more vivid by projecting seasonal gains year-round. When they apply the summer pattern through the entire year (Chart 2), the less affluent group hardly progresses at all and the gap between less and more affluent children increases tremendously. In con-

Chart 3*

Predicted Verbal Test Averages over Five Years by Economic Level Projecting School Year Gains Year-Round:



ut that economic characteristics of children's families most strongly influence summer learning patterns. In their own words:

Socioeconomic standing is not simply a proxy for race in these analyses (or for gender). And since socioeconomic standing effects on the summer reductions are both larger and more numerous than race effects, we conclude that the summer drop-off has more to do with lower socioeconomic standing than with minority group standing. (1998)

Summary and Conclusions

Alexander and Entwisle's findings reinforce the notion that the early primary grades are the years when cognitive gains are most profound and losses most dramatic. Their research indicates that schooling is important for verbal learning, but even more important for learning in math. Alexander and Entwisle also document that Baltimore children exhibit the same economically-dependent patterns of summer learning found in other districts where the family resources vary widely. Simply put, children from Baltimore's disadvantaged families do not progress when school is out of session, while children from more affluent families continue to learn. Finally, Alexander and Entwisle find "that children of all economic levels gain at close to the same rate when they are in school," and that learning rates during the school

year are much greater than are summer learning rates. Put another way, this research strongly suggests that Baltimore's schools - when they are in session - help the neediest children to learn at rates very comparable to more affluent children. ⁹

"Baltimore City's public schools can help poor children learn efficiently."

The equalizing power of schooling is perhaps never more important for Baltimore than the present. The authors note current conditions in Baltimore put many more children "at risk" academically than heretofore, and that the concentration of poverty has increased substantially over the past three decades. In 1990, for example, Baltimore's childhood poverty rate for children 18 and under was 32.5% overall, 39.1% among African-Americans. The national child poverty average that year for the nation's 200 largest cities (population 100,000 and above) was 15.2%. In 1989, average poverty rates across all of Baltimore's 203 census tracts are classified by noted sociologist William J. Wilson as "high poverty," and almost a fifth surpassed his 40% cutoff for "extreme poverty" areas. These rates placed Baltimore 11th among the nation's 100 largest cities in 1990 in concentration of poverty.

There is a good deal of research that links increasing levels and concentrations of poverty to a whole range of social problems, not the least of which

is poor schooling. But, Alexander and Entwisle argue, even with growing poverty and without a substantial middle class, their seasonal perspective on learning suggests Baltimore City's public schools do help poor children learn efficiently during the school year. While they caution that it is unrealistic to expect schools to substitute *wholly* for parental influence, they also acknowledge, "We will look to our schools for solutions, as historically we have, and as well we should" (Alexander & Entwisle, 1998).

Given that students appear to make up for lost time during the school year, a commonsense approach would seem to involve year-round schooling for low-income children. While logical, research has yet to document that this approach would erase the "summer learning gap," - as some researchers have named it. In the case of summer programs, lack of documented improvement may be due to the fact that summer school is generally less intensive and less academic than regular schooling. Many programs do not insist on certified teachers, last for only part of a school day, and do not extend throughout the whole summer. Few are connected to the regular curriculum of schooling. Unlike regular schooling which typically includes a mix of more and less able and more and less advantaged students, many summer programs include only children who have failed during the regular school year and/or come from very disadvantaged circumstances. When, under these circumstances, summer schools don't

produce great strides in achievement, observers may assume they are unsuccessful. Alexander and Entwisle's research suggests that this assessment may be too harsh, given that such students would likely have suffered large losses without summer tutoring. There is little research which studies student achievement separately for poor and more affluent children in year-round schooling. Overall, however, year-round schools¹⁰ have reported improved student performance, reduced problem behavior and vandalism, and improved graduation rates.

Alexander and Entwisle's picture is both promising and disheartening. Schools appear to be more successful than is generally believed, but they do not prevent learning gaps between more and less affluent children from growing larger as children move through the system. Reforms of school-year programs are necessary to improve students' performance, but just as clear, thanks to this study, is the need to improve summer learning opportunities for less affluent children. While current models of summer programs and year-round schools may need further study, they are clearly the place to start.

- 1 The Baltimore headline pertains to city-wide test results in reading and math over grades one through five.
- 2 For an overview of test scores in other urban districts which show similar patterns, see Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay and Greathouse, 1996.
- 3 While statistical adjustments are often used to partition home and school influences, their reliability is limited, because in-school and out-of-school influences are hopelessly confounded in annual data.
- 4 This method was first applied to understanding differences in school performance and educational stratification by Barbara Heynes (1978).
- 5 Regularly promoted children make up about 60% of the group studied.
- 6 To be eligible to receive subsidized meals, family income cannot exceed 159% of the federally-determined poverty level.
- 7 Test scores come mainly from school records, so the 75% of this sample who remained in Baltimore's schools are more likely to have complete test records and be included in this analysis than those who moved out of the public school system. As can be seen, case coverage drops substantially from first grade through fifth. Under certain conditions, attrition can distort results; in this study, attrition would be a problem if many high-performing students or all of the more affluent students left the study. The authors maintain that attrition probably did not change the pattern of results because it was not highly selective and mainly involved economic standing and race/ethnicity. In particular, there is very little selection along academic lines. Additionally, when achievement trends are plotted using all available scores (which maximizes case coverage each year, but does so by including different subsets of the group at different points), the pattern of results is much the same as in Table 1.
- 8 The authors used a hierarchical linear technique to model the growth curve of their sample. Interested readers may contact the authors for further information or see Byrd and Raudenbusch, 1992.
- 9 The sample used in this research was chosen randomly to be representative of Baltimore's school children. The authors have used five years of data on the same children to document learning trends. What this means is that the learning patterns demonstrated by the sample children in Alexander and Entwisle's research can be generalized with a high degree of confidence to the Baltimore system as a whole (and likely to other north eastern, urban school districts as well). Also noteworthy is the statistical growth curve model that backs up their analysis of average test scores.
- 10 Specifically, achievement gains are most likely when year-round schools offer remediation/enrichment during school breaks and teach new material during the typical 5-6 week "review" periods that exist in traditional school calendars (Ballinger, 1987).

A Bibliography with publication information on these sources appears on Page 8.

ABELL SALUTES:

Continued from page 1

school uniforms make to his own school's character building program?

With parent and student support and a \$25,830 grant from The Abell Foundation, school uniforms were introduced at Greenspring Middle in the fall of 1997. Although there is some leeway, students must wear plain white shirts, khaki pants or skirts. Students who wear baggy pants and no belt must come to the office to get a length of string to wear as a belt. Mirrors are posted around the school and students are told, "Look in the mirror and take responsibility for yourself."

What has been the effect of mandatory school uniforms in Greenspring Middle School? "There is no direct cause and effect," Mr. Bundley says, "but my sense is that mandatory uniforms are making a very positive contribution to our overall program of character building. They are helping to make possible in our school what I call 'uniformity of character.'"

"In 1995 and 1996 our attendance was 79 percent; year to date in 1998 it is 87 percent. School discipline data reflects the same positive influence of the uniforms. In February 1997 there were 705 office referrals [for discipline problems]; a year later there were 266.

"Uniforms help give us our uniformity. They identify us to ourselves and to our community. Because I believe school uniforms have made an important difference in the behavior of our students and in the spirit of our faculty and parent group, Greenspring Middle will have uniforms as long as I am the school principal."

Abell salutes Mr. Bundley for the sensitivity, energy, and administrative skills he brought to bear to make, through the use of uniforms, Greenspring Middle a better school.

Some Recent Grants by The Abell Foundation

Arts Education In Maryland Schools **\$25,000**

Two grants for general support of a statewide partnership dedicated to advancing the cause of arts education as a basic component of public education.

Center on Juvenile & Criminal Justice **\$73,000**

To create a Special Education/Alternative to Detention Pilot Program for institutionalized delinquent youth in Baltimore City, whose special education needs had been previously undiagnosed.

Charles Village Community Foundation **\$11,693**

To provide surveillance enhancements to the Video Patrol Program at the Dallas F. Nicholas Sr. Elementary School in an effort to reduce drug dealing and crime.

Harford Road Partnership **\$150,000**

For the creation and implementation of the urban renewal and marketing plans for the Harford Road commercial corridor.

Herring Run Watershed Association **\$3,000**

For support of the Annual Spring Migration Walk-a-thon and Festival in Herring Run Park.

Institutes for Behavior Resources **\$119,339**

For the purchase of a mobile health services vehicle for disbursement of methadone, primary health services and counseling for heroin addicts.

Maryland Disability Law Center **\$20,000**

In support of the Citywide Special Education Advocacy Project to provide disabled children with appropriate educational services.

Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins **\$500,000**

A ten-year grant for scholarships and a longitudinal study to measure the impact of an intensive after-school arts education program on students' academic success for at-risk students.

Teach for America **\$50,000**

Toward recruitment, selection, training and sustaining an ongoing support network for Teach for America/Baltimore corps members placed in Baltimore City Public Schools.

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the Abell Report

What we think about, and what we'd like you to think about

Published as a community service by The Abell Foundation

Baltimore's Poor Children Learn As Much As Middle-Class Children During the School Year, But Fall Behind During the Summer, Hopkins Researchers Document.

ABELL SALUTES: Greenspring Middle School's "Uniformity Of Character" Program

School uniforms are making a difference

"School crime has decreased 36 percent."

"Leaving class without permission is down 47 percent."

"There has been an overall improvement in the school climate and a greater focus on positive behavior."

These comments from principals in schools around the country where uniforms have been made mandatory, came to the attention of, and intrigued, Mr. Audrey Bundley, principal of Greenspring Middle School in Baltimore. The positive effects of school uniforms wherever they had been introduced prompted Mr. Bundley to ask: What contribution would mandatory

continued on page 8

If disadvantaged students stayed in school 12 months, would they progress academically at the same rate as middle-income students? New research shows that the likely answer is "Yes."

"Pupils Lose Ground in City Schools: The Longer Children Stay in the System, the More They Fall Behind."

Baltimore Sun¹

November 12, 1997

Baltimore schools are not unusual among large American cities; typically, in urban schools achievement scores of low-income students fall farther and farther behind national averages the longer children attend public school (e.g., *Education Week*, Special January 1998 Issue). But what is less certain is whether the schools are largely responsible for these problems. Many factors, including poverty, meager funding, and poor parenting, have been blamed for

widespread urban failure, yet there is little consensus in either public or academic debates about which factors are most important.

A recent study of Baltimore City school children sheds light on this important issue. Johns Hopkins University sociologists Karl Alexander and Doris Entwisle have been following the progress of 790 Baltimore students who began first grade in 1982. In trying to understand how public schools contribute (or fail to contribute) to student learning, they have studied standardized test results of these Baltimore children. But rather than studying changes in test scores from one grade to the next, Alexander and Entwisle have compared changes in test scores during the school months (September to June) to changes

continued on page 2

K-12 School Construction Facts

John B. Lyons
U.S. Department of Education

A National Governors 1989 survey of public elementary and secondary school buildings identifies 103,000 school buildings in use. This one-time survey revealed that almost half of these buildings were constructed in the 1950's and 1960's. Twenty-two percent were constructed prior to 1950, and 29 percent were built between 1970 and 1988.

In January of this year, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that the average public school building is 42 years old and the mean age ranges from 46 years in the Northeast and Central States to 37 years in the Southeast. The age of a school is also related to its size in that most schools built before 1950 are small and have a higher proportion of children at the poverty level.

The best estimate is that on average nationally two new k-12 school buildings are started each business day with the total costs approaching \$16 billion this year.

Since the NCES survey, major changes, other than technological changes, have occurred in some governance and instructional processes, all of which influence the utility of k-12 educational facilities. Industrial Art program curriculums have been converted to Technical Education curriculums, Home Economics has been converted to Family-Consumer Science programs, and Food Services has been altered significantly.

Financing

In 1996, Federal funds averaged 6.6 percent of K-12 revenues. State Governments provided an average of 47.5 percent, local governments 43.2 percent, and other sources 2.6 percent. (5)

The proportion of school bond votes approved rose from a low of 50 percent in 1991 to 67 percent in 1998. (4)

Construction

For the next 25 years, California, Texas, and Florida will witness the largest population growth, substantially outstripping the combined expected growth rates of the next 12 fastest growing states. (1)

Combining the age of the school and the year of last renovation presents a rough approximation of the "condition" of a school, assuming all other building conditions are equal. (5)

Page 2 - K-12 School Construction Facts

In 1995, public school construction expenditures amounted to \$15.9 billion. During this school year, California, Texas, Florida, and New York averaged \$1.5 billion. (1)

In 1995, public school systems issued \$16.3 billion of long-term debt. \$7.1 billion of this was used to retire long-term debt. Illinois, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah each incurred more than \$1 billion of new long-term debt. (1)

The Mid-West and Western regions led the nation in k-12 school construction in 1997. A substantial percentage of this construction was for new facilities. (3)

Currently, approximately 50 percent of all school construction expenditures on average are for new school buildings, restoration and modernization of existing buildings and will account for 26 percent, and additions to existing buildings will account for 24 percent. (2)(3)

The median statistics for elementary schools reporting stated that they provide 120 square feet per student and accommodate 600 students. The median size is 72,000 square feet at a cost of \$7 million in construction. (2)

Today the median middle school allows for almost 142 square feet per student and houses 800 students, costing \$12 million to build. (2)

High schools provide 178 square feet per student, house 865 students and cost \$18 million to build. The size is double that of elementary schools. (2)

Over the next 3 years more than 57 percent of all k-12 school construction will take place in the Mid-West, Southwest, and Western states. (3)

Technology

Internet accessibility is not directly related to the age of a school, but a lack of renovation is directly related to technological improvements. (5)

In 1996, 24 school districts registered more than 100,000 students and 94.6 percent of all school districts registered fewer than 10,000 students. (5)

Only 42 percent of the oldest public schools were connected to the Internet in 1995. (5) By the fall of 1998, 89 percent of all public schools had internet access, and the goal is to connect every school by the year 2000. (3)

In 1998, approximately 89 percent of schools were connected to the Internet, but the degree of student access is not known. Approximately 51 percent of instructional classrooms were connected to the Internet. (5)

Page 3 - K-12 School Construction Facts

Students in schools with the highest percentage of minority students and/or with students eligible for free or reduced school lunch program had less access to the Internet. (5)

Maintenance

School districts allocated 9.4 percent of their net current expenditure for maintenance in 1997, a substantial drop from the 12.75 percent allocated in 1988. (3)

The median public school district employs 12 full-time custodial, four full-time maintenance, and two full-time ground personnel. (3)

School Facilities Data Collection

Thirty-two (32) states reported that facilities data collections are administered at the State level. Five (5) states reported that they had completed an annual school facilities data collection, fifteen (15) states reported that either their data collections were one-time (not annual), or they had been discontinued. (6)

General issues and concerns shared across states centered on the adequacy and quality of school facilities. Issues of quality are driven by health, safety and ADA compliance. (6)

Many state data collections were initiated because of concerns over safety, requirements of ADA regulations, current costs of maintaining facilities or capital needs assessment. (6)

Some states reported that they ceased collecting facilities data because of inadequate funding, staff burden or data utility issues. (6)

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Annual School Construction Report

January 1999

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National Library of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

Introduction

Construction cost information is very difficult to quantify and/or reconcile because uniform definitions do not exist and the point of reference varies considerably. Cost information for constructing a new school may use a bid estimate, bid price, or final costs that may include litigation expenditures. Most students of the subject have concluded that the pace of school construction, which includes not only new schools but also renovations and expansion of existing structures, is substantially above the level of economic growth. The Department of Education's 1998 Common Core of Data Survey for public elementary and secondary schools reports an estimated capital outlay of \$27.5 billion in the 1995-1996 school year; a 12.6 percent increase over the prior year, and a tripling of outlays over the past decade. The National Education Association (NEA) reported \$29.1 in capital outlays for 1997-1998, a 12.7 percent increase over the prior year, and a 173 percent increase over the past decade. Both capital outlay surveys were taken from data supplied by State Education Agencies.

The reader should appreciate the variable nature of collecting, evaluating, and interpreting these data. In order to develop the report below, I have aggregated the data to levels where reasonable comparisons could be made among conflicting reports.

School Construction Outlook:

The construction of educational buildings is expected to witness a 7 percent plus growth during calendar year 1999. Although an expected weaker economy in 1999 will no doubt dampen construction in general, the continued increase in student enrollments, especially in the West, coupled with continued successful passage of school construction bond programs, insures school construction and rehabilitation will remain vibrant through 2000.

Of the three categories of K-12 schools, middle schools saw the highest level of construction in 1997-1998 followed closely by elementary schools. Total school construction, including new schools, additions to existing schools, and significant renovation projects completed, required almost \$12.7 billion. While new school construction continued to be the most visible element, it amounted to only 49 percent of all school construction, followed by additions at 29 percent and 22

percent for modernization. By the year 2000, additions to school buildings is expected to rank third.

Regional School Construction - 1997:

While it is difficult to identify and provide solid consistent School construction data, an evaluation of regional activities--using the 10 Federal districts as a model--shows that the Southwest (Regions 6 and 9) as a block continued to lead the nation in total school construction, with a substantial amount of construction (approaching 2/3) going for new schools. This trend follows the expected pattern with expanding populations settling in areas where new housing is being developed. Surprisingly, Regions 5 and 7, comprised of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, and Nebraska followed the Western Regions in total school construction expenditures with more than 50 percent of these funds used for additions and renovations to existing buildings.

Region 1, consisting of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont spent major portions of their school construction budget on new school buildings, perhaps because of their greater portion of older school buildings. Region 3, comprised of the states of Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia equally divided their expenditures among new, modified, and renovated school construction.

Finally, the states in Region 10, Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington spent the lowest amount on school construction.

Nationally, some of the features included in the construction of new elementary schools included an increase in the percentage of art rooms, language labs, and outdoor athletic facilities, and a moderate decrease in middle schools of each of these features. New high schools nationwide witnessed a greater percentage decrease in the availability of music rooms, auditoriums and media centers than prior year construction requirements.

Financing:

There continues to be a wide range of funding methods and cooperation between the local education agencies and their respective State Agencies. Currently 18 states require local revenues to be the primary base of support for school construction. The most common way of financing school construction at the local level remains the sale of general obligation bonds. Unfortunately, local bond initiatives continue to have an average failure of 30 percent.

State bond sales, special and general tax revenues are used by 13 states to provide the majority of school construction aid. In the remaining 19 states local

and state agencies share equally in developing the revenues necessary for school facilities.

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Toward Performance-Based Federal Education Funding

Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Progressive Policy Institute
21st Century Schools Project

Andrew Rotherham

April 1999

About the Progressive Policy Institute

*"One person with a belief is a social power
equal to ninety-nine who have only interests."*

—John Stuart Mill

The mission of the Progressive Policy Institute is to define and promote a new progressive politics for America in the 21st century. Through its research, policies, and perspectives, the Institute is fashioning a new governing philosophy and an agenda for public innovation geared to the Information Age.

This mission arises from the belief that America is ill-served by an obsolete left-right debate that is out of step with the powerful forces re-shaping our society and economy. The Institute advocates a philosophy that adapts the progressive tradition in American politics to the realities of the Information Age and points to a "third way" beyond the liberal impulse to defend the bureaucratic status quo and the conservative bid to simply dismantle government. The Institute envisions government as society's servant, not its master—as a catalyst for a broader civic enterprise controlled by and responsive to the needs of citizens and the communities where they live and work.

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expanding opportunity, and enhancing security.*

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Toward Performance-Based Education Funding

Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

As Congress prepares this year to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), lawmakers face a critical choice: refight old battles or break the mold with a "Third Way" approach that addresses the demand for a public education system that graduates students prepared for the new global economy.

ESEA is the 14-title federal law that today directs more than \$13 billion in annual education assistance to states and school districts through a crazy quilt of more than 50 programs.¹ The largest and best known program is Title I, the cornerstone of the federal government's commitment to ensure educational equity for poor children. The reauthorization gives Congress the opportunity to transform Washington's role in elementary and secondary education from a focus on *process* to *performance*, and thus leverage the limited role federal spending plays in public education into a major force for change.

ESEA today is best viewed as a welter of spending dictates that prescribe how states and localities must spend federal dollars but does not hold them accountable for achieving measurable improvements. In the future, federal dollars should be tied to performance and results. With this

transformation, Washington's role will shift from a passive enabler of failure to a catalyst for success. In short, what is needed is a new bargain on federal education spending: *States and localities should get increased flexibility for using federal resources but must take increased responsibility for results.*

Changing Times Demand Changing Measures

In his 1999 State of the Union address, President Clinton challenged Congress to tie ESEA spending—more than half of the \$21 billion total federal investment in elementary and secondary education—to results on five key measures of state and local performance: ending social promotion, improving teacher quality, reconstituting failing schools, issuing school report cards, and enforcing discipline codes.² The Clinton proposal represents a historic shift toward performance-based funding and away from virtually unconditional support to states and localities. But unless it is coupled with more flexibility, the President's proposal risks adding yet another layer of federal prescription on local districts already

burdened by excessive reporting requirements. At the state and local level, there is an understandable resistance to anything appearing to be additional federal regulation. State and local officials want additional resources, but describe the layering of additional programs one on top of the next as “an administrative nightmare.”³

Enacted in 1965, ESEA is a Great Society landmark that signified a national interest in assuring equal access to a quality education for all Americans. In essence, the federal government took responsibility for compensating poor school districts to put them on a fiscal par with more affluent districts. The federal government must continue to play that role. However, we can no longer define equity solely in terms of fiscal parity. More than 30 years and \$100 billion later, the performance gap between low-income and middle-class students remains disconcertingly wide. To narrow that gap, Washington needs to redefine equity in terms of concrete results.

We need a progressive alternative to the left’s habitual demand for more spending and the right’s incessant campaign to shrink Washington’s role in education. Republicans, for example, propose converting ESEA programs into block grants with no accountability for results, or, in the extreme, eliminating the U.S. Department of Education. Too many Democrats refuse to acknowledge that the problems with ESEA programs go beyond their funding level.

Neither block grants nor more of the same old “top-down” categorical approach driving today’s ESEA will ultimately benefit the nation’s school children, especially the 20 percent who live in poverty and are most likely to be in failing schools.⁴ Since 1965, titles and programs have been added, but the underlying philosophy and methods have not been rethought. The federal role embodied in ESEA is still critical. However, ESEA has calcified into a confusing, unfocused, and largely ineffective statute, as a result of interest group pressure, constituency politics, and Washington’s inability to eliminate or consolidate even the smallest or least effective government program. *In 1999, ESEA is more reflective of symbolic attention to issues than substantive solutions. That is why the Progressive Policy Institute believes a dramatic new approach is essential*

to reshaping the ESEA.

PPI is not alone in this sentiment. Groups across the ideological spectrum are calling for substantial changes to ESEA. For example, the conservative Heritage Foundation advocates that greater control of federal programs be given to the states in exchange for greater accountability. This approach, dubbed “Super-Ed-Flex” will likely be introduced in Congress this year.⁵ PPI supports the Super-Ed-Flex goal of greater flexibility in exchange for greater accountability, but believes that this proposal fails to substantively address the basic problems of the categorical approach.

The federal role in elementary and secondary education is limited but not insignificant. While Washington contributes only about 7 percent to total education expenditures in this country, this money is concentrated—although not to the degree it should be—on impoverished areas. However, Washington must do a better job of leveraging this investment to drive better performance. Specifically, this report proposes that the current categorical approach is broken but that Washington can—and should—play a vital role in elementary and secondary education.

States, school districts, and schools are becoming more flexible and more accountable for performance, and the federal government must support this by becoming flexible and performance-based itself. To achieve a marriage of accountability and flexibility, a real link must be established between funding and results. This must be done in tandem with a commonsense consolidation of programmatic spending and an increase in flexibility. In 1965, equity could be measured in dollars; in the New Economy, equity must be measured by quality.

To update ESEA for the Information Age, PPI believes Congress must:

- Introduce real accountability by making ESEA funding performance-based rather than a guaranteed source of revenue for states and school districts.
- Define performance benchmarks for states and localities.

- Consolidate ESEA programs into funding primarily compensatory education, professional development, limited English proficient students, and innovative strategies.
- Concentrate ESEA funding on impoverished areas where schools are most likely to be in distress.
- Terminate funding for states and districts consistently failing to meet established benchmarks.

With this new role, Washington should be more active

in benchmarking quality and measuring performance. It should do less micro-managing of how local school officials raise their students and teachers to higher performance levels. The federal government should get out of the business of accounting for programmatic inputs and instead focus more strategically on empowering citizens with information, setting broad standards and goals, measuring and comparing results, and researching effective strategies for improvement.

In the New Economy, knowledge-intensive jobs are increasingly the norm. As Robert Atkinson and Randolph Court wrote recently, "Since 1969, virtually all jobs lost in goods production and distribution sectors have been replaced by office jobs."⁶ In the past, students at the bottom-end of America's education system were not learning advanced skills and knowledge. This reality was papered over by—and to some degree *driven* by—an abundance of unskilled and low-skill jobs. The economy lent itself to schools that were, in the words of Urban League President Hugh Price, "expected to educate a small percentage of supposedly bright kids extremely well [while paying] scant attention to those who struggled academically."⁷ The Old Economy didn't demand a large number of highly educated workers. The New Economy demands all students be competent learners if they are to thrive in this new era.

The federal government should get out of the business of accounting for programmatic inputs and instead focus more strategically on empowering citizens with information, setting broad standards and goals, measuring and comparing results, and researching effective strategies for school improvement.

ESEA: Then and Now

When ESEA was passed in 1965 it was landmark legislation, codifying the federal role and national interest in ensuring quality education for all students. Prior to 1965, impoverished students and students of color had been denied access to quality education and a chance to become upwardly mobile in the economy.

Before 1965, Congress had passed smaller bills to aid education—the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 for vocational education,

Impact Aid in 1950, and the National Defense Education Act of 1958. Resistance arising from segregation, and the participation of private and religious schools, however, prevented large-scale federal assistance to elementary and secondary schools. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 helped alleviate the racial issues and ESEA was passed the following year.⁸

ESEA has evolved into a hodgepodge. As a whole, it appears to address different and complementary needs. In addition to the Title I program, there are programs for technology, migrant students, women's educational equity, teacher professional development, civics education, foreign languages, gifted and talented children, arts in education, native American and native Hawaiian children, and various demonstration projects.

Funding is distributed one of two ways: by formula or by competitive grants. Formula programs send money to states and school districts based on certain factors, for example, overall number of students or the number of poor students. Competitive grants are awarded based on an application and selection process.

Besides Title I, the larger programs include the Impact Aid program (\$864 million) compensating school districts that lose property tax revenue because they host federal buildings or installations, such as military bases. The Safe and Drug-

Toward Performance-Based Federal Education Funding

Free Schools program (\$566 million) targets violence and substance abuse prevention. There is also a professional development title (\$335 million), and the Title VI 'block-grant' program (\$375 million), which now also includes last year's class-size reduction initiative (\$1.2 billion). One title is devoted to technology (\$698 million) and another to bilingual education (\$380 million). School construction is even given a title, although it was only funded briefly before the funding was rescinded.⁹

In short, Washington has created a program to address every ill on the educational landscape. What this has created is a statute long on symbolism but woefully short on substance. By undertaking so many challenges through ESEA and related programs, the federal government has ended up doing nothing particularly well. And, the overwhelming emphasis on process has come at the expense of results.

While federal leadership has undoubtedly improved schools over the past 34 years—especially by drawing attention to the special needs of impoverished students—it is difficult to attribute these gains to particular categorical programs. Moreover, as education researcher Dr. Paul Hill points out, many federal programs and regulations have "weakened schools by putting process before results, caused displacement of goals from serving students to guaranteeing administrative compliance, and weakened schools' ability to pursue effective instructional programs and solve the problems presented by their students."¹⁰

ESEA is still arranged and administered in 1999 with the same philosophy as 1965. Federal education dollars are sent to states and localities through a Byzantine patchwork of programs and formulas targeting different discrete needs and populations. This creates confusion, redundancy, and inefficiencies. It also makes systematic collection of useful data a herculean and thus far unsuccessful task.¹¹ In fact, with the exception of Title I, there is a substantial lack of data about the effectiveness of these programs. In addition, in many states it has created a dependency on federal funds to support state education departments, essentially aping the prescriptive struc-

ture of Washington.¹²

A closer look at ESEA reveals problems with the current approach.

Title I

With annual spending of more than \$8 billion, Title I is the largest ESEA program. Title I is, in essence, funding sent to localities by a formula to undertake compensatory education activities for impoverished students. In this sense, Title I is essentially a block grant. Although 99 percent of Title I dollars reach the local level, the money is spread too thinly, and there is no enforced accountability for results from the funding.¹³ Between 70 and 80 percent of Title I funding is used for staff, and the remainder is used to purchase educational services and materials, increasingly from the private sector.¹⁴

Washington has spent more than \$118 billion on Title I since its inception in 1965, and several recent evaluations confirm that these dollars have failed to close the achievement gap between the impoverished students served and their more affluent peers.¹⁵ While some school districts have made demonstrative gains with Title I dollars, the funding has not produced the intended compensatory effect overall.

Not all impoverished schools and impoverished students are served by Title I, so blanket comparisons of Title I spending to the overall achievement of poor students are misleading. As a result of the 1994 Title I reauthorization, Title I funds are more concentrated on high-poverty areas but still not to the degree that they should be. Currently, 58 percent of schools nationwide receive at least some Title I funding.¹⁶ While 95 percent of schools with a poverty level of 75 percent to 100 percent receive Title I funding, often schools with lower but significant percentages of children in poverty do not.¹⁷ For example, one in five schools with poverty in the 50 percent to 74 percent range do not receive any Title I dollars, and only 64 percent of schools with poverty in the 35 percent to 49 percent range do.¹⁸ Research clearly demonstrates that poverty impacts learning, yet many schools with high percentages of impoverished children receive no

Title I funding. At the very least, considering funding limitations, money should be focused more on schools with the highest need. Despite continuing efforts to concentrate Title I funding, the distribution is still based more on politics than policy. While there are four different Title I formulas (two are currently unfunded); 86 percent of Title I funding is allocated based on the least concentrated of the four.¹⁹

During the last ESEA reauthorization in 1994, Congress also made substantial changes to Title I,

allowing local school districts much more flexibility with Title I dollars while requiring that Title I students be held to the same high standards as other students. States were required to adopt assessments to ensure poor children were making progress, and mechanisms were built into the statute to ensure accountability if these steps were not taken. Unfortunately, as one independent evaluation of Title I stated, "There is wide variance in the degree to which states have complied with the requirements of the new Title I."²⁰

Sweeping conclusions based on Title I evaluations are risky. The methodology of social science in this area is notoriously suspect because obtaining random samples often means denying services to students who could otherwise benefit from them. In essence, a random control group is rarely possible. Therefore, as the massive longitudinal evaluation of Title I, the "Prospects Report", pointed out, "[The] inability to discern a compensatory effect of [Title I] is not necessarily an indication of program failure." While the achievement gap didn't lessen as a result of Title I, it didn't grow either.²¹ Basically, because denying a specific group of children services is untenable, measuring what would have happened to these students in the absence of this funding is largely impossible.²²

However, there is evidence of improvement in math and reading scores among the most impoverished students.²³ Nonetheless, aggregate, empirical results from Title I analysis are not encouraging. Further, independent evaluations of Title I still lack academic rigor in activities that the funding sup-

ports.²⁴ The U.S. Department of Education's own analysis of Title I states, "A review of the evidence provided by states shows that [Title I] plans appear to be weak in benchmarking standards against external criteria."²⁵ Rather than raising and holding all students to high standards, Title I funds too often perpetuate a two-tiered educational system setting lower expectations for impoverished students than affluent ones. And, because a true results-

based focus is not part of Title I, the federal government is therefore a silent accomplice in the con-

Accountability provisions are only as effective as the will to enforce them is strong. In the case of Title I, that will has been weak.

tinuing this bifurcated approach to schooling.

Many analysts attribute the disappointing achievement results produced by Title I to the widespread use of unqualified aides or paraprofessionals in the classroom.²⁶ The high percentage of Title I funding used for staff isn't surprising because education is naturally a labor-intensive activity. However, the type of staff this funding supports is often surprising. Half of Title I instructional staff are paraprofessionals who teach even though they lack the educational background to do so.²⁷ Congress has set the bar ridiculously low for these instructional aides requiring only that aides "have a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, or earn either within two years of employment."²⁸ Eighty-four percent of principals in high-poverty schools reported using aides compared to only 54 percent of their peers in low-poverty schools.²⁹ Moreover, in high-poverty schools, only 10 percent of aides have bachelor's degrees.³⁰ This means that the students most in need of high quality instruction are least likely to get it.

Again, it is important to note that Title I isn't a singular program at all. Rather, it is a funding source for state and local compensatory education activities in many forms. That Title I hasn't shown more encouraging results is not proof that these dollars can't be made to work. With funding based on results, all states and localities would be forced to make Title I work. Ineffective practices, such as the use of unqualified teachers especially for the most needy students, would certainly be curtailed if funding were contingent upon results. Ac-

countability provisions are only as effective as the will to enforce them is strong. In the case of Title I, that will has been weak.

Because the U.S. Department of Education has never demanded results with Title I funding, it has created a sense among many states and program administrators that Title I is an undertaking without consequences. Although states are not required to fully implement the changes made to Title I during the 1994 reauthorization until 2001, it is unclear if this deadline will be met. The Department's own evaluation of Title I describes, "States are making significant progress in developing content standards, but progress is considerably slower with respect to developing performance standards according to the timeline set forth in the statute."³¹

Washington has never fiscally sanctioned a state or school district for non-performance. Sanctions have been levied for fiscal noncompliance and civil rights violations but never for simply chronically failing to educate children with Title I dollars. Over 34 years this has created a sense that regulations around Title I have no real meaning. Without fiscal enforcement of the substantial changes made to the law in 1994, this trend, unfortunately, will continue. Clearly, state and local officials share some of the blame for the shortcomings, but in the words of the Citizens' Commission on Civil Rights, "The federal government's failure to take the actions needed to implement and enforce the new Title I has also retarded educational progress."³²

If simply spending money on impoverished students were the key to improving student achievement, Title I dollars would have generated more encouraging results. Equally important to resource allocation is accountability for results with those resources. Unfortunately, when it comes to Title I, this has been a forgotten part of the equation.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools

While Title I is the largest and most visible program in ESEA, other parts of the law are problematic as well. The Safe and Drug-Free Schools program offers an excellent example of the focus on symbolism at the expense of results in the

current categorical approach. The \$566 million program is a marriage of the prescriptive requirements associated with categorical programs and the lack of accountability often associated with block grants.

The rationale behind Safe and Drug-Free Schools makes perfect sense. Drugs and violence clearly impact learning, and hence, school districts have a compelling interest in ameliorating both of these problems. Safe and Drug-Free Schools is the classic evolution of a categorical program: Identify a problem (preferably a politically attractive one with a constituency) and create a program to address it.

With the exception of money set aside for state departments of education and prevention activities led by police officers (in practice usually the popular but ineffective Drug Abuse Resistance Education or DARE program), school districts are allowed latitude in spending their Safe and Drug-Free funds. As with Title I, targeting is a problem. Because of a lack of concentration, most school districts don't receive a meaningful amount of Safe and Drug-Free money. According to Secretary of Education Richard Riley, "Three-fifths of school districts currently receive grants of less than \$10,000, with the average grant providing only about \$5 per student."³³

No comprehensive data on the effectiveness of Safe and Drug-Free Schools funds exists and meaningful data would be difficult to gather. Ample anecdotal evidence suggests that funds are often used ineffectively and that the program lacks a clear focus.³⁴ DARE America, the advocacy group lobbying for the DARE program, purports to have data proving the effectiveness of that particular approach. In reality, these are studies of student and teacher perceptions about the program and student perceptions about drug and alcohol abuse.³⁵ Actual empirical data about the DARE program show that it produces results that are "marginal at best."³⁶ In practice, this is probably because DARE is most often offered as an isolated activity to kids during one year of school rather than as part of a comprehensive focus on drug prevention. However, political popularity and a vocal constituency has protected

DARE from being forced to sink or swim on its own merits.

This doesn't mean that the DARE program can't work, but under the current system it is not forced to work. Because funding is set aside for DARE in the Safe and Drug-Free schools program beyond the commitment of local police officers to discourage drug use among kids, there is little incentive for the program to perform. DARE, and Safe and Drug-Free Schools as a whole, are symptomatic of problems inherent in Washington's top-down approach to educational policy.

Various constituencies, each protecting and advocating their slice of the pie, end up taking the flexibility, accountability, or often both out of programs. The General Accounting Office highlighted problems inherent in balancing flexibility with accountability in a program like Safe and Drug-Free Schools, stating that while local innovation is one of the goals of the program, "the lack of uniform information on program activities and effectiveness" hinders federal oversight.³⁷

Federal process-based accountability is an impossible role for Washington to play. There are more than 14,000 school districts operating in the country right now. How can the federal government possibly monitor them effectively for process compliance?³⁸ However, granting flexibility in the absence of performance measures does nothing to discourage ineffective practices.

Limited-English-Proficient Students

The \$380 million bilingual education program is another example of how entrenched interests can use the inflexibility of the current system to protect categorical programs, often at the expense of children. It also typifies symbolism trumping substance in ESEA. As with Title I and Safe and Drug-Free Schools, bilingual funding is also spread too thin to make a real difference. In addition, the program has no concrete performance measures and often supports activities that research indicates are ineffective.

Educating limited-English-proficient (LEP) students is an urgent issue for many school districts, but the need is not being met. There are 3.2 million LEP students in the United States and more than 75 percent of them attend high-poverty schools.³⁹ Each year, 640,000 LEP students are not served by any sort of program targeted to their unique needs.⁴⁰ Most telling, the dropout rate for Hispanic students (the largest cohort of LEP students) is about 30 percent; 44 percent for Hispanic

students born outside of the United States.^{41,42} A Department of Education re-

There are more than 14,000 school districts operating in the country right now. How can the federal government possibly monitor them effectively for process compliance?

port on dropout rates stated that language difficulty "may be a barrier to participation in U.S. schools,"⁴³ although it is not the sole cause of the Hispanic dropout problem. Further, and fairly obviously, reading ability is a key predictor of graduation and academic success.⁴⁴

Bilingual education and transitional bilingual education are two different concepts. Bilingual education seeks to teach in one language while developing proficiency in a second. Transitional bilingual education simply seeks to teach English as quickly as possible so that a student can transition into mainstream classes.

The federal response to the pressing need to educate LEP kids is a competitive grant program giving priority to bilingual education programs that "provide for the development of bilingual proficiency both in English and another language for all participating students."⁴⁵ In practice, this generally means bilingual education for Spanish-speaking students only because qualified teachers in other languages are rare. More importantly, although the research on bilingual education is mixed and often methodologically suspect, there is no evidence that bilingual education is preferable to other methods of teaching LEP youngsters English. In fact, the National Research Council's Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulty in Young Children found the opposite. The Committee reported that while most bilingual evaluations are too small or flawed to be useful, "the most careful met-analysis of

studies comparing bilingual to English-only programs for language-minority children carried out by Willig (1985) shows better literacy outcomes in English for children who received transitional bilingual education."⁴⁶

In 1998, two types of federal bilingual grants were awarded, Enhancement Grants and Comprehensive School Grants (there are not competitions for every type of grant each year). Applications for Enhancement Grants were filed by 255 school districts and 36 grants were awarded. Applications for Comprehensive School Grants were filed by 401 school districts and 63 were awarded. Only 15 percent of the school districts that applied—that believed they needed federal assistance to educate LEP students—received funding. The average Enhancement Grant in 1998 was \$130,300 while the average Comprehensive School Grant was \$250,000.⁴⁷ Even a \$250,000 grant can be insufficient for a school district struggling to educate a diverse population of students.

Again, the federal focus on bilingual education as a strategy to educate LEP students is surprising in the first place. It seems the only people supporting actual bilingual programs are academics and practitioners with a vested interest in their continuation. A portion of the federal bilingual funding goes to these researchers who, not surprisingly, have a proclivity for producing pro-bilingual research. As James Traub reported in a recent *New York Times Magazine* article, an academic and pedagogical rationale supporting bilingual education actually came about after its inception.⁴⁸ In the words of bilingual scholar Ursula Casanova, "The program was not the result of academic theory but rather 'the result of political strategies designed to funnel federal poverty funds to the Southwest.'"⁴⁹ Boston University professor and bilingual researcher Christine Rossell and Keith Baker, who has directed bilingual studies for the U.S. Department of Education, conducted an exhaustive review of evaluations of 300 bilingual education programs and failed to find any studies showing bilingual education to be superior to other methods of teaching English to LEP students.⁵⁰ In fact, of the 300 evaluations they reviewed, Rossell and Baker only found 72 that were "methodologically sound."⁵¹ Moreover, a recent Public Agenda Foundation report found that

66 percent of Hispanic parents and 75 percent of foreign-born parents reject the idea of bilingual education, preferring English immersion.⁵² As a practical matter, bilingual education just isn't an option in many school districts. Some school districts now serve students speaking more than 100 native languages.⁵³

Voters in California recently gave their verdict on bilingual education by passing Proposition 227. That referendum shifted the focus from bilingual education to teaching children English as quickly as possible. Although, it is too soon to gauge the actual effect of 227 on school districts, changes are clearly afoot.⁵⁴ A similar initiative is on the ballot in Arizona. Meanwhile, states receiving little or no bilingual funding are coping with influxes of LEP students, and America's school-aged population continues to get more diverse.

As a result of demographic and statutory changes, school districts and states nationwide are dealing with a rapidly changing and in many cases, unaddressed situation when it comes to LEP students. However, they are supported by a static and symbolic, rather than substantive, federal role.

Teacher Quality, Class Size, and Student Achievement

Reducing class size is obviously not a bad idea. Quite the contrary, substantial research indicates it can be an effective strategy to raise student achievement. As the Progressive Policy Institute has pointed out, all things being equal, teachers are probably more effective with fewer students.⁵⁵ However, achieving smaller class sizes is often problematic. For example, as a result of a teacher shortage exacerbated by a mandate to reduce class sizes, 21,000 of California's 250,000 teachers are working with emergency permits in the states most troubled schools.⁵⁶

Now a part of Title VI of ESEA, President Clinton's \$1.2 billion class-size reduction initiative, passed in 1998, illustrates Washington's obsession with means at the expense of results and also the triumph of symbolism over sound

policy. The goal of raising student achievement is reasonable and essential; however, mandating localities do it by reducing class sizes precludes local decision-making and unnecessarily involves Washington in local affairs.

During the debate on the Clinton class-size proposal, it was correctly pointed out that research indicates that teacher quality is a more important variable in student achievement than class size. If

fact, this crucial finding was even buried in the U.S. Department of Education's

Instead of allowing states and localities flexibility to address their own particular circumstances, Washington created a one-size-fits all approach.

own literature on the issue.⁵⁷ The Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulty in Young Children stated, "[Although] the quantity and quality of teacher-student interactions are necessarily limited by large class size, best instructional practices are not guaranteed by small class size."⁵⁸ In fact, one study of 1000 school districts found that every dollar spent on more highly qualified teachers "netted greater improvements in student achievement than did any other use of school resources."⁵⁹ Yet despite this, the class-size initiative allows only 15 percent of the \$1.2 billion appropriation to be spent on professional development. Instead of allowing states and localities flexibility to address their own particular circumstances, Washington created a one-size-fits all approach. Considering the crucial importance of teacher quality, the current shortage of qualified teachers, and the fact that class-size is not a universal problem throughout the country, shouldn't states and localities have the option of using more than 15 percent of this funding on professional development?

Smaller Programs

The smaller programs within ESEA are equally as prescriptive, ineffective, or irrelevant as the larger ones. They are just less expensive. Particularly in Title X—the Programs of National Significance portion of the law—there are numerous programs for such activities as reading, writing, civics, arts, gifted and talented students, and various dem-

onstration projects. Individually these programs are small and seemingly innocuous; collectively they add up to more than \$200 million in annual spending.

Because of political popularity and constituency politics, Congress refuses to eliminate or redirect funding from even programs that the Department of Education says ought to go. For example, each year the Department recommends

eliminating funding for the Ellender Fellowships, a small program tucked into

Title X of ESEA. The Ellender funding, \$1.5 million last year, goes to the Alexandria, Virginia-based Close-Up Foundation. Close-Up is an excellent program that brings students from all 50 states and many U.S. territories to Washington for a week during the school year to learn about American government.

The Ellender Fellowships were established to provide scholarships for low-income students to attend Close-Up. However, a 1992 evaluation of the program found that "despite a pattern of increasing federal funding for the program and significant increases in private-sector support for the Close-Up Foundation, the number of fellowships had steadily declined."⁶⁰ Funding was clearly going to administration rather than scholarships. Close-Up and the Department of Education developed a plan to wean Close-Up from its dependence on federal funds and as a result the Department consistently recommends against funding the Ellender program.⁶¹ Nonetheless, each year Close-Up comes through the congressional appropriations process unscathed. It is but one example of a larger problem.

Fiscal concerns about the use of the Ellender funds aside, it is also an important philosophical example. Close-Up itself is a worthy program with broad bipartisan support, valuable to many students. However, does every worthy activity deserve a federal program? As a practical matter, who is in a better position to make decisions about worthiness: Washington, or states and localities?

The Categorical Problem

In his book, *Demosclerosis*, Jonathan Rauch likens the current practice of layering federal programs one on top of the next without eliminating or modifying old ones to building houses, each atop its predecessor. The result might work in the short run but would ultimately become “a teetering dysfunctional mess.”⁶² ESEA typifies this phenomenon. Its crucial purposes are lost in a maze of programs stifling ingenuity, flexibility, and innovation, and as a result, under-serving the children they are intended to help.

This year, in an effort to address this problem, Congress is already considering legislation to introduce more flexibility into federal education programs. This legislation, commonly referred to as Ed-Flex, would allow school districts to apply for waivers from certain state and federal regulations surrounding federal programs.⁶³ In theory, this flexibility would come in exchange for greater accountability for results. Ed-Flex is a step in the right direction, flexibility in exchange for accountability. However, it has two drawbacks. First, it vests additional power in the hands of bureaucrats rather than practitioners by establishing yet another process around federal programs, albeit a waiver process. Second, it doesn’t address the core problems with categorical programs.

The fact is, categorical programs and specific grant programs, large or small, inevitably spawn constituencies and interest groups who then assume a change-averse posture around their programs. Commonsense change becomes difficult and large-scale change nearly impossible. This phenomenon isn’t unique to ESEA. A look through the federal tax code or agriculture subsidies reveals parallel trends. It is also a practice that is not unique to either political party. Creating programs with nebulous purposes and no accountability has long been a bipartisan activ-

ity. A side effect of this proliferation of programs has been the accompanying thin dispersal of funds, as is the case with ESEA.

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We can’t expect schools and school districts to be flexible and innovative while supporting them through an outdated, static funding system.

ESEA in the New Economy: Toward a Results-Based Partnership

In the New Economy, the federal government should play the role of investor and catalyst rather than “command and control” manager. National benchmarks should be set, and Washington should empower states and localities to progress toward them. Most importantly, Washington should not use its resources to drive and support ineffective practices and should not subsidize failure.

Ideally, state and school district performance should be measured against national benchmarks. Presidents Bush and Clinton both tried to take commonsense steps toward creating a national framework of standards and assessments. In his 1997 State of the Union address, President Clinton proposed voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and in 8th grade mathematics. The President hoped that the tests would drive national—not federal—standards embodying what students need to know in the New Economy.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, the Clinton proposal for national testing was killed on Capitol Hill in 1997 and 1998. National standards and a national assessment will ultimately create an environment of less testing for students and more flexibility for states and localities. In addition, standards and assessments create a focus on what will be taught and what should be learned.⁶⁵ This creates clarity for students and teachers and is essential for raising student achievement. PPI continues

to support the President's proposal. However, in the absence of these benchmarks and a way to assess progress against them, states and school districts should be required to demonstrate progress toward established state standards. This is the crux of performance-based support: demonstrative progress toward established goals.

Further, without national standards and assessments, some national comparative measure—for example the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—should continue to be employed to allow interstate comparisons and help the public gauge the comparability of standards. Independent groups monitoring the quality of standards and assessments in various states will also play an essential role as providers of public information and arbitrators of quality.

The federal role in education is limited but not trivial. While federal funds only make up about 7 percent of education spending in this country, to a certain degree they are more concentrated in certain areas, increasing the ability of federal dollars to leverage reform. This is why federal aid constitutes 15.5 percent of the school budget in Birmingham, Alabama, and only 3.3 percent in wealthy Fairfax County, Virginia.⁶⁶ Generally, areas receiving higher amounts of federal funds are also areas where the schools are not delivering a high quality education to all students. Federal funds for elementary and secondary education are targeted more toward impoverished populations than state funds and play a key role in addressing fiscal inequities caused by the reliance on property taxes to fund education.⁶⁷ The General Accounting Office reports that for every dollar provided to each student nationwide, federal funds provided an average of \$4.73 per poor student while state funds only provided \$0.62.⁶⁸ A shift to a block grant simply allocating funds on a per-pupil basis would undermine this role.

In the future, to focus federal assistance on resources and results, federal funding should be sent to states and local school districts with minimal

regulations and maximum flexibility. This should be done in tandem with an increased results-based focus. Rather than a programmatic-based approach to each problem, states and localities should be empowered to solve problems and address challenges. Federal decision-making on specific funding use inherently stifles state and local innovation and ingenuity. Federal funding should be concentrated around a

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small number of attainable purposes rather than spread across myriad programs

with varying goals.

A shift in the federal role toward performance-based assistance will also reduce paperwork and regulatory requirements at the state level. While obviously skewed toward larger states, it does take an average of 50 full-time employees per state to administer ESEA programs.⁶⁹ Paul Hill has referred to this phenomenon as the federal "colonization" of state education agencies.⁷⁰ With consolidated, performance-based funding, states will no longer be required to administer a plethora of federal programs. Rather, they will only be required to meet basic criteria to be eligible for federal support; and continuing support will be contingent on meeting state, or ideally, national standards. Performance-based funding eases the burden on states and localities for paperwork but dramatically increases the consequences for results. Accountability should be based on results, rather than simply meeting reporting requirements.

In this sense, performance-based funding isn't deregulation as many will argue, rather it is a shift in regulation. The desired performance outcomes become the regulation, as opposed to inputs and process.⁷¹

How to Get There from Here

As much as possible, federal money should be sent to states and school districts by formula, taking into account poverty and special populations such as LEP students. Once there, these funds should supplement and not supplant state and local fund-

ing efforts. Federal dollars should not be looked upon as an alleviation of local tax effort. Targeted formulas ensure that federal dollars are going where they are needed without unnecessarily entangling Washington in the affairs of local school districts. Competitive grants, those that school districts apply and compete for, are necessary under some circumstances (for example, stimulating and supporting innovative practices), but are inherently unfair because not all school districts are able to effectively compete for these dollars. With competitive grants, often the districts needing them the most are least likely to get them. Small rural school districts are at a particular disadvantage here.

While there is variance on a state-by-state basis, localities contribute an average of 43.2 percent to public school funding with the states contributing 47.5 percent and the federal government and private sources adding the remainder.⁷² At the extreme, New Hampshire schools are almost entirely locally funded while Washington State and New Mexico rely heavily on state funding. Overall, localities rely on local property taxes, putting wealthy districts at an advantage over poor districts. Further, poorer school districts tend to have higher concentrations of students with special needs and tend to be the most in distress.

It is here that the federal government can play a vital role by providing funds to impoverished school districts to help them meet the unique challenges they face. For example, principals in high poverty schools, particularly urban ones, report more difficulty hiring teachers.⁷³ Poverty and learning problems are clearly linked, as research shows. Moreover, when a significant percentage of students at a school are impacted by poverty, the achievement of all students is impacted.⁷⁴ Students in impoverished areas are most likely to not receive the education necessary in the New Economy; increased accountability for results is most sorely needed. Consistently, when scores on national and international tests are disaggregated, it is impoverished students

who are most likely to be failing in school. Or, more accurately, impoverished students are the most likely to be in failing school systems. The realities of poverty must be taken into account but are not an excuse for failing schools.

It is in these school districts where the true crisis in public education lies and here that federal dollars can most effectively leverage change. Federal funds are concentrated on these districts now,

but not to the degree that they could or should be. *The Washington Post* recently referred to this diffusion of fed-

Federal money should be sent to states and school districts by formula, taking into account poverty and special populations such as LEP students.

eral funds writing that "[education] reauthorization fights have an earthier side as well. They are partly about money—the old-fashioned issue of slicing the pie."⁷⁵

Conservatives will continue to argue that block grants and vouchers are educational panaceas. Since the GOP controls Congress, block grants are likely to dominate the Republican approach—and there are three primary reasons why this approach to ESEA is ill-conceived. *First*, sending funding to states or school districts solely on a per-pupil basis completely ignores the reality of school finance in the United States. Schools are heavily dependent on property taxes for revenue. Hence, wealthier districts are at a funding advantage relative to poor districts. *Second*, simply transferring regulatory control from one bureaucracy in Washington to 50 in state capitals around the country doesn't address the core problems with the current regulatory burden on schools. *Third*, the federal role in education has more defined purposes than simply revenue sharing. Block granting education programs ignores these purposes, chiefly performance goals.

At the same time, the liberal Democratic solution of simply creating new programs without reforming or eliminating ineffective ones is equally ill-advised. By defending outmoded, ineffective, and unsuccessful practices, liberal Democrats inadvertently swell the ranks and strengthen the hand of those who believe public education is a wasteful and ineffective enterprise. The incredible

response to a privately funded voucher program sponsored by Ted Forstmann and John Walton provides clear evidence that the voucher movement isn't arising from a vacuum. Many parents, particularly in inner cities, have lost faith in the status quo and for good reason. Too many schools don't perform. And throwing good money after bad won't alter the political dynamic or, more importantly, improve the schools.

The Third Way: Performance-Based Grants

There are too many federal education programs creating a confusing and top-heavy bureaucracy, but the answer isn't simply carte blanche consolidation. In the words of PPI analysts Ed Kilgore and Kathleen Sylvester, "[Simply] turning federal programs into block grants makes them easier to administer, but does not accomplish any clarification of federal and state rules, or of the national and local concerns that justify them."⁷⁶ In addition, Republican block grant proposals decrease rather than increase accountability. Performance-based funding creates greater flexibility while requiring increased accountability, by giving "flexibility in exchange for achieving defined results that embody the national purpose justifying the use of federal funds."⁷⁷

Federal performance-based ESEA funds should become more focused on underprivileged children, limited English proficient children, professional development, and innovative practices. These dollars should be contingent upon demonstrated results, and states and school districts not meeting targets should be sanctioned fiscally. Likewise, states exceeding goals and states with particularly rigorous goals should be rewarded.

PPI recommends creating five performance-based grants for compensatory education, professional development, limited-English proficient students, innovative practices, and state administration and oversight. Specifically, we recommend:

- ***Turning Title I into a completely performance-based compensatory education grant distributed by formula.*** Building on what President

Clinton has proposed, states must demonstrate that they have a plan in place to identify and reconstitute failing schools; are ending social promotion by identifying and helping students in need; and have a standards and assessment plan in place so they can be held accountable for the performance of impoverished students. Title I funding should be contingent upon demonstrated progress toward established state content standards and more concentrated to better serve students in impoverished areas. Making Title I performance-based does not undermine the 1994 reforms but instead strengthens them. While the use of aides should be left as a state and local decision, the qualification prerequisite for these aides should be raised to a bachelor's degree. Title I should be an education program, not a jobs program.

- ***Creating a second performance-based grant for professional development programs for teachers and other education professionals.*** Again, building on President Clinton's proposal, states must demonstrate that they are taking reasonable steps to curtail out-of-field teaching, and implementing rigorous testing procedures for *all* teachers to improve teacher quality, and offering alternative paths (not simply emergency certification) to attract qualified people into the profession. Performance will be indicated by improvements in student achievement. This funding should be sent to school districts by formula, and the existing local matching requirements should be kept in place. Consolidating three existing professional development programs under the Eisenhower program, Title III technology programs, bilingual education, and the Reading and Literacy Grants program would alone create a fund of more than \$700 million for professional development. This funding, ideally augmented through consolidation of other lower priority programs, could put fiscal muscle behind professional development for the first time. School districts should have the flexibility to determine the specific use of this funding and cooperative arrangements with other school districts and

entities should be encouraged. Rather than guaranteed revenue streams for any provider of professional development services, a market built around delivering high-quality services to school districts will emerge. Local school districts may work with traditional providers, such as regional education laboratories and universities, or non-traditional venues, such as corporations and consulting firms. Fundamentally, school districts should be able to access the services they believe best suit their needs.

- ***Converting the existing Title VII Bilingual Education Program into a third performance-based grant for teaching English to limited-English-proficient students.*** Performance should be based on a three-year goal for moving students served with this funding into mainstream classes and measured by whether students are learning English or not. Excluding professional development, Washington still spends \$330 million on bilingual and migrant education under Title VII of ESEA. This sum should be augmented by new funding or funding from lower priority programs to a full \$1 billion to provide federal funding of \$300 per-LEP student sent by formula to impacted school districts. Providing substantial funding for educating LEP students is a compelling national interest; however, states and local school districts should have the flexibility to teach English in the manner they believe to be most effective. The federal government should not mandate nor preclude any particular curricular or pedagogical approach to educate LEP students. Results, not process, are the best way to gauge success.
- ***Creating a fourth performance-based grant focused on innovative strategies and local flexibility.*** Again, higher student achievement should be the performance measure rather than the methods states or school districts employ.

Rather than individual federal programs targeted at technology, drug-free schools, class-size reduction, etc, the federal government should send targeted aid to school districts to drive innovation. Again, a formula should be used to ensure that funds are sent to districts requiring additional fiscal capacity. Giving local school

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districts flexibility with this funding will drive market-based services and solutions at the local level. Already, private-

sector providers of educational services are working with school districts all over the country. Washington should seek to empower this activity.

A portion of this money should be set aside to create a competitive grant program to support and stimulate innovative practices. By funding truly innovative strategies initiated by states and school districts requiring an up-front commitment of resources, Congress can stimulate innovative activity and help researchers capture data on promising ideas. These practices include, but are certainly not limited to, innovations such as longer school days, longer school years, innovative teacher-mentoring programs, and creating charter districts—districts where every school is on a performance contract and parents can choose from among different schools.⁷⁸

- ***Ending “set-asides” of funds for state departments of education within each program and instead creating a fifth performance-based grant for state administration and oversight.*** Performance indicators for this funding will be based on the goals a state has set for its compensatory education, LEP education, professional development, and innovative strategies. These funds will support state oversight, accountability, and reporting requirements. Reward or incentive money for states will also come from this grant. Rather than state departments of education relying on varying percent-

ages of funding from each categorical program, a separate grant should provide funds to states for administration, oversight, and accountability. This funding should be distributed to states on a per-pupil basis and the states should be given discretion to spend it.

- **Recognizing the permanence and importance of public school choice.** Charter schools and magnet

schools are now an integral part of the educational landscape. A separate title should be created for public school choice programs including charter schools, magnet schools, and school report cards—the key informational component to effective public school choice. Thirty-four states and the District of Columbia now have charter schools, and magnet schools are found throughout the country. The unique nature of charter schools requires federal start-up funding and support. This can be accomplished without hindering the flexibility of these schools or unnecessarily involving Washington in their operation.⁷⁹ A recent evaluation of charter schools by the U.S. Department of Education showed that 59 percent of charter schools found a lack of start-up funds to be a “difficult” or “very difficult” challenge.⁸⁰

- **Sustaining Impact Aid.** As long as most states continue to rely largely on the property tax for a substantial amount of school funding, the Impact Aid program will be an important federal contribution. Impact Aid compensates school districts for the fiscal displacement caused by federal property (military bases, offices, etc.) within their taxing authority. Since federal property can’t be taxed, its presence adversely affects the local tax base. Impact Aid alleviates this problem and plays an important role in local school finance.

Critics will complain that school districts will squander their funds on ineffective practices

without stringent federal control of means. Certainly this will occur in some places; however, Washington is in a better position to demand results for its investment than to regulate means. This complaint also ignores the reality that substantial federal and state process-based regulatory accountability has failed to curtail ineffective

By linking federal dollars to state standards and assessments and commonsense improvements, the federal government can ensure that taxpayer dollars are driving results-based education at the state and local level.

practices. If the past 35 years of ESEA prove anything, it is that a system comprising 50 states and more than 14,000 diverse

school districts doesn’t lend itself to process-based accountability.

Critics of performance-based grants will also attack them as masking cuts in education spending. They will point out that, 38 education programs were consolidated in 1981 into a block grant (now the current Title VI) and that funding for that program has dropped by more than 60 percent since then.⁸¹ The unfocused nature of that particular block grant was more the cause than any inexorable trend of consolidation equaling lower funding. As opposed to performance-based grants, the current Title VI program fails to articulate either a national interest or performance indicators.

Education, especially the education of poor children, is an expensive undertaking. Even fiscal conservatives acknowledge that additional spending is needed, and public opinion is strongly in favor of additional investment in education.⁸² However, simply spending a lot of money doesn’t guarantee that impoverished students are receiving a quality education. At a minimum, the more than \$13 billion currently spent on ESEA—consolidated around essential purposes and targeted where it is needed—would for the first time put substantial federal fiscal muscle behind important ESEA purposes rather than spreading funding around too thinly to make a difference.

Even with the introduction of consolidated applications for states and school districts, the process of applying for federal funds is still too arduous. In addition to the basic prerequisites

described above, states should only have to submit to the Secretary of Education their goals on state assessments and should be held fiscally accountable for reaching those goals in order to receive federal funds. Until national standards and benchmarks are developed, Washington can't hold states and school districts accountable to them. By linking federal dollars to state standards and assessments and commonsense improvements, the federal government can ensure that taxpayer dollars are driving results-based education at the state and local level. Writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, Ronald Brownstein recently dubbed this sort of relationship "flywheel federalism".⁸³ It is an apt description and a new, more empowering, and constructive approach to education policy.

While some are far from ideal, 49 states currently have or are developing standards. Federal dollars should support states taking this commonsense step toward accountability.⁸⁴ State standards are not a substitute for national ones, but developing national standards is a process that will take time from both a policy and political standpoint. In the meantime, it is worth noting that 29 of the 41 coun-

tries participating in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) set curriculum standards at the national level.⁸⁵

Conclusion

The federal government can play a tremendous role in public education; however too often federal involvement doesn't play to its strengths and instead maximizes its weakness. Effective learning happens as a result of adequate resources, high standards, and accountability for results. The federal government can play a leadership role in facilitating these conditions at the state and local level, but it cannot and should not do the job for states and localities. Recasting the federal role to focus on providing resources and demanding results supports the national interest in a strong public school system and most effectively leverages federal strengths. Everyone recognizes that schools must improve, but the federal role must change, too, in order to more effectively support and empower states and localities to achieve excellence.

Endnotes

- ¹ According to the U.S. Department of Education, ESEA spending—including Goals 2000 and Class Size Reduction (now part of Title VI)—was \$13.6 billion in FY99. As to the exact number of programs, estimates vary depending on criteria used. The problem is exemplified by the Department of Education's inability to produce an exact number.
- ² Total federal spending on elementary and secondary education was \$21.4 billion for the 1997-98 school year according to the U.S. Department of Education.
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- ⁴ United States Census Bureau, *Poverty Estimates by Selected Characteristics*, 1997.
- ⁵ Nina Shokrai Rees, and Kirk A. Johnson, "Why A 'Super' Ed-Flex Program Is Needed To Boost Academic Achievement," The Heritage Foundation, March, 1999.
- ⁶ Atkinson, Robert D, and Randolph H. Court, *The New Economy Index: Understanding America's Economic Transformation*, Progressive Policy Institute, 1998, 9.
- ⁷ Hugh B. Price, "Establish an 'Academic Bill of Rights'," *Education Week*, March 17, 1999.
- ⁸ Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education 1945-1980*, Basic Books, 1985. This contains an excellent discussion of the history surrounding the enactment of ESEA.
- ⁹ All figures cited are for Fiscal Year 1999 and provided by the U.S. Department of Education.
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- ¹³ Most of Title I funding reaches the local level and 90 percent to 93 percent of this is spent on instruction or instructional support according to *Promising Results, Continuing Challenges: The Final Report of the National Assessment of Title I*, United States Department of Education, 1999, 1.
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- ¹⁶ U.S. Department of Education, *Promising Results, Continuing Challenges: The Final Report of the National Assessment of Title I*, 1999, Chapter 5, 6.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Ibid. Chapter 5, 1.
- ²⁰ Citizens Commission on Civil Rights, *Title I In Midstream: The Fight to Improve Schools for Poor Kids*, 1998.
- ²¹ ABT Associates, *op. cit.* 56.
- ²² Ibid., 54.
- ²³ U.S. Department of Education, *Promising Results, op. cit.* Chapter 2, 1.

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- ²⁴ Citizens Commission on Civil Rights, *op. cit.*
- ²⁵ U.S. Department of Education, *Promising Results*, *op. cit.* Chapter 3, 7.
- ²⁶ Ralph Frammolino, "Title I's \$118 Billion Fails to Close Gap," *Los Angeles Times*, January 19, 1999, A1.
- ²⁷ U.S. Department of Education, *Promising Results*, *op. cit.* Chapter 6, 2.
- ²⁸ Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended. 20 U.S.C. 6301, Sec. 1119.
- ²⁹ U.S. Department of Education, *Promising Results*, *op. cit.* Chapter 6, 3.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ *Ibid.* Executive Summary, 10.
- ³² Citizens Commission on Civil Rights, *op. cit.*
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- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 278-79.
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About the Author

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