

## 1. Charleston Post and Courier

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### *Education chief opposes vouchers*

By STEVE PIACENTE

Of The Post and Courier staff

WASHINGTON - Using tax dollars for private school vouchers is an idea that is "dead wrong," and would "undermine the nation's 200-year commitment to the common school," U.S. Secretary of Education Dick Riley said Tuesday. Riley, who just returned from back-to-school visits in a dozen states, used a National Press Club appearance to argue against vouchers and to promote voluntary national testing in math and reading. The former South Carolina governor said it would cost \$15 billion to pay the tuition of 5 million children already enrolled in private schools throughout the country. "The last thing we should be doing at a time when so many of our schools are bursting at their seams is to be draining public tax dollars from public education to subsidize private education," he said. Riley said the money would be better spent repairing old schools and building new ones. Riley also said schools that are failing to educate can't be allowed to drift, and that burned-out teachers should be counseled "to leave the profession." The best way to gauge progress in education, he added, is with voluntary national tests in basic subjects. "This is a very conservative idea, so it always surprises me that some on the right attack the president's proposal," Riley said. One critic is Rep. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who believes such testing would diminish local control over education. "National school testing should send chills up the spine of every parent in South Carolina with a child in public school," Graham said. Graham, who serves on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, said national testing would be "the first step toward a national curriculum and national control over local schools." Though complimentary of Riley in the past, Graham said the education chief "has been in Washington too long. He needs to come home and visit with the people in South Carolina." On the voucher issue, Graham said he has mixed feelings, despite public opinion polls that show support for the concept. Graham said the idea "grew in response to public school systems that aren't delivering" and would be a good way "to introduce an element of competition." However, Graham said he would not want a voucher system initiated by Washington bureaucrats. ■

## 1. Talk of the Nation

09/22/97 Section: News; Domestic;

### *Education Testing*

**The battle over President Clinton's plan for national education testing heats up this week when members of the House and Senate meet to hammer out a compromise. The Clinton plan calls for voluntary national testing of all fourth-graders in reading and all eighth-graders in math starting in 1999. The House rejected the proposal, the Senate gave it the green-light. Join Ray Suarez and guests for a look at the bitter debate over the government's role in setting educational standards.**

By Ray Suarez, Washington, DC

RAY SUAREZ, HOST:

This is TALK OF THE NATION. I'm Ray Suarez.

The Senate has passed a bill compromising with the White House on national standardized testing for school children. The House has come out swinging against the president's plan and now the two chambers must go to conference to come up with something the president will sign.

He promised over the weekend that if the plan does not include the key elements he's looking for, he'll veto it. In the interest of simplification I'll quickly sketch out everyone's position.

The president wants to set national standards and various disciplines, then pull up schools that are not meeting them. He sees the national test as a way to easily diagnose which schools are home to large numbers of children not meeting the standard, which will help target aid and attention.

He's tried to take the poison pill of Washington involvement out of the argument by having the test designed and presented by others, and overseen by a board of educators appointed by Congress.

The Senate is far more interested in block granting current Department of Education programs and sending the money and the functions back to the states. They haven't altered the testing plan too much.

The House, meanwhile, wants no funding for the national tests. Under the House bill there would be no money to give reading tests to fourth graders and math tests to eighth graders. House opponents say the test will do nothing to improve the quality of education, and represent the federal government meddling in what is the most local of local functions: elementary education.

What do you think? If like me, you have primary school children you may be thinking you haven't heard enough of this argument to know what you want. And you may wonder how, for or against, your own member of Congress knows so much about your own desires. This is an hour to put some meat on the bones.

Marge Roukema of New Jersey is one of the most senior Republicans on the Education and Workforce Committee and a former secondary school teacher. She joins us from her district in New Jersey. Welcome to TALK OF THE NATION, Congresswoman.

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE MARGE ROUKEMA (R-NJ): Oh, thank you, very much. Glad to be here.

SUAREZ: Representative George Miller is a Democrat from California. He's one of the most senior Democrats on the Education and Workforce Committee, and vice chairman of the House Democratic Policy Committee. And he joins us from Berkeley, California. Good to have you with us Congressman.

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE MILLER (D-CA): Thank you.

SUAREZ: Our number is 800-989-8255. That's 800-989-TALK.

Representative Roukema, why don't you begin by sketching out the basic reasons why your caucus is generally opposed to this plan.

ROUKEMA: Well, I'll tell you. First of all, the proposal came as a surprise to many of us. And by that I mean certainly those of us on the education committee with jurisdiction over the issue. It was a circumvention of the authorization authority of our committee.

However, I'm not using that as the fundamental argument. I mean, I don't want to play, you know, that kind of politics or whatever — whatever way you might designate it, as my fundamental problem.

When it came as a surprise, and I began to look at it, I said to myself, what are they talking about here? As far as I'm concerned, I think a national debate on educational standards is probably all long overdue, but this sketched-out proposal, while it — and it's only a sketched-out proposal — it asks for precise amounts of money but tells you very little about what they're going to do with it or how they're going to implement it. And then, to my surprise I found that they were already putting out the contracts for these tests.

Now, am I just playing petty politics here? Not at all. First of all not only wasn't I a school teacher in public schools, a secondary school teacher, I sent all my three children to public schools, I served on a board of education, the only other elected position I've ever held, and I feel deeply about public education and educational standards.

If there's anything we know in this country, there's alarm bells going off, because we feel as though our standards have been eroded. But I take it very seriously, and when I looked at the proposal I said: what are they making this up as they go along?

Every time chairman Goodling raised a legitimate question, or the people on the Senate side raised a legitimate question about what the proposal was, the administration — the department quickly turned around and said, well, that's not what we meant, or we'll deal with you and we'll change it. It showed how ill-considered the whole thing was.

Now, what did that do? That raised legitimate questions, not only in the most conservative elements of the Republican Party, but it raised legitimate questions in moderates like myself, and even saw many — a good many of the urban Democrats that were concerned about what the true objectives were here.

Speaking now for myself, the alarm bells went off because I said, now wait a minute, I want this to — I want education to remain a state and local priority, and I do not want to set a national curriculum. I have long proposed that, but I began to be suspicious.

How can you set up a so-called "voluntary program" set up by the department without any outside input, and say that you're not — and not be able to identify how you have set your goals and your standards and what application you're going to make. That's where I'm telling you they were making it up as they went along. So, I...

SUAREZ: OK, well, let's take a look at your opp...

ROUKEMA: Wait a minute, wait a minute, so I decided that the real intention here was to open the door widely, not just a crack, but widely, for national curriculum standards and I was not going to sign on to that unless we had full and open debate on the specifics of the proposal.

SUAREZ: From what you've said about the lack of consultation, beforehand, and I understand why that's a problem and the...

ROUKEMA: This is not just about that though...

SUAREZ: ... and the problems with the design of the legislation, as it stands now...

ROUKEMA: Yes.

SUAREZ: ... one thing you haven't said is that you are opposed to standardized testing...

ROUKEMA: Per se.

SUAREZ: ... as a tool.

ROUKEMA: No, no, I am not oppose to standardized testing per se. I really believe and said so in my debate on the floor, that this kind of debate is long overdue. What does trouble me and even some of my business supporters — Republican business supporters who have a lot experience from state to state, have expressed concerns, not that they're not supporting, you know, standardized tests for national curriculum, but they have expressed concerns that we don't know from one state to the other how the achievement levels of our employees are measuring up.

So, it is a larger question here, but I don't want to sneak things through the back door.

SUAREZ: Representative Marge Roukema joining us from New Jersey. Representative George Miller, why don't you lay out the case for those people who think this is a good idea?

MILLER: Well, thank you. I think to lay out that case you have to go back all the way to 1991, 1992 when President Bush offered exactly the same program, suggesting that we needed a national assessment so that we could start to upgrade the standards, and so

that our students could start to compete on a national and an international basis.

As you know, that was about the time when we really started to take notice of technological changes and how they might be brought into the educational systems of this country. And in fact in 1994, the Congress authorized the Secretary of Education to go forward and to engage in this kinds of activities.

The president then said in his State of the Union, along with his 10-point program, that he felt that national testing and national standards were a key component of that effort.

We currently give a high quality high standard test to many, many, many students across this nation, and to see how they're doing. And interestingly enough, those students who historically do fine on their local and state tests don't do very well on this high quality test — national test. And that raises some very real concerns as to what's going on locally, whether or not tests are being dumbed down locally, whether or not children are being passed from grade to grade without being proficient in the subjects at the grade level that they should be. And so, this program has worked its way forward.

Interestingly, somehow this — decided to be sort of a test run for, I think, a component of the Republican Caucus in the House that's decided that they lost their way after the budget agreement, and that they didn't get credit, and now we were going to have some kind of assault again on federal education.

And tragically this is now caught up in that sort of political football, it's not — many of these people, you know, would — had voted to, and I'm not speaking about Congresswoman Roukema because I don't believe this is her position — never has been, but if you start to look at what took place during the appropriations bill, solid attacks on many components of education, and at the same time also opposing these standards.

Obviously, what we believe is that these standards start to drive other actions, and they start to empower parents; and they start to let parents know what is really going on and how their children are doing. Because even in the national test that we

give now, we don't compare students, we simply make generalizations about how American students are doing.

But, the fact is in my own state, in California and all across the country, states are investing billions of new dollars into education, local bond issues, at least here in California, are passing, I think some 70 percent of the bond issues are passing by a two-thirds vote, before that it was 30.

There is a reawakening in America that education is the key. The question is: will we be doing the right things with those billions of dollars? And this gives local districts the chance to measure how they're doing; how their individual students are doing; where they can direct the resources for those students who turn out aren't doing terribly well on the reading test or the math test; and get a concentration of efforts on those.

I also think that bill's a political base for an awful lot of schools that have been neglected by local school boards, by state legislatures, to start to put a claim on some resources so that they too can share in the kinds of technology, first class textbooks, first class qualified teachers, that very often are denied those students most — most often identified as central city core students, but other...

SUAREZ: Well, Congress Miller let me just jump in for a second because...

MILLER: Sure.

SUAREZ: ... we should talk about the utility of such a test, and a body of national results as a tool. There are a good number of tests already given to students between K and eight. And I think if we were with big system superintendents like Rudy Crew (ph) from New York, Paul Vallis (ph) from Chicago, they would be able to tell you — ticket off on their fingers which are the schools that are already in trouble; that we already know aren't meeting the standards; that we know would have problems with their third graders in math or their eighth graders...

MILLER: There's no question about that.

SUAREZ: ... in reading. Is this a tool that is going to have the kind of utility you seem to think it'll have if you already...

MILLER: I think it's very clear...

SUAREZ: ... know a lot of the information it'll endorse?

MILLER: It's very much like when the college presidents decide that you were going to have — have to have a 2.0 grade point average to participate in athletics as a freshman. It drove additional actions at the high school letter — if the uni — level.

If the University of California or Harvard University, University of Illinois raises its standards, it drives a whole set of actions at the local level so that students can then meet those standards because that's what parents expect.

The — one of the reasons the City of Chicago has signed up for this: by putting forth that they now have the expectation that their students and their schools will be able to provide a curriculum that can meet high quality international standards in testing in mathematics and reading has allowed that superintendent to drive some additional actions, such as taking over local schools, reconstituting those schools; putting in new principals; putting in new faculties; changing the way that those schools have been run and the test, in fact — the knowledge on parents that look at some of this as very necessary should have been done years ago, it was never done.

I think that's true. That's going on in the City of San Francisco where we see schools that have been lagging, because people are starting to think to themselves: this isn't good enough. This

test will help drive those kinds of actions, it will also let you know if the decisions that you're making today, in fact, are working out.

SUAREZ: Go ahead.

ROUKEMA: Let me observe something here. You know, George, I don't know. Maybe if you and I sat down and worked on this for a year or two, we'd really come up with something that we could both agree to, from different sides of the spectrum, but — I hear what you're saying, but everything that you've pointed to has been the effectiveness of states and local communities taking charge to empower parents.

MILLER: But, a...

ROUKEMA: ... and that...

MILLER: ... part of that equation, Marge, is that we have a huge number of 12th grade students who can't read their diplomas, we have fourth grade students...

ROUKEMA: No, wait a minute I'm...

MILLER: ... who can't read at grade level, and that's all run at the local level...

ROUKEMA: I...

MILLER: ... this is a way to start to drive some higher...

ROUKEMA: ... Yes...

MILLER: ... expectations because a lot of students have been just allowed to slide though.

ROUKEMA: Yeah, but then you inevitably have to face the question: does this not inevitably lead to a national Department of Education that controls the curriculum? Now, you and I might disagree on that.

I am not ready to make that leap. Nor do I think the Congress — regardless of partisan points of view — I don't think that the Congress for intelligent reasons is yet ready to do that.

In the first place, they don't want that entails. In the second place, it goes completely contradictory to our experience in other departments where we're pulling back and giving more authority to the states, rather than less authority...

MILLER: This doesn't change — but Marge you know that this standard is...

ROUKEMA: ... well, let me, let me just finish this. Let me just finish this point. I think there is — the administration brought on most of its own trouble. Because as I said before, you got the feeling they were making it up as they went along.

Either they were trying to hide something, or someone had not given the serious didactic, rational, analytic approach to this subject that it should have been given. And so, they were asking for enormous amounts of money, millions — multiple millions of dollars going into the billions of dollars, just to administer tests or to form tests, and then administer the test that they claimed were only going to be voluntary. And with...

MILLER: Right.

ROUKEMA: Well, wait a minute now. You can't say that it has any credibility of setting a national — telling parents how their children are getting along nationally, on national objective standards, when one you haven't defined what those objective standards are, and two, every time you're criticized you're saying, oh well don't worry about it they're only going to be voluntarily...

SUAREZ: Well, let's get a reply from George Miller...

ROUKEMA: ... you only have...

MILLER: No, that's not an answer...

ROUKEMA: ... a handful of states that have even expressed an interest, much less signed up...

MILLER: The answer that it's only going to be voluntary is not...

ROUKEMA: ... and the cities are pulling out as they learn more about it. This whole thing was not thought through completely. But, again...

SUAREZ: Let's get a reply from George Miller..

ROUKEMA: ... I believe this...

SUAREZ: ... and then I'll take some phone calls at 800...

ROUKEMA: ... I believe it's because...

MILLER: The answer that it's voluntarily, is not a answer to criticism that you might have of the exam. The answer that it's voluntarily is, like most federal programs, they are in fact voluntary.

ROUKEMA: No...

MILLER: And — oh, yes, yes...

ROUKEMA: ... but then it doesn't give you a national standard that you're claiming...

MILLER: ... let me finish. Yes it does give you additional standards, 'cause with all do respect most parents and most children want to perform at a high level, OK...

ROUKEMA: Yes, of course.

MILLER: ... now the problem is...

ROUKEMA: ... of course.

MILLER: ... that many local districts, and many teachers, and many principals, and many superintendents from time to time, have not been exactly willing to tell parents the truth. So their children come along and they do fine...

ROUKEMA: Oh, I have to...

MILLER: ... they do fine on an exam at the state level, in Louisiana 88 percent of the children passed the fourth grade reading assessment, but only 15 percent of them could pass the national test. In South Carolina, 82 percent passed the local state test, only 20 percent of them can pass the national test. In Georgia the same point; in North Carolina the same point; Wisconsin the same point; in Connecticut it's the same.

This starts to tell you that maybe the dumbing down, maybe the lack of expectations, maybe the stereotyping of children is taking place at the local level, and this assessment will give parents a way to break out of that and say, I expect more on the behave of this district.

This is about empowering parents, not empowering the Department of Education. This is about parents being able to walk through the front door and say, all right now start to explain to me why my child...

ROUKEMA: Look...

MILLER: ... cannot perform at fourth grade proficiency as other children can in other districts, or in other states, and I want some answers to these questions...

ROUKEMA: That rhetoric sounds very good...

MILLER: No, no that's not rhetoric...

ROUKEMA: ... about empower parents...

MILLER: ... that's what's happening...

ROUKEMA: ...if the whole history of...

MILLER: ... all across this country...

ROUKEMA: ... the whole history of...

MILLER: ... is parents are starting to raise questions about...

ROUKEMA: ... excuse me...

MILLER: ... about the how they've been...

ROUKEMA: ... excuse me...

SUAREZ: George Miller, please...

MILLER: ... how they've been slighted by local administrations...

SUAREZ: ... Representative Miller, Representative Roukema, please don't continue to talk. You hear me trying to

come in here and try to introduce the topic...

ROUKEMA: I'm sorry I didn't hear you, Ray.

SUAREZ: ... no, not you Congressman Roukema, but Congressman Miller, you're very well aware that I've been trying to get in here. If you're just joining us, we're talking about the educational standards testing that the president has proposed to the Congress. The House has given him a setback in debating that and denying funding for various forms of the national standardize testing.

The Senate is perhaps less hostile to the testing plan, but is trying to put through other priorities, conferences committees are going to work. Representative Marge Roukema, Republican of New Jersey joins us from her district, and Representative George Miller joins us from Pacifica Station KPFA in Berkeley. He's a Democrat from California.

Our number in Washington is 800-989-8255. Anne is in Frederick, Maryland. Hi, Anne.

CALLER: Hi. I really agree with Representative Miller. I think that any kid in this country ought to get the same education whether they live in Maine or whether they live in the barrios. I think that we need to be able to measure that.

And the only way that we're going to be able to tell that my kid is in a supposedly really good decent school here is actually doing as well as they say he is compared to the other kids that he's going to be competing against to get into college is to have a national testing program that'll tell each individual kid how they did compared to everybody else, and how they did on a standard objective scale.

And I think they ought to get rid of all these darn local tests, which are taking the kids out of classroom time, that — it seems like every year they're spending more and more time being tested, and we should have just one set of national tests that everybody is compared to and compared against.

And, you know, frankly I don't care if we don't really know exactly what they're going to end up being tested on 10 years from now. I think we need to do something and get it started, and refine it as time goes by.

SUAREZ: Anne, one of the principles of American education is local control, and we've heard that, I mean, historians have noted it about American schools since public schools started in this country. Do you think you...

CALLER: Well, I disagree with that principle because...

SUAREZ: ... do you think you'll give up anything by letting the federal government take a glimpse into the working of your school? Do you surrender a piece of local control when you submit your students to a test like this?

CALLER: I worry about local control, because local control is where you get the bigots; local control is where you get the people that started things like the Scopes monkey trial; local control is where people who are not trying to find the truth exist.

I want to go for a national standard that everybody has to debate against. And if individuals feel that they need to teach their kids something more, then they should be teaching their kids themselves that something more. I feel that if your local standards don't stand up to what nationally we agree on, then there must be something wrong with your standards.

SUAREZ: Anne joining us from Frederick, Maryland. I'm Ray Suarez. You're listening to TALK OF THE NATION, from NPR News.

Marge Roukema, go ahead.

ROUKEMA: Well, that woman at least is direct and intellectually honest with her straightforward approach, I just happen to disagree with her — with her assumptions. Her straightforward approach would lead to, without question, and she said that she would much prefer that, a national ministry of education that would direct education from Washington and override state and local control.

Fine, if she's living in that kind of a world. I do not want that. I don't believe the American people want it, and I have never known of any circumstance where I would trust the Department of Education over my local school board.

I can go out and vote for that local school board. I in New Jersey can go out and vote for the funds for that school board, and vote for more money and put the priorities there. That is the heart of our democracy in this country, and I see no reason to change it right here and now on these educational standards.

Do I believe that we are long overdue for a national debate on how we approve — improve educational standards? Fine. I do not criticize the teachers the way many would. Many would accuse the National Educators Association and the State Teachers Association, with their union approach to things, for having led to this decline in standards.

And therefore, they have been part and parcel of the problem here, and leading to a national program like this seems to me to be moving us farther down that old way, which I don't believe has done public education any good.

SUAREZ: Congressman Miller.

MILLER: Well, you know, it's kind of interesting, that this whole notion that the federalization of education or a national curriculum. The fact of the matter is, those arguments are being induced for one simple person — reason, and that is to try to rally people against this program. They know that these standards are voluntary just like they know most of the federal education programs outside of education for the disabled are in fact voluntary, and if school districts don't like it, they don't have to participate.

But, I think really what the previous caller was telling you is that they want to know that their child's education of a world class standard. They want to know that, in fact, their child is really reading at what fourth grade children are capable of reading at that level. And all of the rest of this is kind of an interesting political attack.

I don't think it's going to hold water, it's not going to hold up in the conference committee. I think you have a very strong bipartisan support from William Buckley to David Gergen, to President Clinton, to educators, CEOs of top corporations that believe that this is a fundamental part of the building blocks of high standards, and a world class education for America's

children in the future.

SUAREZ: You're listening to TALK OF THE NATION, from NPR News. I'm Ray Suarez.

You just heard from Representative George Miller of California and Representative Marge Roukema of New Jersey is always with — also with us. We're going to take a short break now, and when we return we'll take more of your calls at 800-989-8255.

You can also e-mail us at [totn@npr.org](mailto:totn@npr.org) or send us a letter:

TALK OF THE NATION Letters 635 Massachusetts Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20001

At 33 minutes past the hour, it's TALK OF THE NATION from NPR News.

Welcome back to TALK OF THE NATION. I'm Ray Suarez.

We're talking today about the national debate over standardized testing. My guests are Representatives Marge Roukema, Republican from New Jersey; and George Miller, Democrat from California. Both are members of the House Education and Workforce Committee, looking into President Clinton's proposed plans for national education testing.

If you want to join us, our number is 800-989-TALK. That's 800- 989-8255. Ellen writes from Strongsville, Ohio: "one of the questions you should be asking is what will happen once we get the results of the tests. They will really do no good unless you can offer programs to help those students who do not make passing scores."

"How will they implement and who will pay for the programs to get the failing teachers, students, and schools up to speed? Another test pointing out failures will do no good without a plan to fix the problem."

And this from Joan Davis Radoray (ph), who's the President of the Institute for Independent Education, which represents mostly African- American independent schools in cities around the country: "the use of tests is the single most aggravating assault on urban youth in elementary and secondary schools to diminish their spirit and educational attainment."

"The National Assessment of Educational Process, or NAEP, has been one of the most positive additions to the testing arsenal because it focused the spotlight away from individual achievement to the performance of local, state, and national entities. In fact, the trend data of NAEP have helped consumers to understand in some detail how state standards are being implemented in various jurisdictions."

"If we're going to have high-stakes testing, we need to provide a solid foundation for the growth of these tests out of strong curricula and teaching practices, thereby providing genuine direction for change in the learning environments of our youngsters."

Well there, George Miller, we hear from somebody representing basically minority students, saying, you know, if you want to have testing to figure out what districts are a problem — in trouble or what schools are in trouble, fine. But this one, which has a higher individual stress, is not the answer. And Ellen in Strongsville, Ohio saying OK, fine, once you get the results, what are you gonna do with them?

MILLER: Well when this was first — national testing was first suggested by President Bush, I argued very strongly that we should also have national opportunities to learn standards, which were fought by the Republicans and others. And I think even including maybe some of the Democrats in the Congress, on the theory that yes, once you did take these assessments — then once you had a roadmap to those students who were in trouble, to those schools that are in trouble and at risk of failure, you ought to then apply the resources in those areas.

And I continue to believe that's true. I think there's an interesting argument coming from the minority community. That is, if this test tells us that our children aren't performing, what will happen is nothing.

Well, that's an interesting political dynamics for people who insist on putting so much responsibility and love and care into local school boards and state legislatures and school districts. If the answer is that those districts will do nothing in light of evidence that their schools are falling behind, their children are at risk of failing, or in fact are failing, then we have a very serious problem in this country.

I happen to think that maybe cities like Chicago, San Francisco, and of course many others that I'm not aware of — but North Carolina is a state — are making a real effort at using high national standards and testing to drive an improvement in curricula; to drive higher expectations by teachers.

You know, one of the things we've learned over the last 25 years is that children are capable of so much more than we have historically asked of them, in terms of their ability to think and to reason and to carry out educational functions. And we've now got to put that to work.

But if the argument against testing is that school boards, when they find out that they're not doing very well, will do nothing. First of all, that sort of sounds like today. But I think what you'd need there is not a different test, what you need is a new school board or a new state legislature that will respond to the needs of parents and children.

SUAREZ: Representative Roukema?

ROUKEMA: Well, I'm kind of laughing here because I probably agree with the last part that George Miller just said: yeah, you do. You need a new state legislature, new governor, and a new local school board. But let me go to make another point, OK? 'Cause I think it's related to these issues as you've now raised them.

I want to have the national debate on what can, if anything, usefully be done. OK? But in the meantime, we have so many tests and so many standards whereby we already know the deficiencies, whether they be in urban education or across-the-board in science, math, reading et cetera.

And yet we don't — are not putting the resources in there. We're cutting back on those resources. It would seem to me that if we want to get our priorities straight, we'd take this 90 — well, over \$100 million, OK, billions of dollars that we're going to put into this — and redirect it right now in the short term at least to Head Start, Early Start, and teacher preparation.

Wherever I go, I am told that they need better teacher preparation. They have unqualified teachers in the elementary schools and in the junior highs. And so if there's anything that school boards and school superintendents would quickly come to assess — agreement on, would be if they had the money, they would put those teachers back into training programs and get them more highly qualified to teach to those standards in the local classrooms.

SUAREZ: 800...

ROUKEMA: It is admittedly a question of priorities. And I think we — there are known programs that work that we're in desperate need of and that we've been cutting back on the financial resources for. And that should be the first priority and then we'll continue to discuss whatever relative merits there may or may not be to national testing.

SUAREZ: 800-989-8255. Jeffrey's in Tallahassee, Florida. Hi ya, Jeffrey.

CALLER: Hey, Ray. We do things other than play football here in Tallahassee.

SUAREZ: Well, that's good to know. You do that well, though.

CALLER: Let me just say: I think the, unfortunately, the topic and the people speaking on the topic sometimes are missing the point, that when it comes to looking at education, that I see all these people are like the old story, they're all trying to fiddle around with the alarm system that's sounding off while the building continues to burn.

I'm a father of five home-school children. My wife and I home-school our children, and I would just say as a general principle two things are completely working against the whole system of public education in this country, and one is: the majority of the people who are presently and in the past who've been in education; and number two, the eroding of the American two-parent family.

As long as those two elements continue as they are, and dig in — the educators and all the people who are in education dig in, and the family continues to erode, it's just a moot point. You can just discuss what you want ad infinitum.

SUAREZ: So Jeffrey, I take it you are opposed to testing?

CALLER: No, it's — no, I'm not opposed or for it. It's just, again, it's — unfortunately, what a lot of topics end up on the public radio system, it's pouring from the empty into the void.

MILLER: I don't think that's what's going on...

SUAREZ: Geez, Jeffrey. I don't know if that's necessarily a policy problem of public radio in particular. I mean, we're talking about something that the House Education Committee has been taking up as well, and public...

CALLER: Let me just say: that's nice. But they've been talking and discussing all these things for about the last 20 or 30 years. That's fine, but let me — to just give a slightly different nuance on this, let's take Switzerland for example.

They don't — 22 percent of people in Switzerland go on to college compared to 50 percent in America. The Swiss people, many of their top managers, many bankers, and people who are very successful in Switzerland, a very educated country, many of them have never seen the inside of a high school.

We have to realign our whole idea of what it is to teach a human being. And as long as the educational system continues to dig in, and all of these other people, whether it's the people who've been in the education system or all these government people — whatever they do, they're just beating a drum. That's all. Unfortunately, it's very unfortunate. A lot of us who know this have had to just go on out and, like my family and I, we've just had to go to home schooling.

SUAREZ: Jeffrey in Tallahassee, Florida, thanks for your call. Let's go next to Tulsa, Oklahoma. Marilyn, welcome. Marilyn.

CALLER: Yes, hello.

SUAREZ: Hi, Marilyn.

CALLER: I agree with both of your guests to some degree. I do agree that a voluntary test is not going to do any good. It doesn't have any teeth. But I think the Congresswoman is incorrect in that all of the control needs to be at the local level.

I'm — I just retired this past year. I'm a veteran of many, many years in the schools in Missouri and in Oklahoma. And I found that this is getting worse as time goes by. There are too many parents who don't understand whether or not their children are learning critical reading skills. This is — this is something that is my area. I can't speak to the math.

But they don't understand that they are not reading critically. And there are too many teachers that are giving extra credit to bring up grades because they don't want the parents on their back. They don't want to have to deal with all of this harassment. So, they give extra credit. A kid — used to be that a kid would copy down an encyclopedia article. Now, they run them off on the computer.

Now, you know, that's not doing a bit of good.

SUAREZ: Well Marilyn, as someone who until very recently was in the classroom, maybe you can tell us what kind of tools there were at your disposal for doing diagnostics? Some people have said there are already an array of tests, state to state, that helps teachers understand which kids are having trouble; or helps department chairmen understand which teachers are having trouble.

Did you have those at your disposal?

CALLER: Yes. We gave the Iowa tests of basic skills. And for some things, it was good. It was not particularly good in assessing critical reading skills.

ROUKEMA: May I ask her — there's no great mystery to this, is there? If you're a really talented teacher, you know who's achieving and you know if you're talented.

CALLER: Yes.

ROUKEMA: You know the children that need extra help.

CALLER: Yes.

ROUKEMA: There's no big mystery there, is there?

CALLER: That's the problem. The problem is in getting parents to go along with us.

ROUKEMA: Mm-hmm.

CALLER: That's the problem. And teachers — teachers really are tired of being hassled. And so, they're going to this dumbing down thing. The congressperson from California is correct. And it's

getting worse and worse. It's scary. I taught in one of the best — supposedly one of the best schools in Oklahoma.

And he's right about kids being able to do amazing things. They can do amazing things. A state test was instituted.

My kids in government took it for the first time last year. And it was just amazing, the difference, because they thought they had to pass that test in order to graduate. Now...

MILLER: And I think, Marilyn, that's the point. When you set out what the goals are going to be or what the standards are going to be, it's amazing how children — how all of us — how all of us will respond. If we decide — you know, if Marge and I decide we want to — the goal is to run for the Senate, we know all kinds of things that we have to notch up and that we have to do and that we have to be proficient in and how we have to change things.

It — that's life. And it's — you know, there are tests in life. It's about getting employed. It's about, you know, it's about the SAT. It's about people notching themselves up to pass a law school exam to get into law school and to pass the state bar exam; to pass their graduate school exams.

You know, people notch themselves up based upon what they know their expectations are. And I have to tell you, I'm a great supporter of local education. That's where I've been for 23 years. But something is terribly wrong when this many children are slipping through the system. And I see schools where they concentrate on children, and you know how many — I mean, it's just amazing how many more of these children we can get to read at grade level when we make the effort.

So something is terribly wrong here, and I think this kind of national assessment will drive — listen, it may be voluntary, but if you think states are going to start opting out of the system when they see other states taking it, and their children doing well, or that — or parents asking: we want to know how our children are doing. It's just, you know, it — they're going to decide to participate, too.

SUAREZ: Marilyn in Tulsa, Oklahoma, thanks for your call.

Go ahead, Congresswoman.

ROUKEMA: This sounds extraordinary because some of the same arguments this last speaker made is what people like myself look at as the dumbing down of our educational system, was not brought on by the parents, but by the professional educators who had a philosophy for social promotion and the need — I've forgotten what the jargon is — but the need for self-respect et cetera.

And so they looked for interactions and social relationships, rather than getting back to basics. Now, this conversation...

MILLER: Marge?

ROUKEMA: ... this conversation, though, shows on the one hand how there's probably more agreement between Mr. Miller and myself, if

not coming to the same conclusion, but an agreement as to what the problem is. But the callers have indicated a wide misunderstanding of what the essence of this question is.

And we're all looking, I guess, at different sides of the issue and seeing it very differently, which just shows how much of a consensus there is in this country, to have a full debate over what are the problems and how much more resources, financial resources, should we be putting into it? And if so, where? Where do we put those financial resources?

MILLER: But Marge, I think a lot of that debate has already taken place. It may be new to the Congress...

ROUKEMA: Think so?

MILLER: ... but the fact is that state legislatures and local school districts are investing, this year, billions of new dollars that were not invested before.

ROUKEMA: That's true.

MILLER: And I think this...

ROUKEMA: And in New Jersey, that's very true.

MILLER: ... test raises — you know, and the interesting thing is when you look at the state exams, somewhere between 25 and 35 percent of the kids meet the state standard. When those same kids go forward to take the national exam that we currently have, where we just kind of compare on a general basis, somewhere between 60 and 80 percent of those kids can't meet that standard.

ROUKEMA: In certain states; in certain states, but not in California and New Jersey, right?

SUAREZ: OK, well...

ROUKEMA: It makes your point. I don't know.

MILLER: No but...

SUAREZ: Marge Roukema is in New Jersey. Representative George Miller is in California. And I'm in Washington. I'm Ray Suarez. You're listening to TALK OF THE NATION from NPR News.

And Paul is also in California. He's in Mountain View. Hi ya, Paul.

CALLER: Hi. My question is: what is the point of the testing? What it comes down to is something that Congressman Miller mentioned earlier in this discussion, which is parental control. And if you find that a school is not performing up to your

standards or to the national standards, you can't do anything about it. It takes years to replace a school board or a state legislature or a governor.

And if you can't move your kid out of that school, then it's tough luck. And your kid is going to be...

MILLER: Well, I...

ROUKEMA: Then what's the alternative?

MILLER: Well, in California, you know, in California, I think many people on school boards would tell you they've been replaced rather quickly.

ROUKEMA: Absolutely. In New Jersey, too.

MILLER: In recall elections...

ROUKEMA: Absolutely.

MILLER: ... and you know, if the constituency, the parents, are going to say: "well, there's nothing you can do," then all is lost.

SUAREZ: But Paul...

ROUKEMA: And superintendents...

SUAREZ: But I think Paul might be making a...

CALLER: ... know that California it is, by law, required that a child with a Hispanic surname is placed into a immersion class, regardless of whether or not that child happens to be of Hispanic ancestry or not. And there is nothing you can do to get your child out of that program.

SUAREZ: So there's no language assessment at all, Paul?

CALLER: None.

ROUKEMA: Well, let me ask you: would you like that judgment to be held in Washington in the Department of Education? Because...

CALLER: Absolutely not.

ROUKEMA: All right.

CALLER: What I want is for my kids to be able to go to a school that will, in fact, perform. And I can't move my children out of any public school.

SUAREZ: So Paul, more than testing, you're talking about school choice.

CALLER: Exactly.

ROUKEMA: Oh, oh, OK.

MILLER: Well, but let me say, Paul, with all due respect, there's parents in school districts all over this state, I mean, I'm across the bay from you, who are moving their children from school to school based upon their decisions where their child can get a better education within a school district. So I'm not sure you're giving us

an accurate representation of the situation, certainly, not on a district-wide or state-wide basis here.

Paul in Mountain View, thanks for your call. We'll have time for one more this hour, from Kalamazoo, Michigan. Curtis, welcome.

CALLER: Hey, Ray. It's great to be on your show. The point of all this is we want our kids to succeed, and we feel that this test is going to show us if they have the potential to succeed. Do we agree with that?

MILLER: Well, it's not just the potential.

ROUKEMA: Not the way...

MILLER: It's how they're doing. It's how are they — are they reading at fourth grade level proficiently enough so that they can then read to learn.

CALLER: Let me take this from a business perspective. If you're a businessman, and I haven't heard that any businessmen are going to be involved in developing a test, but if you were a businessman...

MILLER: They are.

CALLER: ... if you could just — if you could just say: here's the 10 things — 10 things only — that I want my new employee to know, and you went out nationwide with that, because this is what it boils down to: we want the kids to succeed in school so they can get a job. And if they test well, then that shows we're teaching them the right thing.

If we can know how the kids in Arizona do, versus North Dakota, and I'm a businessman looking for an employee, I know where to go. And the student knows what to learn. I mean, what to apply his talent to. The school system knows what to apply.

MILLER: Well, that — Curtis, that's the purpose of this exam. Children come to school in kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and we start the process of helping them to learn to read. The fourth grade exam is whether or not they have now learned sufficiently at a high enough level so that they can now read to learn, if you will; so they can start to acquire knowledge in other areas because of their reading skills.

The same with them would be true in mathematics. And that's the reason that the National Business Roundtable, I think there's 200 high technology executives that have supported this effort because they believe you have to establish these benchmarks so that not only can children work toward the benchmark, but we can tell which children haven't achieved it or which districts haven't achieved it, and we can then make the adjustments.

SUAREZ: But that's where the voluntary nature of the test, which is meant to make it more politically palatable...

ROUKEMA: Yes.

SUAREZ: ... makes it also — undermines its effectiveness as an evenly-applied national tool. Congressman...

MILLER: But you are never going to have a mandatory test because the Congress of the United States and parents and local — will never go along with a federally-mandated exam or curriculum.

ROUKEMA: George Miller...

MILLER: So ...

ROUKEMA: ... I've got to ...

MILLER: ... that's just never going to happen.

ROUKEMA: That's a good example...

SUAREZ: OK.

MILLER: So this is what business and others have decided is the next best thing.

ROUKEMA: May I just say to my business person — the business caller there, you do recall that this was one of the points I made at the beginning, that the one thing that gives me pause to think about this a little bit more is the fact that I have some business people that have raised exactly the same question — people with businesses outside the State of New Jersey who are concerned about the low level.

That's something that we should think through. But I don't think this preemptive strike with an ill-thought out and ill-conceived, and poorly analyzed proposal...

SUAREZ: Well, that's all the time we have for this hour. Representative Roukema, thanks for being with us, Marge Roukema from New Jersey; and Representative George Miller joined us from KPFA in California — Berkeley.

In Washington, I'm Ray Suarez, NPR News. ■

## 1. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

09/22/97; Edition: Final; Section: News; Page 10

# *Congress again botching effort to bolster education*

By TOM TEEPEN

Cox Newspapers

In their different ways, the House and Senate are making such a hash of education policy and **Education Department** funding that the result this year may be a retreat from what is already only a timid effort at national leadership.

The Senate has voted to take \$13 billion of Education's \$20 billion school-aid budget and bundle it as block grants. The change would eliminate, among other targeted programs, support for charter schools, computer technology and vocational rehabilitation, in favor of tossing the money to the states and hoping for the best.

In a few states, the best might happen. In more, the money will be used just to substitute for current state effort or will be passed on in part to local boards for whatever strikes their passing fancy. No broad upgrade in education is likely. It's doubtful that any is even possible from such scatter-shot funding.

More sensibly, the Senate has agreed to the creation of an annual national reading test for fourth-graders and math test for eighth-graders, a project pushed hard by President Clinton as a way to assess performance, enforce accountability and focus improvement.

Participation by states would be voluntary, and Clinton has agreed to have the design and management of the tests moved from the Education Department to the National Assessment Governing Board, a bipartisan creation of Congress with both professional and lay members.

Credit that shift to conservatives like former GOP education officials William Bennett and Chester E. Finn Jr., who see value in setting national benchmarks but fear, with cause, that charging the Education Department with the task could set off an endless game of capture-the-test by education trendies.

Even the modest testing step is menaced in the House, from both sides of the aisle.

Speaker Newt Gingrich, buying the woodsy lore of right-wing militias that the federal government is the enemy, opposes national testing on the ideological ground that Washington has no business in education. The right suspects a plot to pervert children into godless little leftists.

And the Black Caucus fears the tests would mire pupils from poor homes, disproportionately black and Hispanic, in endless and hopeless remediation and thus feed racism. As easily, however, such results could produce a commitment to serious catch-up. The nation is not utterly without conscience.

We are in this grand muddle because of the virtually unique American refusal to recognize a substantial national interest in the education of its citizens.

Leaving the outcome overwhelmingly to chance and local school boards has produced just the spotty results that now drag down national ability. American education is more successful than much of the hand-wringing would lead you to believe, but can we afford what is nonetheless a system shortfall in a global competition that rewards creativity and work-force skill?

Odd: Pretty much the same folks who see divisive menace in any little twitch of "multiculturalism" also push a states-first federalism that all but denies the very idea of nationhood and, time and again, forbids us to act in our common interest. ■

## 1. Osgood File (CBS Radio Network)

09/22/97

### *Debate around testing students to find out if they're being properly educated*

DAVE ROSS reporting:

THE OSGOOD FILE, sponsored in part by Settlement Capital and the American Plastics Council. This is Dave Ross in for Charles Osgood on the CBS Radio Network.

It was not too long ago that everybody was demanding tougher standards for American students. Now it turns out that everybody is still in favor of tougher standards, just as long as it doesn't involve testing. Stand by.

(Announcements)

ROSS: Imagine if you will a balance where five balls marked A balance three balls marked B. Now imagine that on another balance, one ball marked B balances a ball marked A and two marked C. How many C's does it take to balance an A? Drives you nuts, doesn't it? And if that's too tough, here's an even tougher one. Can questions like this determine whether a child is educated or not? President Clinton says they can and he's pushing nationwide testing beginning in 1999. Ninety-minute tests given over two days. Fourth-graders would have to prove they can read. Eighth-graders would have to prove they can do math. Multiple choice won't do. Kids would have to show their work.

Now we all took national tests of one sort or another in school and survived pretty well. But the debate swirling around this idea makes you wonder how we managed. Some conservatives have criticized the testing idea, because that's all it is, just a test, with no consequences for schools or for students who fail. Maybe kids who fail should be handcuffed in front of their classmates and led directly off to the nearest French fry machine, where they'll be pursuing their careers. At the same time, some liberals hate it because they think kids who fail will indeed be handcuffed and led off to the nearest French fry machine.

But if all this is true, then why test children at all, ever? Why not just eliminate testing altogether? You know, the reason we started worrying about education in the first place was that SAT scores were dropping, right? Well, no test, no crisis. All testing does is invite competition anyway and competition is so hurtful. It's like making Olympic athletes race each other. Each should run alone so we can appreciate the beauty of their stride. And why make sports teams confront each other on a playing field? It only causes injuries and hard feelings. Teams should simply practice and go home.

By the way, in the balance problem, it turns out that three C's equal an A. Probably some test designer's idea of a pretty good joke. THE OSGOOD FILE, Dave Ross on the CBS Radio Network. ■

## 1. Los Angeles Times

\* 09/22/97; Edition: Ventura County Edition; Section: Metro; Zones Desk; Page B-2

# *Standardized Tests and More Slated for Schools*

By RICHARD LEE COLVIN  
TIMES EDUCATION WRITER

First it was on, then off, then on again. When legislators left Sacramento last weekend, they had given Gov. Pete Wilson the prize that he had insisted on all summer: a standardized test that would make it possible to compare the performance of school districts, schools and even individual pupils across the state.

Who: All public school students in grades 2 through 11 will be tested.

What: An "off-the-shelf" test—immediately available from a testing company—for each grade. From grades 2 through 6 it will cover math, reading, written expression and spelling. Grades 7 through 11 will cover those subjects plus history, social studies and science. The test will be "norm-referenced," meaning that student performance will be measured against a national average.

When: The State Board of Education will choose a set of tests—from recommendations by Supt. of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin—no later than January. Students will take them by the end of May and the results will be available—for each pupil, school and county—by the end of June.

Why: Since the 1960s, California has lacked a way to measure the performance of its schools against those nationally. For the past three years, the state has not even had its own testing system.

Cost: \$35 million a year. Districts will be reimbursed \$8 per test.

Local impact: Virtually all of the state's districts gave standardized tests this year—but 56 types, making comparisons impossible. When the state picks one exam, all districts will have to fall in line. Those choosing to stick with their current tests will also have to give the one selected by the state.

Language: Wilson wanted pupils tested only in English. Democratic legislators, especially Latinos, wanted students tested in their first language—usually Spanish—for as long as they receive instruction in that language. A compromise requires students to be tested both in English and in their primary language during the first 12 months that they attend California schools. After that, districts must use English exams, but have the option of testing in both.

Other tests: The new test is not the only one students can expect. By January, the state will adopt standards for what students should know in math, reading, writing, history and science. Then a second set of tests—created just for California—will be given in grades 4, 5, 8 and 10 to measure students' progress against the standards. These will not produce results for individuals, merely for schools and districts.

That's not all. In a year, the first statewide test will no longer be bought off the shelf, but will be customized to California's new standards. While that will reinforce the importance of those learning guidelines, it will make it difficult to compare results to a national average.

Still other tests: The Clinton administration is pushing Congress to adopt voluntary national testing—to measure reading levels among fourth-graders and the math proficiency of eighth-graders—beginning in spring 1999. To date, seven states and about 15 large school districts have said they would participate. The U.S. Senate has endorsed the idea, which would cost up to \$117 million a year. But the House will vote today on a proposal to block it.

The administration argues that such tests are needed because current testing programs only sample students to compare states—and don't generate scores for individual pupils, schools and districts.■

## 1. Sacramento Bee

September 22, 1997

# *Hard lessons: High turnover, low expectations plague poor schools*

By Deborah Anderluh  
Bee Staff Writer

There is a week left of school, but Woodbine Elementary has largely shut down. The computers are covered in plastic; the library is packed up. In many classrooms, the walls stand bare and long strings dangle without purpose from the ceilings, snipped of whatever cardboard planets or construction paper snowflakes they once suspended.

The window that isn't boarded over in the principal's office is smeared with the dried remains of a smashed tomato. The man inside won't be back next year. After four years at this Sacramento school, years strained by ugly squabbles with and among the teachers, he has been told he will not return.

In a first-grade class, a man hired in November as a 30-day, emergency substitute after the last teacher walked out in frustration, fails to teach the children to tell time.

In another primary class, a young teacher tells of asking for a teacher's manual and being told it was too expensive, of teachers being ordered to swap classes mid-year, of windows taped shut since autumn, of unusable chalkboards that never get replaced. The teacher points out a first-grader who people assumed spoke no English, but who, it turned out, had been terrified into silence after being shuffled between four teachers in just the first semester.

"Probably my biggest frustration seeing the difference between Title I schools and others is that public education is not equal," said the teacher. "What goes on here would not be tolerated at (a more affluent school like) Crocker Riverside. ... A lot of parents don't realize their kids are not getting the same education."

It is in the classrooms that the pitfalls of America's Title I program, now more than 30 years and \$100 billion in the making, are most apparent. And in the Sacramento region, where districts spend tens of millions of dollars annually to buy special services for low-income students, the problems plaguing the nation's poor schools are heavily underscored.

Here and across California, it is not just family income levels that distinguish Title I schools, but the very education schools provide: High-poverty schools are rife with inexperienced teachers and principals who grapple, burn out and move on. Teachers at every grade level take as a given students who cannot read or write. Districts spend millions of dollars, year after year, on programs that do not work. Or, as occurred for years in Sacramento City Unified, they hold on to large portions of their Title I entitlements, never spending the money on children.

Like Woodbine, a school in which three-quarters of the students come from families on welfare, most high-poverty schools in the region remain mired in the bottom ranks of achievement, their students performing well below the national average.

Educators tend to blame the persistent low achievement on the tendency for poor families to move frequently, often transferring their children to three or four schools in a single year.

But in many of these schools, the turnover in staff is just as startling. Witness Sacramento's Pacific Elementary, with seven principals in seven years; Del Paso Heights Elementary in the Del Paso Heights district with three principals in four years; Jonas Salk Middle School in San Juan Unified, with just two of 30 teachers on staff longer than five years.

"This school seems to be a training ground," said principal Phyllis Westrup, in her first year at San Juan's Howe Avenue School, which last year had a new principal, new vice principal, new counselor and 17 new teachers.

Even with widespread recognition of the problems posed by student transiency, there is little collaboration among districts or schools to establish continuity. Educational programs — in some districts, even textbooks — vary from school to school. It is rare to find a poor school in which teachers at different grade levels get together to align their course work.

For all the talk of revision and rejuvenation that came with Congress' 1994 reauthorization of Title I, which expends \$7.2 billion annually to raise the achievement of impoverished students, the majority of poor schools continue to struggle — and to struggle alone.

"The Title I schools talk about getting together to discuss what they're doing that's effective, but we haven't gotten there," said principal Ann Emanuels, who transformed San Juan's Carmichael Elementary into one of the rare high-poverty schools achieving near national norms, only to be transferred this summer because of district-set term limits for principals.

"When you get a child who's been passed from school to school in a variety of programs, the truth is there's a lot of ... "This child has been in five schools. He's going to be here two months. Why bother?" We get kids for whom nothing has been done."

Teachers will tell you, and research indicates, that the children's home lives have a great deal to do with the persistent low achievement: Poor children are more likely to enter school below grade level, to have sporadic attendance, to have parents who dropped out of school. But the research also makes clear that what goes on in high-poverty schools magnifies the problems.

National studies show low-income students in high-poverty schools score well below low-income students in more affluent schools. Students who are not poor, but who attend high-poverty schools, score lower on average than their peers in affluent schools.

Work given an "A" in low-income schools would earn students a "C" in more affluent schools, according to another

national study.

Parent Colleen Hauk said her son was getting A's at Sacramento City Unified's C.B. Wire Elementary, where more than two-thirds of students are on welfare. So when his district achievement test results showed him to be performing below national norms, she said she called the school in alarm.

"I called, and it was basically, 'Your child is doing average (for our school),' she said. 'As parents, we don't have any idea of this stuff. Without having checkpoints or guidelines, how can you?'"

The tendency for teachers to teach to "the middle" of the class, a common practice in California because there are no grade level standards, has had a devastating effect in high-poverty schools, where the majority of children enter each grade years behind in their skills.

According to teachers interviewed, the state's recent move to lower class size in grades K-3 has helped somewhat when it comes to managing classrooms in high-poverty schools. But the reductions have done little to alleviate the vast range in skills teachers face: In virtually every grade level, there are students who cannot read or write.

In school after school, teachers acknowledged finding it difficult to challenge their higher achievers, who often are used to tutor the other children on low-level skills. Most said that the highest achievers, though capable of more, tend to score at or below average on a national test.

"I told (my top student) that she needs to be somewhere with students more like her," said Yvonne Bundy, a first-grade teacher at Sacramento's Harkness Elementary, where two-thirds of the children come from welfare families and students test on average in the bottom quarter of the nation.

"I don't know if that was right or wrong, but I told her she needed to be challenged more than I could do."

Bundy, a seasoned veteran, offers a prime example of how difficult it can be, even for a strong teacher, not to lower expectations. In the course of the year, she had students enrolling into the last month of school. Many came not knowing letters. One student, kidnapped as a toddler during a custody dispute, fell apart whenever asked to speak. Another was absent 60 days.

During one afternoon lesson, she interrupted her discussion of colors every few seconds to correct some misbehavior.

"Excuse me," she told one student. "Someone is making a bad choice," to another. "Sit," to a third. The students were assigned to fill out worksheets, completing sentences using words printed on the board. Most had difficulty, not having grasped the concept of a sentence.

"My goal is to take every child from where they are," Bundy said. "If you have kids who don't know the alphabet, it's great if they know at least half by the end of the year."

One of the nagging ironies of Title I schools is that, while the goal of the program is to accelerate learning for low-income students so they can catch up to their peers, they often end up progressing at a slower pace.

"Generally, we're not getting a year's growth for a year. Maybe a year for every two years," said Chris Corral, Woodbine's Title I resource teacher.

"We look for three-months' or six-months' growth," echoed Jacquelyn Smith, a resource teacher at North Avenue Elementary in Del Paso Heights, where nearly every student subsists on welfare and third-graders test in the nation's bottom 13th percentile in reading.

Despite taxpayers' sizeable investment in Title I — California will get \$820 million in Title I funds this school year; Sacramento City Unified \$11 million, San Juan Unified \$4.3 million — the effects of such spending in most local schools appear minimal.

A three-year longitudinal study on Title I students in Sacramento City Unified found that more than half the fourth-grade students had lost ground or failed to make meaningful gains in achievement after being in Title I programs three years; in the sixth and eighth grades, two-thirds of the students had failed to make meaningful gains.

Broken down by ethnic group, by the sixth grade only 7 percent of low-income African Americans in the test group had reached grade level, 12 percent of Latinos, 13 percent of Asians and 19 percent of whites.

And those scores reflect the performance of the most stable Title I students, the 35 percent who remained in the same school during those years and are presumed to be higher achieving.

Part of the problem, said Jim Sweeney, acting superintendent of Sacramento City Unified, is that there has been little connection between the state regulations governing Title I and actual achievement in the schools.

"Compliance has little to do with achievement," Sweeney said. "As long as you did everything right, every kid in the district could be in the (bottom) 1st percentile nationally, and you're all right."

But Sweeney, just a few months into his tenure, acknowledged that in past years district policies and practices have compounded the problems. For instance, until recently, the district was carrying over a huge portion of its Title I allocation from year to year, rather than spending it on services.

District records show that in 1994-95, the district had more than \$2.3 million in Title I funds left over from the previous year — or about a fifth of the previous year's entire allocation.

Combining the carryover with the district's regular annual allocation, Sacramento City Unified had more than \$13 million available for Title I programs in 1994-95. Of that, records show, only \$6.2 million was given directly to schools. The Title I office held onto another \$6.1 million, which it disbursed in small portions on behalf of schools of its choosing over the course of the school year. The year ended with \$1.6 million unspent.

According to teacher interviews and a 1996 external audit of the department, administrators regularly would notify schools in the final weeks of the school year that the district needed to use up its allocation and that the schools had a matter of days to figure

out how to spend thousands of dollars. In the 1995-96 school year, according to the audit, one site spent \$30,000 on paperback books in the last six weeks of school.

District chief financial officer Laura Bruno, who joined the district in late 1994, said the practice made it difficult for schools to do large-scale planning and allowed for favoritism when it came to allocating funds.

She has since eliminated the practice and the carryovers. This summer, in one of his first moves as acting superintendent, Sweeney gutted the entire Title I office, sending the staff out into schools.

The region is rife with questionable practices: In San Juan Unified, a change in school boundaries, made during a round of school closures in the 1980s, means students from a pocket of low-rent apartments ride past several closer — and more affluent — schools to get to Carmichael Elementary, which is predominantly poor. District officials contend the decision was made at the time because Carmichael had space and already offered Title I services.

In many local districts, purchasing decisions appear to be based on what is considered state of the art, rather than what is needed in Title I schools. Classrooms are lined with basic readers, dusty from disuse, because students cannot read them, while teachers dig into their own pockets to compile classroom libraries they can use to teach reading.

The staffing chaos common to many area schools is in abundant display at Pacific Elementary, a school of 640 students in Sacramento's Lemon Hill area. Ninety percent of the students come from families on welfare, and half are Hmong, a culture that until recently had no written language. The school's third-graders this year scored in the 7th percentile nationally in reading; its 6th-graders in the 13th percentile.

Pacific has had a new principal every year for seven years. The principal who was expected to return last school year left for Hawaii on vacation and never came back. The school had a substitute principal until October 1996, when the district promoted a vice principal from another school, who had no experience as a principal, to lead the district's lowest performing school. Though the majority of students are non-native English speakers, the school had no bilingual teachers or teacher aides until last year. Eight of the 21 teachers are new; of the eight, only two are fully credentialed.

The school gets \$300,000 a year in Title I funds, but has had difficulty sustaining a program. It was planned last year to use Title I funds to create a four-member teacher SWAT team to rove among classrooms. But with the change in administrators, the program never got off the ground.

The school has no parents room and no PTA to create one.

"Basically, it's just me and the lady who gave you the hall pass. That's all the parents you get," said Christine Velasquez, who works as a Spanish interpreter in her son's second-grade classroom.

On the first day of school, the teacher assigned to Velasquez's son's class called to say she was not coming. The students sat two hours waiting for a substitute. The next day, another sub came.

"They wouldn't stay because it was total chaos," said teacher Kathy Ahern. "I came (to sub) the third day, and we had a substitute principal, and he begged me to stay.

"It was strange. There were a lot (of students) who didn't speak English. ... There were desks and chairs and piles of unwanted papers. Not a book. It was two to three weeks before I got books."

Of the 31 children in Ahern's class, nine left and were replaced during the year. Five arrived in the last two months of school. One had not spoken at all until he was 5. One still speaks only Hmong. Only eight are reading.

All will go on to third grade.

Down the hall from Ahern, Lemoine Bond, a self-described "retired businessman and entrepreneur," stood before another second-grade class. Hired in October as a temporary replacement for a teacher who by May had yet to return, he has no teaching credential and had never taught in a K-12 school.

"Basically, the district — well, they give you a great deal of autonomy, let me put it to you that way," said Bond, 58. "You punt, pass and lateral. ... I did some night-oil research, and basically by the responses I was able to get from the principal, I was able to assemble a plan."

The region overflows with examples of high-poverty schools existing as islands, drafting programs in isolation: Schools creating their own bilingual programs; devising their own grade-level standards; selecting their own textbooks; creating their own reading programs.

The region also abounds with examples of schools that have skipped from program to program as new principals have come on, new grants have come through or new fads taken hold. At Howe Avenue, Title I coordinator Laurie Burden sighed going over the changes: five principals in 11 years, and during that time, whole language (gone), multi-aged classrooms (gone), language centers (gone), IBM writing lab (gone), AT&T computer lab (gone.)

"This was a school that was willing to try anything that sounded promising," said Phyllis Westrup, the newest principal. "But it didn't necessarily have the rigor to evaluate and follow through."

At North Avenue School in Del Paso Heights, principal Erna Sims echoes the viewpoint. "Everyone is searching for a reason — why is this happening to our kids? And everyone is looking for a solution," she said. "But I think if you (switch programs) so many times, people become numb."

Starting last year, the Del Paso Heights district began a four-year process of training all teachers in a new reading program called the Literacy Achievement Project or LAP. The method has helped in the classrooms of the 25 teachers now trained in the program. In first-grade LAP classrooms, 60 percent of students have reached the national average in reading, said district officials, compared with the 10 percent considered normal for the district.

But principals remain cautious, not sure the program will stick. "We hope it's a forward direction," Sims said. "And that

it will last long enough to know if it works."

One of the problems over the years, said Johns Hopkins University researcher Sam Stringfield, who focuses on low-income students, is that schools have been indiscriminate consumers: using Title I entitlements to fund programs based on slick brochures, trade magazine ads or more of what they're already doing. Neither research, nor analysis of the needs of their unique student populations, have played much role in the decision-making.

"Schools are not yet sophisticated consumers of education reform," Stringfield said. "Look at the inside cover of Phi Delta Kappa (an education journal). I don't remember the last time it wasn't a two-page ad for a computer company. Well, why? Because they've found that marketing works."

This lack of sophistication is thought to explain, in part, why one of the notorious staples of Title I — the "pullout" program, which amounts to removing children from class for a half-hour each day and sending them down the hall for remedial drill work — continues to thrive, despite sheaths of test scores that show the method fails the vast majority of students.

If schools still grope to find a solution to the academic needs of low-income students, they have made grand leaps in meeting their physical and emotional needs. Most high-poverty schools in the area have become social service centers of sorts, providing two daily meals, counseling, health check-ups, dental screening, clothes closets, toothbrushes, shampoo.

The schools are attempting to address so many needs, researchers say, that academic achievement can begin to seem secondary.

"If it's your middle-class first-grader who can't read, you go berserk, you hire a tutor. You don't see it as normal — and neither does the school," said Johns Hopkins researcher Robert Slavin. "In a poor school, there are so many things going on ... it's almost seen as normal."

Faced with failure after failure, in program after program, principals acknowledged that over time, the curriculum starts to soften.

"I have seen teachers who were very caring who didn't want to affect a student's self-esteem," said Carol Bly, recently promoted after seven years as principal of Jedediah Smith Elementary, which draws its students from two Sacramento housing projects. "They didn't want to see a child fail at a task, so they changed the task."

One sees the phenomenon at Jonas Salk Middle School, a San Juan district school of 520 students, almost all of them low-income. In one 7th/8th-grade social studies class, students decorated posters for their "reports" on Mexican history. One boy used markers to draw a Midwestern-style red barn to depict the ancient Mayan culture. "They were farmers," he explained.

The students were required to keep journals that briefly summarized major units of study. "I went to Buddhism Church to learn how to write," read one student's vocabulary page. "A meritocracy happened to me yesterday."

This summary, taken from a student's report on West Africa, got 25 out of 25 possible points: "In Africa trading is a very big source! They trade iron, copper, tools, gold and stone. Climate region changed from grassy to sand in other parts of Africa. This is now called the Sahara Desert. They are farmers, compenders and artists."

The students come to them so low, explained principal Bill Hockensen, that teachers burn out trying to catch them up: Only two of the school's 30 teachers have been there more than five years.

"We could try to cover the text," Hockensen said, "but we might as well cover it with six feet of dirt."

So as a school, they have learned to revamp the curriculum to fit the students and to measure success in ways other than test scores. Like the girl who came to them, teeth rotting, hair chopped off by the mother's boyfriend as a form of discipline. They fixed her teeth, got the family in counseling, and celebrated when the girl went on to graduate high school.

"I don't think at this school (she) changed her test scores. It was the human connection," Hockensen said. "But how do you explain that to a public that says teach them harder, don't pass them on?" ■

## 1. Education Daily

September 22, 1997

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**T**he House last week passed its fiscal 1998 education funding bill, paving the way for negotiations with the Senate to develop a compromise on not only funding levels for each program, but also whether to place most K-12 funds in block grants to local education agencies and whether to stop the president's national testing plan.

### Awaiting the President's Signature ...

Student Aid Guidelines H.R. 1866: Would allow colleges and universities using need-blind admissions to award institutional aid based on financial need, and to exchange information through an independent third party. The bill would extend a provision in the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act that is set to expire Sept. 30.

Last action: The House on Sept. 8 accepted a Senate change limiting the extension to four years (ED, Sept. 9).

Next action: President Clinton is expected to sign the bill.

### Recent or Upcoming Action ...

Fiscal 1998 Appropriations/National Tests H.R. 2264: Would boost the Education Department's budget from nearly \$29.47 billion this year to about \$34.3 billion in fiscal 1998, including mandatory spending on programs such as student loans. It would increase spending on Title I and special education, set aside \$205 million for comprehensive school reform, level-fund Safe and Drug-Free Schools grants, and cut Goals 2000 funding from \$491 million to \$387 million (ED, Sept. 11). It also would provide \$100 million for charter schools and \$435 million for state formula grants for school technology. The bill would set aside \$260 million for a childhood literacy program in fiscal 1999, if it is authorized by April 1. State Student Incentive Grants (SSIG) would be eliminated. S. 1061.

Would send about \$13.4 billion in Title I, Goals 2000, bilingual, technology and vocational education funding to school districts as block grants (ED, Sept. 12). Special education state grants for school-age children would get a substantial boost, to \$3.95 billion. SSIG would be cut to \$35 million. A reconstituted National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) would oversee President Clinton's voluntary national tests. Both bills would raise the maximum Pell Grant to \$3,000.

Last action: The House passed its bill, 346-80 on Wednesday, after accepting an amendment, 295-125, that would bar spending for Clinton's national testing plan (ED, Sept. 18). The Senate passed its bill Sept. 11, with a provision that would turn over the test oversight to NAGB (ED, Sept. 12).

Next action: The House expects this week to name conferees to negotiate with the Senate, but the Senate has not announced when it will choose conferees. Key Senate Democrats already have said they would bar the block grant plan, and the White House is threatening a veto if the legislation would create the block grants or halt Clinton's testing initiative. In a separate appropriations bill for Washington, D.C., the Senate and House leadership want to tack on a vouchers plan for 2,000 impoverished children, for up to \$3,200 per child.

Omnibus Education S. 1: The GOP bill would allow states to use existing Title VI block grant funds for public and private school choice, would raise special education funding starting with a \$1 billion hike next year, and would authorize a school choice demonstration program for low-income families (ED, Jan. 23).

S. 12: The Democrats' bill would require the federal government to pay up to half of the interest on school construction bonds and authorize \$1.75 billion for reading programs and \$1.8 billion for school technology.

Last action: A third of charter school administrators in a General Accounting Office study said they aren't getting their fair share of federal funding, according to preliminary findings presented at a House Early Childhood, Youth and Families Subcommittee hearing Sept. 16 (ED, Sept.

17).

Next action: The House youth and families subcommittee plans a hearing on school choice Sept. 30. The House Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee travels to Muskegon Heights, Mich., on Oct. 2 for a hearing on federal K-12 policy.

Private School Tax Breaks H.R. 2373, S. 1133: Would allow parents tax-free withdrawals from education savings accounts for expenses including private K-12 tuition, transportation, tutoring and computers (ED, Aug. 4.) Last action: During an Early Childhood, Youth and Families Subcommittee hearing Sept. 9, House Speaker Newt Gingrich and other Republicans lobbied for several school choice plans, including tax breaks for K-12 savings accounts (ED, Sept. 10).

Next action: The youth and families subcommittee plans another hearing on school choice Sept. 30. The House Ways and Means Committee is expected to work on H.R. 2373 this month. No action is scheduled in the Senate.

Vocational Education H.R. 1853: Would allot school districts at least 90 percent of the basic state grant under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, up from 75 percent, and shave the state set-asides to 2 percent for administration and 8 percent for leadership. It also would lower the minimum school district grant to \$10,000.

Increases in voc ed funds would be allocated under a census and poverty formula for the next three years. By 2002, the

formula would be weighed 40 percent on the same population and 60 percent on its poverty rate (ED, July 24). S. 1186.

Would maintain separate funding and administration for voc ed, job training and adult education programs, but would let states submit one plan for all three programs and would reward state coordination among programs with incentive grants. Grant minimums and formulas for distributing Perkins state grants would remain unchanged.

Last action: The House passed its bill, 414-12, on July 23.

The Senate introduced its bill as S. 1186 on Sept. 17.

Next action: The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee expects to vote on S. 1186 Wednesday.

HEA Reauthorization H.R. 6: The bill would reauthorize funds for all existing Higher Education Act (HEA) programs, which expire Sept. 30.

After the House writes new legislation for student aid and other programs under HEA, it will be substituted into H.R. 6.

Last action: During a House Postsecondary Education, Training and Life-Long Learning Subcommittee hearing on Thursday, Republicans and Democrats expressed dismay at Education Department student aid management in light of a shutdown in direct loan consolidations (ED, Sept. 19).

Next action: Within a month, the House Education and the Workforce Committee may take up legislation to create a new management structure for federal student aid programs and to allow direct loans to be consolidated under the Family Education Loan program. No HEA action is expected until after a panel studying college costs completes its work in December.

#### **Just Introduced ...**

K-12 Teacher Training Grants S. 1169: Would authorize \$100 million per year for five years for teacher professional development grants to partnerships of higher education institutions, local and state education agencies, teacher organizations or nonprofit groups.

Last action: Introduced Sept. 11 by Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., referred to the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee.

Next action: No action is scheduled. —Laureen Lazarovici, Jonathan Fox■

## 1. LRP Publications

September 22, 1997

# *Clinton May Veto Education Block Grants, National Testing Ban*

Two provisions in the recently-passed funding bill for dozens of federal education programs could invite a presidential veto if they survive a House-Senate conference set to work out a compromise over the next two weeks.

President Clinton is expected to state his position on the issues in his weekly radio address Saturday.

The sensitive issues are a Senate-passed amendment to its S. 1061 to shift several education programs into a block grant to states to spend as they wish and a House amendment barring the administration from carrying out a national testing program for reading and mathematics as proposed by the Clinton administration.

The Senate provision would specifically exclude funds for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act from the block grant. Also protected and allowed to continue operating as they now do are programs under the Adult Education Act and other programs under Title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Armed with new "line-item veto" powers, Clinton could strike the provisions from the funding bill for the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services and Labor if they survive the compromise.

He has used the selective veto only once so far, striking items from the five-year budget bill.

White House press secretary Mike McCurry hinted during a daily press briefing that Clinton would consider a line-item veto of both amendments. He said White House advisers are warning Congress the two amendments could draw a veto, but McCurry stopped short of warning that Clinton actually would do so.

Clinton's weekly radio address is to be used this week to address education issues and McCurry said the two amendments would be addressed.

The objectionable amendment in the Senate bill was proposed by Sen. Slade Gorton (R-Wash.). It would shift most of the funding for K-12 programs into a block grant with funds channeled directly to local schools, the amount to be based on the number of school-aged children in the districts and the relative wealth of the state.

During consideration of its version of the funding bill, the House had planned to consider a similar amendment, but the Republican leadership determined it would not be able to muster enough votes to pass the amendment. It was withdrawn from consideration.

In the Senate, Sen. Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) had prepared an amendment similar to the one the House passed to bar funds for a national testing program. Gregg's version would not bar the funds, however, if Congress passed a law specifically creating the program. His amendment was withdrawn in the final days of Senate work on the bill.

But the testing issue became a major issue in the House where Rep. Bill Goodling (R-Pa.), chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee, won approval of an amendment barring the program outright. The vote was 295-125. ■

# 1. The Christian Science Monitor

September 22, 1997

## *National Aims, Local Schools*

Gail Russell Chaddock

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor, page 1

WASHINGTON — Education has soared to the top of the American public's concerns, edging out crime as the issue most demanding attention.

Confronted with poor student performance and weak school standards, educators, parents, businessmen, and politicians are giving virtually unprecedented consideration to a more national approach to reforms. Proposals for voluntary national testing, defining new standards, and expanding school choice are all under scrutiny.

But there are deep divisions over how much of a role the federal government should have in solving the problem.

"The question of a federal role is an extremely contentious one. But there is a growing consensus that the country needs a national strategy, even among the governors," says Robert Schwartz, president of Alliance Inc., a new resource center founded by the nation's governors to provide information on state standards.

President Clinton and Congress are about to square off over this issue, as House and Senate lawmakers prepare the final version of a \$269 billion annual spending bill for education, labor, and health programs.

"If Congress sends me partisan legislation that denies our children high national standards, or weakens our national commitment to stronger schools, ... I'll veto it," President Clinton said in his weekly radio address on Saturday.

At stake: funding for the president's proposal for voluntary national tests and a controversial block-grant amendment that would let school districts decide how to spend some \$11 billion in federal funds now targeted to programs such as charter schools, bilingual education, computers, and drug-free schools.

Last week, the House voted against funding Clinton's proposed voluntary national tests. The Senate backed a revised version of national tests. It narrowly passed an amendment that would support a block-grant approach to funding leading federal K-12 education programs.

"Over time, Washington gradually took responsibility for education from our home towns and put it in the hands of federal bureaucrats," says Sen. Slade Gorton (R) of Washington, sponsor of the controversial amendment. Federal funds account for just 7 percent of K-12 spending.

"Since 1960, education spending has risen 200 percent, but SAT scores are down. Teachers used to make up two-thirds of our full-time school staff. Now it's barely half. And the schools are more dangerous than ever," he added in the Republican response to Clinton's weekly radio address.

The success of the Gorton amendment caught many lawmakers and the White House by surprise. A comparable amendment was proposed in the House, but quickly withdrawn for lack of support. White House advisers say they expect the block-grant amendment will fall out of the final bill lawmakers negotiate next week.

Congressional opposition to national tests has deeper roots. The lopsided 295 to 125 House vote included conservative Republicans, who argue that a national test would threaten local control of education, and liberal Democrats, who say that low scores on a national test could stigmatize minority groups. The same coalition defeated a similar testing proposal by President Bush.

Public support

But White House advisers insist that public opinion is on their side.

"We had an election a year ago that centered on the federal government's role in education. The public isn't buying the extremist argument that federal bureaucrats are taking over the classroom. Polls suggest that the public is far more concerned about pitching in and doing something about education," says Mike Cohen, the president's special adviser on education.

The latest Gallup poll signals strong support for new national initiatives. Two-thirds of the public favors the proposal for placing a computer with access to the Internet in every public school classroom, and 57 percent supports Clinton's voluntary national tests of student achievement in reading and math.

Both politicians and the public are suspicious that politics could bias the process. Senators backed the president's testing proposal only after the tests were turned over to a bipartisan board, rather than left in the hands of political appointees in the Education Department. And when Gallup pollsters asked if people favored a standardized national test (leaving Clinton's name off the proposal), support jumped to 67 percent.

State governors are also reluctant to let Washington write the test. Only seven states have signed on to the testing plan. Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad flat out refused: "The last thing we need is bureaucrats in Washington devising some politically correct test. We have in Iowa some of the best testing in the country," he said at a Republican National Committee briefing on Sept. 5.

But behind the partisan rhetoric are signs that a strong consensus is emerging for national if not federal solutions to the nation's No. 1 problem.

In 1989, President Bush, top business leaders, and national governors agreed to set national educational goals. Nearly all states are now developing their own standards and tests to meet those national goals. So far, results have been mixed.

"There have been some judgments on these state standards, mainly negative. In history, state standards are abysmal. States prefer vague and contentless standards," says Diane Ravitch, a former assistant secretary of education under President Bush and now with Brookings Institution.

Student test scores are rising, and students are taking tougher courses. But 40 percent of fourth-graders are still reading below basic levels, and eighth-graders still score well below the average of the rest of the world. Significant racial gaps persist.

That record has prompted business leaders to take a more active role in the issue. "Education used to be a mommy issue. Now corporate America is finding out the costs of an inadequately trained work force. They have to deal with it every day," says Paul Anir of the conservative lobby group Empower America.

Cleveland businessman David Brennan says he started three schools in his city because "the quality of students we saw coming in ... was so dismal."

"There's a broad consensus between the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Roundtable, the 240 high-tech CEOs in this country that we need national standards and that we need a voluntary national assessment of English and math," says Alan Wurtzel, former CEO of Circuit City and a member of the executive board of the National Alliance of Business.

#### Comparing state standards

Last March, the National Governors' Association (NGA) convened 46 governors to assess progress on meeting national standards. Each governor brought a top business leader in the state. They agreed to set up a new organization to help governors compare states' standards.

"For the first time, we heard governors asking questions like, 'Are our standards good enough?' or 'Should we start teaching fractions in the second or fourth grade?' " says Patty Sullivan, an NGA spokesman. "Governors used to be very uncomfortable going head to head.... Now they're working with us to get comparable data. It's a sea change," she adds.

Experts such as Ms. Ravitch say that politicians and the public need to view educational reform like a race to the moon.

"We will be years working through the nature of the new federal role in education. This should be approached with great deliberation and not be made an election-year issue. Kennedy said we will send a man to the moon. Clinton needs to see this issue in the same vein: We will send a man to the moon, but not before the next election." ■

# Daily Education News

Monday, September 22, 1997

## 1. Business Week

September 29, 1997

### ***NATIONWIDE STUDENT TESTING? HERE ARE SOME ANSWERS***

#### **The upside of proposed national reading and math testing**

Should fourth graders across the country be tested annually on their reading ability and eighth graders on their mathematics knowledge? It seemed a no-brainer when President Clinton proposed it last February. Yet in recent weeks the notion of national testing has become highly politicized. The initiative, which passed in the Senate, has run into problems in the House, and the debate over whether and how such testing should be funded is likely to rage on. Some opponents contend that national testing—even though voluntary—would be the first step toward a national curriculum and federal control of the nation's 15,000 school districts. Others argue that poor and minority students would be unfairly penalized for low scores. Below, some key questions and answers about national testing:

What would national testing of fourth and eighth graders accomplish? The tests would provide parents, teachers, and students with individual results that can be compared with district, state, national, and even overseas scores. Business in particular favors testing as a way to benchmark the academic achievement of U.S. students—against one another and against students in other countries. Today there is no way to compare the performance of a child in Utah with that of a child in Kentucky, much less with that of a child in Tokyo or Taipei.

In the past few years, many states introduced or upgraded academic standards. National tests, then, would "help us know whether what we're doing is good enough," observes Governor Roy Romer (D-Colo.). "National tests would provide a benchmark against which we can measure progress and be a diagnostic tool to tell us where to concentrate our efforts."

How would the tests be designed and conducted? National tests would be based on the only existing standardized national test, the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Why not just use NAEP? Because it doesn't provide results for individual districts and students, it's not conducted annually for each subject, and because its sample size of about 100,000 students means it's not representative.

In August, the Education Dept. received draft reports and sample questions from national test panels (table). The department has already contracted with several test developers to design the tests and estimates that design and field testing will cost \$16 million. Actual testing could total \$100 million in 1999, or about \$10 to \$12 per child. The National Assessment Governing Board, an independent body that currently oversees NAEP, will have oversight.

To date, only seven governors or state school superintendents and 15 municipalities have said they will participate. A number of governors have pushed in recent years for tougher standards and assessments within their states, and they may regard the President's initiative as an unwelcome distraction.

Don't kids take enough tests already, and won't national tests promote "teaching to the test"? There are some states where students are subjected to a battery of state tests and others where students take very few. Today, there certainly aren't too many national tests being given, and if the new tests duplicate state-administered tests, perhaps some of the latter could be eliminated. As to "teaching to the test," if national tests are well designed and a good tool for assessing students' skills, there shouldn't be a problem. "If a test is measuring what we want students to know, it's not a bad thing to teach to the test," observes James W. Stigler, an educational psychologist at University of California at Los Angeles.

Will national testing lead to better learning? Possibly, but only indirectly. "Testing in and of itself doesn't do much of anything to improve learning," says Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor at Teachers College at Columbia University. South Carolina and Georgia ramped up statewide testing in the 1980s but have experienced little or no improvement in educational achievement, while states such as Iowa and Minnesota do relatively little testing and rank very high in educational achievement. One factor: Iowa and Minnesota have tough standards for teacher education and licensing. "Tests don't teach children, teachers do," says Darling-Hammond.

So if national testing leads to better teacher training and stronger curricula, better learning will result. That means a big investment in teacher training. Today, 30% of math teachers don't even have minors in math. More than 50% of students taking physical science are taught by a teacher with no background in that field. "We've got to give kids qualified teachers—we can't put the whole onus on kids and tell them to learn to pass tests themselves," says Darling-Hammond.

Will national testing lead to a national curriculum? Opponents such as Representative William F. Goodling (R.-Pa.), a

former educator, worry that national tests could be a first step in that direction, and they believe curriculum decisions should be made at the local and state level. Indeed, the politics of education are such that control could never be wrested away by the federal government, nor is there any indication that the federal government would want to do so. Yet it's true that national tests would presume that there is some single standard of reading ability and mathematics knowledge against which students are being measured—an unstated national curriculum, if you will. It hardly seems objectionable, however, to expect fourth graders to read at the same level from state to state or eighth graders to have the same mastery of math skills from coast to coast.

If states are already moving to improve education, do we need national testing? States are doing better, but it could take many years before there is convergence toward higher academic standards. Currently, state NAEP results show much lower academic achievement than does state-developed testing. National tests would put more pressure on states to improve. But Clinton's proposal shouldn't be viewed as a magic bullet for the nation's educational ills. Participation is voluntary, so truly nationwide results wouldn't be available. At best, national testing could turn a spotlight on students' performance and perhaps motivate parents, educators, and employers to push for better results. How to go about getting those results is part of a bigger and still more contentious debate.

*By Karen Pennar in New York* ■

# 1. Los Angeles Times

\* 09/21/97; Edition: Home Edition; Section: National Desk; Page A-26

## ***Clinton Threatens Veto of School Bills:***

***He derides legislators for not including national tests and lumping programs into block grants. GOP says it will fight for more localized approaches***

By ELIZABETH SHOGREN  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

SAN CARLOS, Calif. — President Clinton threatened Saturday to veto a sweeping funding package for federal education and labor programs unless it provides money for his national school exam initiative and continues to support other administration programs for reforming public schools.

In his weekly radio address, Clinton lambasted the Senate for voting to combine funding for various education programs—including charter schools—into lump-sum block grants for states, and he took the House to task for voting against his proposal for voluntary national reading tests for fourth-graders and math exams for eighth-graders.

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"In effect, they've cast their votes against better schools and for a status quo that is failing too many of our children," Clinton said.

In the Republican radio response, Sen. Slade Gorton (R-Wash.) said Clinton's veto threat shows that he believes the notion that Washington knows best.

"By taking this position, I think the president is telling parents and teachers, 'I don't trust you,'" Gorton said.

Rep. William F. Goodling (R-Pa.), the chief House opponent of Clinton's national testing plan, insisted that the president's veto threat would not deter House Republicans from their efforts to kill the "new education tests developed by Washington bureaucrats."

Goodling also implied that a veto of the education and labor bills could have serious ramifications. "I am very surprised that the president would suggest a veto that could force a government shutdown," he said.

Clinton made his veto threat on a presidential weekend full of education themes. On Friday, Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton dropped their daughter, Chelsea, off to begin life as a Stanford University student. On Saturday morning, Clinton met with parents, students and administrators of several California charter schools at one of the schools in San Carlos.

The president used the event to praise the fledgling charter-school movement and to announce that \$40 million in federal grants—including \$3.4 million for California—will go to support new and existing charter schools. Such schools, while publicly funded, are free from many of the requirements and bureaucracy that govern traditional public schools.

"I believe the only way public schools can survive as the instrument by which we educate our children and socialize them and bring them together across all the lines that divide us is if all our schools eventually—and hopefully sooner rather than later—are run like these charter schools," Clinton said.

But as Clinton listened to charter-school founders, teachers, students and Silicon Valley high-tech executives talk about the success of these innovative schools, a battle was brewing in Washington over the funding that helps them run and the federal role in public education in general.

One of the measures that provoked Clinton's veto threat was a Senate provision—offered by Gorton—that would consolidate Education Department funding for charter schools with other specific federal initiatives for elementary and secondary schools—such as bilingual education and safe and drug-free schools programs. The Senate would have the money go to states in the form of block grants, which they could use at their discretion.

Although 27 states have passed laws supporting charter schools, Clinton suggested that this Senate provision would hurt charter schools because the federal money specifically allocated to fund them would no longer exist.

Meanwhile, the House, in an unusual coalition of conservatives, who say the national tests advocated by Clinton would open the door to more federal control of schools, and some liberals, who believe that the tests would stigmatize poor and minority students, voted to block federal funding for the initiative. The Senate, however, approved a modified version of Clinton's plan.

The House and Senate versions must be reconciled before the legislative package is sent to Clinton; it remains unclear whether the final version will include either the Senate's block-grant plan or the House's test-funding ban.

Back at the San Carlos Learning Center, Clinton was basking in praise for his support of charter schools. When Clinton took office there was only one charter school, but now there are 700 across the country. The president said that the \$40 million in grants could support the planning and implementation costs for as many as 500 new charter schools. The administration has set the goal of helping to create 3,000 charter schools by 2000.

Two of the founders of South-Central's Accelerated Charter School, as well as a parent of one of the Los Angeles school's students, told Clinton that their school is bringing hope to an area that was devastated by the 1992 riots.

"We expect more of our students and of ourselves," said Jonathan Williams, a teacher and co-founder. Williams told the president that test scores are skyrocketing and that, thanks to community support, the school has moved out of a church basement and into a 150,000-square-foot facility.

At Accelerated, parents play a much larger role in selecting teachers, planning the curriculum and envisioning the school's future. "At Accelerated School you actually feel your opinion matters," said Kevin Jones, whose daughter attends the school.

Clinton said Accelerated's success "puts a lie to the notion" that some children inherently perform at a lower level than other children.

Clinton seemed particularly tickled by the students' testimonials.

Jose Maya, 15, said he used to be in a gang before deciding to attend the brand-new Leadership High School in San Francisco. "I used to do all those negative things," he said. "Now I want to have a future."

Hillary Clinton, who also attended the session, said charter schools can help "liberate" public school officials to make the changes they know are needed to better serve their students. She has worked with her husband on education reform both in the White House and when he was governor of Arkansas. ■

## 1. Associated Press

9-21 12:47p

### *Just how would those proposed tests work?*

By ROBERT GREENE  
AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - If President Clinton has his way, millions of fourth- and eighth-graders will soon sit down in their classrooms to take tests measuring how well they can read or do math.

They'll fill out multiple-choice questions. They'll write answers: a few words, a sentence, sometimes longer. They'll show how they solved their math problems - and might get some credit for using the correct approach even if the answer is wrong.

As little as six weeks later, the grades will come back - a numerical score based on correct answers to the 90-minute tests, each given over two days.

Each child's skills and knowledge will be deemed basic, proficient or advanced in the subject - a judgment not made in the other widely used, commercially available tests now found in many American schools.

And if the Education Department can iron out technical problems, the math results will be compared with how students in other countries do.

Whether the voluntary tests are given in the spring of 1999 as planned depends on Congress. The House voted last week to block them. The Senate has given them the green light, but only if an independent board takes control of testing from the Education Department.

The Clinton administration says the idea behind the tests is to give parents and schools new types of information in a more-timely fashion.

First of all, the tests of fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math will be among the most public around, says Marshall S. Smith, acting deputy secretary of education.

A model test will be put on the Internet next spring, along with suggestions of activities or books for teachers and parents to use.

"Everybody will see what the test is like," said Smith. "There will be descriptions of the items, why they are on the test and what they are trying to measure."

The actual tests also will be made public soon after they are given so teachers and children can go over them and other people can try them. Because of that public distribution, the tests would have to be changed each year.

Also, the graded tests will be returned to parents and schools before the end of the school year.

"The teacher will be able to sit down with the kids and say, 'This is where you're strong, and this is where you're weak,'" Smith said. Principals could use the test to help see that teachers are better trained.

But not everyone believes the uses will be so benign. Civil rights groups worry that poor black and Hispanic children in substandards schools will be branded as inferior and unteachable. Some teachers worry about the use of tests to rate them and to compare schools.

Other people criticize the tests for the opposite reason.

"If a student fails or if a school is failing to reach real skills and knowledge, all we have is information," said Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating, a Republican. "There are no consequences."

Oklahoma is one of 46 states creating education standards that all students should be able to meet. Those who fail the state's third-grade reading test get "intensive remediation" and may be held back.

Oklahoma students now take the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a set of federal tests given to a sample of students nationwide to measure trends in achievement. Clinton's national tests would be based on the math and reading portions of that national assessment.

Oklahoma students also take exams in grades 5, 8 and 11 based on the state curriculum. And they take commercially produced national tests in grades 3 and 7.

Many states already are developing new tests designed to see how students meet their state standards. In addition, more than half offer commercially available tests in a variety of grades, as does Oklahoma.

One example is the Iowa Basic Skills Test Program, which covers 13 areas and takes five hours to complete. Questions are multiple-choice, but optional tests are available to elicit the kind of written responses in the proposed national test■

## 1. Weekend Edition - Sunday (NPR)

09/21/97 Section: News; Domestic;

### *Michael talks with NPR's Claudio Sanchez about the Education Bill which is currently in Congress and is under threat of veto by the White House.*

By Claudio Sanchez; Michael Goldfarb, Washington, DC

MICHAEL GOLDFARB, HOST: President Clinton has often said that education is his first priority. In that, he's not unique. Most presidents in recent decades have said much the same.

Education reform is one of the many issues on Congress's legislative agenda in the next few weeks. And our Educator Reporter Claudio Sanchez joins me now to help explain exactly where things stand.

Claudio, good morning.

CLAUDIO SANCHEZ, NPR REPORTER: Good morning.

GOLDFARB: What are the education issues on the table at this point?

SANCHEZ: The fight between Congress and the Clinton Administration is over tests, vouchers, and the dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education.

GOLDFARB: And all three of these issues, they've been around a long time.

SANCHEZ: They have. They've never necessarily come together in this manner, however. People have been talking about dismantling the Department of Education ever since it was created, which was in the late 1970s — 1980, '81. It's been there, essentially taking an increasingly important role, because increasingly we have talked about the need for reforming public education in this country as a system, not necessarily as a combination of local school districts.

GOLDFARB: And vouchers?

SANCHEZ: Vouchers have been around for at least 30, 40 years. People would recall that soon after the 1954 ruling — Brown vs. Board of Education — there was great talk of vouchers, essentially as a way to extract white children out of integrated schools so that they would be able to mix with their own and have the government pay for it.

These days, interestingly, it is black and minority communities that have increasingly become interested and, in some cases, have demanded vouchers, because inner city school systems, which is where most kids of color reside, have been so abysmally poor.

GOLDFARB: And testing is another idea that's been around for a long time. When we talk about testing, you mean a specific kind of testing, don't you?

SANCHEZ: National tests. And the two that the president is proposing include a fourth grade test in reading, the other an eighth grade test in mathematics. The two seemingly innocent and neutral areas, which unlike history are not value-laden.

Yet, it is the concern that a national test would lead to a national curriculum, would lead to a national mandate of sorts that every school child in this country — every fourth grader and every eighth grader, in the beginning — met a certain standard that is being dictated from Washington.

GOLDFARB: Right. So that there's always this — in education discussions of this — very basic contradiction. You get the sense that parents want as much local control as possible. But many parents probably would be averse to the idea of a national standard for their child to meet so they know exactly where their children stand in the national spectrum, right?

SANCHEZ: And every poll has shown that. Eighty to 90 percent of Americans want to know how their child compares to children elsewhere, if not to children in other parts of the world.

GOLDFARB: And so what happens is you've got this situation where if you're going to have national testing, you're pretty obviously going to have to have some kind of Department of Education, or some kind of cent — national, central government kind of oversight of these standardized tests, right?

SANCHEZ: And the latest on that is that — what the Clinton Administration has agreed to is not allowing the Department of Education to develop these tests, but rather to allow an independent organization — and there is one that has existed for years and years — that oversees a great deal of the testing that already goes on.

GOLDFARB: You're talking about the Educational Testing Service?

SANCHEZ: The National Assessment of Educational Progress is essentially the entity that has monitored school progress and student progress in this country. And it is overseen by a governing board that is politically diverse.

What Senators — Republican Senators — have asked the administration to do is to accede to one that is even more diverse, at least having a couple more people that are more like-minded, more conservative.

GOLDFARB: So now we've got these three basic important issues. You've got national testing, you've got vouchers, and you've got whether the Department of Education survives into the new millennium.

Now this is all part and parcel of education legislation that the president sent to Capitol Hill. Where does that stand

now?

SANCHEZ: Well, the House, of course, has rejected national tests. And for now, they will not budge. The Senate has decided to work with the administration on something that is less politicized in their view.

The vouchers weren't necessarily a surprise. But there are at least four, maybe five, proposals out there, most of them coming out of the House of Representatives, from the most conservative members. The Senate has not necessarily been against — maybe some of the more radical proposals like tuition vouchers, which would allow kids to take money directly to the schools that they choose, including parochial and private schools.

The Clinton Administration has said no to both of those. And of course, it has said no to the proposal that the department lose at least \$13 billion of the money that it manages, essentially for remedial programs. So any one of these will essentially trigger a veto as far as the White House is concerned.

GOLDFARB: Where is it now? I mean, what position can be stated that hasn't been stated a dozen times?

SANCHEZ: I would like to describe this as yet one more skirmish in the greater scheme of things. The president clearly has the political upper hand. A veto is something that Republicans, even the most adamant Republicans, do not want.

And what puts the Republicans and conservatives at the disadvantage is that there is really no clear public mandate, nor are people knocking down their doors to have them do what they're trying to do, which is to essentially to undermine the president's education agenda.

This has, after all, been a president that has made education a top priority. He wants it to be central to his legacy. And he will not allow the Republicans to hinder or interfere with that. And there is no evidence that the public is against any of the president's proposals, at least not until now.

GOLDFARB: I think that one of the things that's most interesting is as this debate has been going on and on and on, that the voucher issue has changed who its constituents are.

SANCHEZ: What you saw was, slowly but surely, less of a constituency there for vouchers for white parents, for middle class parents. But because so many kids remained in the inner city schools — largely minority, black, Latino kids — that is where the voucher arguments then took hold.

And that is why you are now seeing such an extraordinary increase in the interest of minority communities to use vouchers to essentially escape, and to do what so many other affluent and middle class families have been able to do, which is to flee the places in which they resided, in which those poorer schools exist.

The other thing about vouchers is that, you know, we still don't know whether they actually result in better academic performance of children. People who have used them in at least two cities — Cleveland and Milwaukee — are simply too new for us to know whether they really do help inner city poor kids do better in school.

The jury's still out. And unless there is harder evidence — although there is a leaning to showing that there are better results — Americans are still going to be — remain very skeptical of it. And that is what has hampered the Republicans' efforts to get these vouchers on a national scale.

GOLDFARB: And finally — in all of the haggling over the Education Bill, is the Department of Education going to disappear?

SANCHEZ: The U.S. Department of Education is not going to disappear. It's just taken on too many responsibilities and has become too important to — really, the consensus opinion out there, which is: We need an agency that oversees education reform, that at least does basic research into where we're going in public education, kindergarten through higher education.

It may lose a few billion dollars here and there. But it is not going to go away.

GOLDFARB: NPR's Claudio Sanchez. Thanks.

SANCHEZ: Thank you.■

## Clinton Threatens Veto in Fight to Preserve Education Proposals

By JAMES BENNET

SAN CARLOS, Calif., Sept. 20 — Setting himself on a collision course with the Republican Congress, President Clinton vowed today to veto a mammoth spending bill if it contains amendments blocking his national school standards and testing plan or channeling money away from his other cherished Federal education programs.

The House has passed an amendment to stop the school testing program, while the Senate has voted to take money away from many Federal education programs, like bilin-

gual education, and give it instead to school boards in block grants.

"If either one of these provisions makes it into the final bill, I will have to veto it," Mr. Clinton warned this morning at a school appearance here. Mr. Clinton also threatened to veto the bill during his weekly radio address this morning.

The House and Senate must now negotiate with each other over whether either or both of the amendments should survive as part of the \$279 billion spending bill for the departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services.

A veto of the spending bill, one of 13 that pay to run the Government, would also block financing for a number of the President's favorite initiatives, including scholarships to help pay for the first two years of college. Further, it would resurrect the specter of gridlock in Washington.

But, pointing to polls that show the President's approval at an all-time high and national education standards as an overwhelmingly popular issue, White House aides expressed confidence that Mr. Clinton would win such a fight. Indeed, they seem to be spoiling for one.

The day after he dropped his daughter, Chelsea, at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., Mr. Clinton turned his attention today both to crusading for his education goals and to raising money for the Democrats. He planned to raise almost \$1 million at three San Francisco fund-raisers.

This morning, Mr. Clinton appeared visited a so-called charter school here to highlight \$40 million in new Federal grants for such experimental institutions, which are freed from many public school regulations in exchange for creating a charter, or contract, that lays out how the

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school will operate. Mr. Clinton warned that the Senate change to the finance bill "would abolish very specific and highly successful education programs, like the charter schools."

After amicable talks on the outlines of a balanced-budget deal, Mr. Clinton's education standards plan is emerging as the first devil in the details of this year's budget. Mr. Clinton is asking for a relative pittance, \$16 million, to develop tests that would be measured against new, voluntary reading and math standards. But a House coalition of conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats has staked out its opposition.

On Friday, a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll found that 62 percent of Americans, the highest proportion

in that survey to date, approved of the job Mr. Clinton was doing. It also found that 79 percent approved of his national testing plan.

With his popularity high, Mr. Clinton has kept raising money for the Democrats despite the investigations into his finance practices. Today in San Francisco, he planned to raise \$300,000 at a lunch with 70 guests, \$600,000 at a dinner with 30 guests and \$50,000 at a reception with 400 less wealthy donors.

Aides said the dinner was organized in part by John Doerr, a venture capitalist and one of a group of Silicon Valley millionaires whose policy input and political support Vice President Al Gore has been aggressively soliciting in recent months.

# 1. National Journal

09/20/97Section: EDUCATION;

## *Testing! Testing!*

By ROCHELLE L. STANFIELD

This should be something that has nothing to do with party politics," President Clinton said on Sept. 8 as he described one of his top political priorities. "There's no politics in this, only our children."

He was touting his plan for voluntary national achievement tests that would examine all fourth-graders for reading competence and all eighth-graders for mathematics proficiency to determine whether they meet tough standards in those subjects. He was surrounded, campaign-style, by photogenic elementary school students at a ceremony in the colorful auditorium of a public school in Gambrills, Md., halfway between Washington and Baltimore.

The setting on Capitol Hill had been very different a few days earlier when Rep. William F. Goodling, R-Pa., chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, testified passionately against the President's test scheme: Goodling was surrounded by grown-ups in somber suits and silk ties against a background of dark wood and leather in a Senate hearing room. But the GOP lawmaker's words were almost the same as the President's.

"This has nothing to do with politics," Goodling said repeatedly. "Politics should stop at the schoolhouse door."

But the politicking isn't likely to stop over a national testing program—or any other education program sponsored by the federal government. That's because schooling, unlike most other topics, touches a nerve in the American people. What subjects children are exposed to and how they are taught provoke visceral reactions that are tailor-made for the pols of the land.

So, naturally, politics was in overload in the way that Congress reacted to Clinton's plan, which calls for implementing a national testing program by simply spending money that the Education Department already had. The department spent \$13 million this fiscal year and proposed to spend another \$16 million in fiscal 1998 to develop the tests, and as much as \$90 million in fiscal 1999 to administer them.

Congress has split on the issue. On Sept. 17, the House adopted by a healthy margin—295-125—a Goodling amendment to the Education Department's fiscal 1998 spending bill that would prevent the department from spending any money to develop the tests. More than 70 Democrats signed onto Goodling's protest.

A week earlier, the Senate had overwhelmingly approved funding for the tests in its version of the spending bill, exacting as a concession from the White House a change in the independent board that would oversee the administration of the tests.

The two versions now go to conference, where an attempt will be made to iron out the differences. If the House version prevails, the White House has held out the option of a veto.

Lost in the fight over the appropriation, however, are fundamental policy questions that underlie the political sniping: How would national tests help improve American education? What would they measure that existing tests don't? If new tests are the solution, does the President's plan fill the bill?

### POLITICS NOT AS USUAL

Education policy considerations probably prompted the President's plan—along with the urging of advisers helping Clinton shop around for relatively easy ways to nail down so-called legacies. But the school testing proposal has brought to the surface conflicts that are political in practically every sense of the word: party and ideological politics, divisions between the executive and legislative branches, splits within Congress, federalism issues over local control of the schools, and arcane pedagogical politics.

"It may be just politics, but it's not normal politics," Marshall S. Smith, acting deputy Education secretary, said in an interview. (He and presidential special assistant Michael Cohen were the intellectual parents of the President's plan, which was enunciated in Clinton's February State of the Union message.) Indeed, the test proposal divides friends and draws together enemies.

The plan has mainstream, centrist appeal. Business organizations are all for it. The academic standings of American students must be raised if this country is to compete effectively in a global economy, their argument goes, and that requires tough national education standards, with tests to gauge whether students are measuring up. In fact, although Clinton as governor of Arkansas had promoted high standards and tests to measure whether students met them, this new plan is really another case of his appropriating a Republican idea. President Bush and his Education Secretary, Lamar Alexander, had proposed a more comprehensive set of tests in 1991.

The public also seems to favor national standards and tests. Thus, the latest version of the annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of public attitudes toward public schools, released last month, found that 77 per cent of the respondents favored national standards, 67 per cent endorsed standardized testing to measure achievement and 66 per cent even gave the nod to a national curriculum. That politics is a factor showed up when the pollsters attached Clinton's name to the testing plan; the approval rating dropped to 57 per cent.

Goodling maintained in an interview, however, that a poll he had conducted earlier this month showed that only 22 per cent of respondents favor tests constructed at the federal level, compared with 74 per cent who wanted state or local entities to control the tests.

The notion of a national test sends shivers down the spines of the Religious Right, family advocacy groups and conservative Republicans in general, who see in it the specter of federal intrusion into state, local and family prerogatives. Vocal opposition to the plan, mounted at the last minute by House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., was viewed by many as his attempt to regain favor with conservative congressional forces that earlier in the year had spurned him. Yet Sen. Dan Coats, R-Ind., a conservative who had planned to sponsor Goodling's amendment in the Senate, changed his mind and instead sponsored the amendment modifying the board that would administer the tests.

Democrats are also split. Some liberal Members of Congress, governors and mayors have come to accept standards and tests as the only way to save inner-city schools. That is the conclusion reached by Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., an early skeptic of national testing who aggressively pushed for the President's plan.

But many African-American and Hispanic Members of Congress, along with civil rights and other advocacy groups, were no happier with Clinton's plan than the conservatives were. They saw the tests as simply one more public brand of inferiority that would stigmatize poor, minority and disabled students, especially in the absence of equalized financial support for disadvantaged schools.

"No testing should be instituted unless we also push some new effort to guarantee that every student gets a break in terms of learning," Rep. Major R. Owens, D-N.Y., a senior member of the Education Committee and of the Congressional Black Caucus, said in an interview. Owens had signed a letter, which Goodling circulated among Members, opposing the test plan.

Goodling's opposition to the testing comes from a complex mixture of pressure from conservative members of his committee and the fear of stigmatizing the disadvantaged, layered on top of his 22 years as teacher, principal and superintendent of schools with the school administrator's inherent dislike of standardized tests that compare schools or school districts.

The education establishment is split on testing. Echoing some of Goodling's sentiments, the National Education Association (NEA), the largest teachers' union, had opposed national tests until this summer, when it adopted a lukewarm approval of some exams for certain purposes. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), on the other hand, had been an early advocate of the tests, spurred on by its late president, Al Shanker, who saw them as the only way to jump-start achievement in the inner cities.

But Goodling's political problems with the issue go beyond the plan itself. He resented the need to make policy decisions on an appropriations bill, he said, and he was bothered by the cavalier approach of the White House and Education Department.

Indeed, the Administration's handling of the proposal probably escalated what was sure to be contention into open warfare. Instead of courting congressional Republicans such as Goodling and seeking broad bipartisan support of the idea at the outset, Clinton simply announced his plan as a fait accompli.

And in a desperate drive to hold the first tests in 1999 (that is, during Clinton's term), the Education Department let contracts for test development instead of handing the project over to an independent, bipartisan entity outside the federal government, as Goodling and just about everybody else in the education community expected. In so doing, the department opened itself to criticism and speculation about test questions, teaching methods and educational theory.

"I think they could have avoided an awful lot of the grief they are now getting from conservatives if they had approached this differently from the beginning, but they were arrogant," said education analyst Chester E. Finn, Jr., a former assistant Education secretary and Hudson Institute scholar, who is now president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation in Washington, and who favors national tests but opposes the Clinton plan. "If national testing goes down in flames, it will be because of conservatives who hate the word 'national' and liberals who hate the word 'testing.'"

#### NOT ANOTHER TEST!

Why do we need another test at all, critics ask, arguing that American students are already tested too much.

"To tell the 50 per cent of the students who have been told 100 times that they're not doing well, to tell them one more time that they're not doing well—what does that do to improve the situation?" Goodling demanded.

In fact, others complain, the proposed tests could make a bad situation even worse. "This is not just any old testing," Owens said. "Testing to some kind of a national standard is going to be high-stakes testing, and it's going to put a stigma on the students who don't do well—a number that will follow those students wherever they go."

Not so, reply testing proponents, who insist that these tests will be helpful to students, parents and teachers and that they are necessary precisely because they will be different from any current test.

No single test is given to every fourth-grade or eighth-grade student in the country, so there's no way to tell how the academic advancement of fourth-graders in Detroit differs from the progress of fourth-graders in San Jose, or to tell how close either group comes to meeting a national reading standard. Popular commercial standardized tests—the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, for example—provide comparisons of those who take it. But those tests are graded on a curve; they don't show whether the test takers meet a national standard.

A series of tests sponsored by the Education Department, called the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), are pegged to national standards. But only a sample of children take the tests, and the results have been computed only at the national and state levels. A few school districts are now getting their own NAEP results, but not for individual schools or students. The President's plan would convert NAEP's fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math tests into such individual exams.

"Through that one, single test administration, you would have the possibility that students in one school would know how their scores on that test compare with [those of other] students in their state, in school districts outside their state, indeed,

[in] the nation as a whole," explained Gordon M. Ambach, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, an enthusiastic backer of the plan.

Such reporting will just lead to invidious comparisons between rich and poor schools and districts, Goodling retorts.

"That misses the point!" Ambach shot back. "What everyone is really interested in is measuring a whole variety of high-wealth districts to see which ones are producing better students, and then to measure a whole bunch of low-wealth districts to see which ones are producing higher scores." Districts with low scores would be more likely to adopt the winning practices of those that are in a similar economic position and get high scores, he said.

"These tests will make the notion of high standards very concrete," acting deputy Education secretary Smith added.

"We will be able to give examples of the kinds of knowledge and skills that students will have to have to be able to do well on these tests. And we can make that information available to parents, teachers and the students themselves. In the United States, we don't very often connect the kind of student work you need to know how to do with the kind of [standardized] test we're going to give."

Critics point out, however, that in the absence of a national curriculum—which remains a huge no-no—that isn't a realistic goal. The eighth-grade mathematics test is likely to include algebra questions, although most school districts don't teach algebra in eighth grade. If the districts stick with their own curricula, the test won't be fair to the students. Smith and others hope the test will force states and school districts to teach more algebra—but some educators call that a backwards way to develop a curriculum.

"The whole purpose of these tests," Smith went on, "is to improve the lives of all children."

To Goodling, that objective "is sort of the usual Washington arrogance," he said. Setting education standards is a state responsibility, he insisted. "Here we have all these states upgrading their curriculum, testing to see whether the children are learning, and somehow or other [in the view of the Clinton Administration], that isn't good enough."

The problem, proponents of a national test say, is that what the states are doing generally isn't good enough. Whenever Education Secretary Richard W. Riley makes a speech, testifies or appears on television about this subject, he pulls out a chart showing how fourth-graders rank on state reading assessments versus how they rank on NAEP, the national sample assessment that would form the basis of the new tests. In Riley's home state of South Carolina, for example, 82 per cent of the children met the state standard; only 20 per cent met the NAEP standard. Only in Delaware was the state standard tougher than the NAEP yardstick.

Sandra Stotsky, a Brookline-based education researcher at Harvard and Boston Universities, who co-chaired a committee to draft English-language arts instruction standards for Massachusetts, takes a rather dim view of what most states are doing. "We have so many bad standards documents, poor, inadequate, weak standards documents out there," she said after reviewing the English standards adopted by 28 states, for a report published by Finn's Fordham Foundation. "So I am inclined to favor a national test in grade-four reading."

Not only do state standards range widely, but many states have an implicit policy encouraging the practice of social promotion—or advancing students with their age-mates regardless of the quality of their schoolwork. An AFT study of 85 school districts, released on Sept. 9, concluded that social promotion is "rampant."

Such variance may have been true in the past, but "the whole debate in states has shifted," said Patricia Sullivan, director of education legislation for the National Governors' Association in Washington. "There is less comfort with having poor quality standards than there used to be, because of the comparisons that are being made."

Meanwhile, business leaders say they need job applicants who graduate from schools that adhere to consistent national standards backed up by tests.

"Any major business that has offshoots all over the country doesn't set a different standard for participation in the workplace [in each area]," said Milton Goldberg, executive vice president of the Washington-based National Alliance of Business. "It has common standards, and it has common assessments. We've got to raise academic standards and student performance in this country, and raising standards without having assessments related to those standards is going to make the standards almost meaningless."

#### WHO WRITES THE QUESTIONS?

If national tests are to be given, all sides agree that great care must be taken to assure that they are not federal tests. So why did the White House allow a "federal" taint to mar the proposed tests by going ahead on its own to award contracts for test development?

When considering the launching of the test initiative, the White House, aides say, tried to remove as much politics as it could. That's why Clinton proposed to test only reading and math achievement. What could be more apolitical than such basic skills? And that's also why the Administration proposed adapting NAEP, about as credible and respected a set of tests as exists in the country.

Although NAEP is under the general auspices of the Education Department, these tests are constructed, supervised and administered overall by a 26-member independent bipartisan body called the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), which is composed of governors, state legislators, business representatives and a variety of educators. The logical tactic would have been to turn control of the proposed new tests over to NAGB.

There was one big problem: That was illegal. Congress had forbidden NAGB from testing individual children; it could administer tests only to small groups of students. The White House could have asked Congress to give NAGB the authority to administer this test. Goodling says that's what he expected would happen. No one will say definitively why that course of action

wasn't taken, but there were political considerations: The Administration didn't want to open up a political can of worms. As it turned out, the worms got loose anyway because the White House didn't ask Congress for authority. And timing was a problem; Clinton wanted the tests given in 1999, so the Education Department needed to move quickly. Seeking a change in NAGB's authority would have taken much more time.

Instead, the Education Department asked the research arm of the Council of Chief State School Officers to convert NAEP into a single test for individual students. Currently, any one child is asked only one-sixth of the questions on NAEP. The council's job was to pare down the number of questions so one child could reasonably answer them all in 90 minutes. The reason the Education Department asked the council to head the effort was that for years, the council has held the contract to decide on the kind of questions that NAEP asks.

"We set up a very distinguished NAGB-like panel," the council's Ambach said. "It has representatives from the governors, the state legislatures, business—everyone."

To actually write the test, the department let contracts to a consortium, including the Educational Testing Service, which supervises NAEP operations; independent consulting firms; and huge commercial test publishers, including Harcourt Brace and the California Test Bureau/McGraw Hill. If NAGB or another independent body had been in charge, these same entities would probably have been given the job. The problem was political—it was the federal government who hired them.

"It is so rare that the government is criticized for moving too quickly," acting deputy Education secretary Smith said. "But that's what's happened."

Goodling mounted his offensive against the procedure, and Riley backed down and agreed to ask Congress to give NAGB authority to oversee the tests. The White House-Senate compromise would expand NAGB to include three governors (now there are two)—two of them members of the party not in the White House. But that concession was not sufficient to satisfy Goodling, who pushed his amendment barring financing for the tests through the House.

Goodling calls the national test plan "Smith's Folly." In response, Smith smiles sheepishly. "When I think of other things that were called follies — Seward's Folly for the purchase of Alaska and Fulton's Folly [the steamboat] — I have to think that I'm in good company," he said. "And I think these tests will be just as important." ■

## *American Opinion (A Special Report): A Quarterly Survey of Politics, Economics and Values*

### **Education Is the Top Priority Among Public-Policy Concerns, A Benefit to Democratic Party**

By Sarah McBride  
Staff Reporter  
of The Wall Street Journal

Education has soared to the top of Americans' public-policy concerns, and so far, Democrats are reaping the benefits. In the latest Journal poll, 28% of respondents picked education as their top concern, building on a trend that emerged earlier this year. In past years, education fell well behind issues such as the economy.

A clear majority — 64% — backed national testing of schoolchildren, a favorite initiative of President Clinton. But on school choice, a proposal beloved to Republicans, the nation splits 53% to 44%, with the majority against tax-funded vouchers or tax deductions for parents who send their children to private schools.

The voucher issue doesn't garner support in the same way national testing does, perhaps because many Americans worry that the plan would divert resources from marginal public schools that need it most. Also, most Americans are satisfied with their schools, so the need for more choice doesn't seem so pressing. According to an August Gallup poll, 64% of public-school parents asked to grade the school attended by their eldest child gave it an A or B.

Republicans have often touted the advantages of vouchers for inner-city minority students trapped in failing school systems. But blacks oppose the proposal by a decidedly larger majority than the rest of the population.

Not surprisingly, school choice is favored by a clear majority of Republicans, while almost two-thirds of Democrats oppose it. One bright light for proponents: The key Catholic constituency supports it, 54% to 45%.

Widespread support for national testing apparently reflects parents' desires to know that their children are competitive with those in any area of the country, especially given the increasing mobility of many Americans.

"They know their kids might go to other parts of the country to get jobs," says **Mike Smith, acting deputy secretary of education**. "If my kids can cut it in California, they can also cut it in Wisconsin and Louisiana." Existing tests don't allow one school system to measure itself against another.

Testing enjoyed support among all groups, especially among Democrats and people with school-age children. While the Congressional Black Caucus opposes national tests, charging they would brand minorities in poorly performing schools as underachievers, the poll shows blacks favor national testing by a slightly higher margin than whites. Factors such as income or whether the respondents live in urban or rural areas made little difference.

The results show Democrats are riding the national mood on both major educational initiatives of the day, something that leaves the White House happy. Paul Begala, an adviser to President Clinton, called the testing issue "a real winner" for Democrats and hopes to turn the president's opposition on the voucher issue to his advantage as well. "We can win that battle if we wage it," he says.

The testing plan suffered a setback on Tuesday, when the House voted against using federal money to administer the exams. The Senate endorsed a testing proposal last week. ■

## 1. Times Educational Supplement

September 19, 1997

### ***United States: Promotion without progress attacked***

**Pupils should stay in lower grades until they have learned enough to move on.**

**Tim Cornwell reports**

The practice of "social promotion" - moving pupils on a class regardless of their ability - must stop according to the new US teachers' union chief Sandra Feldman.

In her Washington political debut Ms Feldman said the phenomenon was a major problem in American schools. She blamed it for a lack of reading, writing, and maths skills, particularly among the urban poor.

The American press has reported rising complaints about the number of students arriving in high school and colleges requiring remedial lessons in the basics they should have acquired years before.

No US school district has an explicit policy of "social promotion", according to a survey by Ms Feldman's union, the American Federation of Teachers. But nearly half its members say they have been put under pressure to promote students to the next year who were not ready to move on.

Children often progress through the grades simply by putting in time because of pressure from parents, determined their child will not suffer the stigma of staying down a year. And principals are reluctant to halt their progress and make the school look bad.

A small but growing minority of districts have listened to the critics. Chicago, with 425,000 students this summer, required 42,000 to enter summer courses in reading or mathematics or face being failed.

The city of Cincinnati expressly banned social promotion; where before, 95 per cent of pupils automatically moved on, nearly a third were held back in the early elementary grades last year.

It is estimated that between 15 and 20 per cent of American pupils are held back in the same grade in any year. In urban districts, more than 50 per cent of children will be retained at least once.

Ms Feldman praised school districts in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Albuquerque, New Mexico for singling out pupils who are in danger of failing and setting up special support programmes. For struggling students lagging behind, Cincinnati has established "plus classes" with fewer students and intensive teaching methods.

But most school districts tacitly encourage moving pupils up regardless of their grades in the previous year, Ms Feldman said. They do it with rules that forbid holding students back more than once, or holding back those with poor English or learning disabilities.

Feldman used social promotion to make the case for higher standards and the national tests which President Bill Clinton has proposed, which are now running into political trouble (see below).

The problem, she said, is that there are no agreed standards defining what students should know and be able to do at various grade levels. One school in Nevada required only, for example, that "student advancement through the curriculum should be according to the student's demonstrated ability".

In Long Beach, California, promotion to the next grade required students to "demonstrate sufficient growth in learning required basic skills".

In Pennsylvania, the AFT dug up a draft set of required "student learning outcomes" which demanded that "all students understand and appreciate their worth as unique and capable individuals and exhibit self-esteem". By contrast, national history standards require pupils to explain British imperial policy following the history of Paris in 1763, and the chronology of the outbreak of the American revolution. ■

# Daily Education News

Friday, September 19, 1997

U.S. Department of Education

Office of Public Affairs

FB-10B, Room 2200 • 401-1218

Norman Greenberg, Editor

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*Today Debate: Student-Athletes & Grades*

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## 1. Education Daily

September 19, 1997

# ***GORTON DEFENDS BLOCK PLAN AMID JEFFORDS' CRITICISM***

**T**he Senate architect of a plan to roll most federal K-12 education spending into local block grants said yesterday that he's confident House and Senate conferees will accept the idea.

Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., who will serve on the conference committee, acknowledged at a news briefing yesterday that it will be difficult to maneuver his block grants into the final fiscal 1998 funding bill for education, labor and health programs.

But Gorton said Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott this week spoke with House Speaker Newt Gingrich and House GOP leaders on the matter and they are "highly enthusiastic."

Still, not all Senate Republicans back it, and a key opponent lashed out yesterday during a conference of school administrators.

'Dangerous' Amendment Sen. James Jeffords, R-Vt., chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, told the American Association of School Administrators' legislative conference that the provision is "a very bad and dangerous amendment." He reiterated earlier complaints that it would lead states and localities to lower property taxes at the expense of school spending.

Jeffords said he was relieved that the House didn't include a similar provision Wednesday when it passed its spending bill (ED, Sept. 18).

Democratic staffers had said Rep. Peter Hoekstra, R-Mich., didn't have enough support for his planned amendment, and opted not to offer it. But GOP staffers—and some education lobbyists—said yesterday that the amendment was nixed partly because of House rules.

Meanwhile, Jack Jennings, director of the Center for Education Policy and a former Democratic education staffer, told the administrators that passage of the Gorton amendment signals a realization that federal programs are too complex.

But he complained that the Senate plan "has no fiscal accountability or educational accountability," which would lead to reduced funding.

"With block grants, the money goes straight down because you don't have anything to show for it," he said.

While Gorton's amendment ensures that no state would lose money next year, in the past, converting education funding into block grants had led to decreases, Jennings said.

### **Still Work For ED**

At the news briefing, Gorton countered claims his amendment is designed to gut and shut down the Education Department.

"We're not trying to destroy the Department of Education," Gorton said, observing his amendment leaves intact higher education programs, such as student aid, which ED would still run.

He also said he's not using the amendment as a bargaining chip to counter President Clinton's proposed voluntary national testing program when the House and Senate hammer out differences in their spending plans.

Gorton said he intends to let the tests go forward if Congress approves them, noting there would be enough money to cover the costs of the tests.

The Senate funding plan would require that an independent, bipartisan board steer the tests for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math, but the House voted to bar Clinton from spending any more money to set up the tests, which he wants to begin in 1999 (ED, Sept. 18).

House conferees are expected to be named next week. The Senate has not announced when it will name negotiators. — William J. Cahir, Matthew Dembicki, Laureen Lazarovici■

## 1. Associated Press

09-19 2:03a

### *Education secretary uses Florida visit to pitch national testing*

By TOM BAYLES

Associated Press Writer

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) - While Florida's education commissioner thinks testing of students should be left up to the states, President Bill Clinton's education secretary urged Florida business leaders to support a national testing program.

"These tests can be a real breakthrough in two areas that we've simply got to improve," **Education Secretary Richard Riley** told members of the Florida Chamber of Commerce Thursday. "(They) will be rigorous tests and challenge students to meet high standards. I ask each of you to raise your voices in support of them."

Frank Brogan, Florida's Education Commissioner, however, feels the national tests would be - at best - a watered-down version of exams the state will be giving students starting in January.

"Commissioner Brogan thinks education has to be a state's issue and has to be on the local level," said Laurie Cain, a Brogan spokeswoman.

Brogan was traveling out-of-state Thursday afternoon and unavailable for comment.

The top item on President Clinton's education agenda faces an uphill struggle after the House rejected standardized national tests for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math. The Senate approved them last week.

Florida has spent \$17 million on the development of the Sunshine State Standards. Cain calls them "very rigid" criteria in seven subject areas designed to ensure a student has the basic skills to succeed after high school.

The state is also spending \$26 million to implement Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. In January, testing will begin in 4th, 8th, and 10th grades in language arts and math.

Cain said FCAT testing is rigorous and comprehensive, moreso than any federal testing program "because special interest groups would, unfortunately, have a great deal of influence."

She said a national test would have to be developed by an outside, independent, non-governmental agency to be credible, although there were still be the problem of choosing which group's standards to measure the test against.

"President Clinton is proposing to have a national test based on no standards," Cain said. "The problem then is if you backtrack and come up with standards, whose standards do you use?"

Cain said there is one way Brogan may look more favorably on a national test.

"If President Clinton wants to use our standards, we'd welcome that," she said.

Seventy-five Democrats joined Republicans Tuesday in the 295-125 House vote to halt money for the voluntary tests. But the Senate had voted last week to let the tests go forward after the Clinton administration agreed to hand control of the tests to an independent board.

The differing votes mean the administration, House and Senate will have to work out a compromise.

"We have an important federal role, one of leadership," Riley said after his speech. "Not control, but support." ■

## 1. Miami Herald

September 19, 1997

### *Clinton's education boss visits S. Florida*

By SABRINA WALTERS  
and JACQUELINE CHARLES  
Herald Staff Writers

President Clinton's top education adviser urged Broward business and community leaders to make easing school crowding a priority, then told them the solution to the problem lies not in Washington, but with states and local communities.

"Student enrollment in Florida has been soaring, and school overcrowding has become a serious problem," U.S. Secretary of Education **Richard Riley** said Thursday. "We cannot build strong communities without strong schools."

Riley was the keynote speaker at a two-day educational conference at Fort Lauderdale's Hyatt Regency Pier 66. The conference, sponsored by the Florida Chamber of Commerce, was intended to show businesses how they could encourage, and take part in, school reforms.

The Florida stop comes at about the midway point of Riley's three-month "America Goes Back to School" national tour. He touted some of Clinton's educational initiatives, including:

Continued support for the president's \$5 billion school construction proposal, which has stalled in Congress. The plan would generate \$20 billion in local school construction activity. Broward's cut would be \$16.3 million, roughly the cost of a middle school.

Across-the-board higher standards for kindergarten through high school students.

Greater emphasis on math, science and the technologies in all grades.

More money for college in the form of tax breaks and cash incentives, and even more for students who go on to graduate school.

Voluntary national tests for fourth-graders (reading) and eighth-graders (math).

Earlier in the day, Riley visited two Dade magnet high schools — MAST Academy and Northwestern — where science and math are emphasized in marine science and medicine curriculums.

"More than any time in our nation's history, education is the ticket," Riley told students, teachers and Dade County Public School administrators at Northwestern High, which this year moved into a new building in Liberty City.

"We all need to rally around this cause," he said.

He blasted Congressional Republicans who have sought to dismantle the Department of Education and those who have tried to quash Clinton administration efforts to offer scholarships to families with college-bound children and to create national standards.

"The first question you must ask people who criticize education is, 'When was the last time you have been in a classroom,'" Riley said.

Riley said everyone should be concerned about crowded classrooms, a situation causing great concern in South Florida. He pointed to a recent education department study that put Dade and Broward counties at the top of the list of fastest-growing schools in the nation.

"The baby-boom echo has really made an echo here," Riley said. "I hope we see something come out from Congress for school construction."

Riley didn't just talk policy; he got a firsthand look at some of the programs he is touting.

At MAST, a national Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, Riley looked down from a second-floor balcony to watch students practice underwater photography. He also saw math students plot coordinates for ships using graphing calculators.

At Northwestern, which through its magnet program offers courses that prepare students for jobs in the medical field, ninth-graders wearing goggles in a science lab used beam balances to weigh samples as Riley watched.

Rose Dorsainville, 18, a senior, said Riley's speech was more of a pep talk for her.

"I thought it was inspiring. I'll keep it with me when I go off to college," said Rose, who hopes to go to medical school.

Said Fernande Saintilus, 17, who plans to attend Florida A & M in the fall: "It was good to hear it from him that he cares so much about education." ■

## 1. Ft. Lauderdale Sun Sentinel

September 19, 1997

### *U.S. Education Secretary says state and community responsible for easing overcrowding*

By RAFAEL LORENTE

Staff Writer

U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley told a group of Florida business leaders Thursday that it is the responsibility of states such as Florida and communities such as Broward to see to it that school crowding is alleviated and education improved.

The federal government, he said, will help where it can.

"Generally speaking in this country, the bricks and mortar for building schools is considered to be a local responsibility," Riley told attendees at the second annual WorldClass Education Center Conference at the Hyatt Regency Pier 66 in Fort Lauderdale.

The WorldClass Education Center is an organization of chambers of commerce and business leaders working to reform schools in Florida. Business leaders are trained to learn what it takes to create better schools, then sent out to act as leaders in their communities.

Riley praised the organization and said it was a similar partnership that helped him reform schools in South Carolina when he was governor of that state.

He said communities that improve their schools will find businesses expanding and moving to their areas.

Riley said Broward, Palm Beach, Dade and Orange counties made up four of the 10 fastest growing school districts in the country from 1984 to 1994. This year's record 52 million public and private school students in the country will grow every year through the next decade, he said.

Riley said President Clinton will continue pushing for a plan that would generate \$20 billion in school construction across the country. The measure, which failed in Congress this year, would have sent about \$16 million to Broward.

A scaled-down version of the plan being pushed by Democrats in Congress would generate \$58 million for Florida. But other than the relatively small amount of construction money and the economic benefits of the balanced budget agreement signed by the president, Riley touted only national testing as a way for the federal government to help local schools.

The plan calls for testing fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math all over the country. The test would allow comparisons among students, states and with countries around the world, Riley said.

He said it should not be seen as competing with state initiatives such as the Florida Writes test.

"For the first time, the parents of students in West Palm Beach, Fla., would know that their children are getting the education they need to compete," Riley said.

For more information and pamphlets from the Department of Education, call 800-USA-LEARN.■

imperative." Big cabinet  
oyed to win passage, but  
in trouble with both  
(Article on Page A2)

61-39 to fund the Na-  
for the Arts, proposing  
but warned that  
the White House  
seems more widely  
The House has voted to  
(Article on Page B6)

AIDS fell 6% to 56,730 in  
the year earlier, the first  
the history of the epi-  
the Centers for Disease  
tion. New combination  
edited with delaying the  
AIDS in those with HIV.

tourist bus in Cairo killed  
them Germans, outside  
um. Authorities immedi-  
slim militants, who have  
attacks on tourist sites.  
of three gunmen, who  
tern business dress.

deal with a U.S. man  
move three families out  
a Palestinian neighbor-  
alem, but replace them  
nts. Arafat called it "a  
applauded the move.

sickle-cell anemia had  
out by 90% with monthly  
according to a Medical  
study the government  
n do its findings.  
isk overload.

s parliament appeared  
approval a week after  
cked its own home-rul-  
ish body's powers are  
he Labor-backed plan.

man was barred from  
a near-fight with New  
ez. The California Re-  
g his defeat last year,  
d illegally in the race.

plane and bailing out of the country. Mr.  
Headley senses that they feel as if "Big  
Brother is breathing down their necks."

Their paranoia is contagious: Ken  
Lambert, who happened to sit next to Mr.  
Headley on the fund manager's next flight,  
from Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok, Thailand,  
finds him seething, his head buried in a  
newspaper. "What's wrong?" asks Mr.  
Lambert, a regional president for New  
York advertising firm D'Arcy Masius Ben-  
son & Bowles Communications. "I'll tell  
you when we're 10 minutes out of K.L.!"  
snaps Mr. Headley, who is reading yet  
another article about Mr. Mahathir casti-  
gating foreign investors for Malaysia's  
currency woes.

"I was close to tears on that plane," Mr.  
Headley says when he gets to Bangkok. "I  
was really angry," partly because of Mr.  
Mahathir's remarks but also because "I  
lost a lot of money."

The up-and-coming fund manager has  
an awful lot riding on Asia: his profes-  
sional reputation, his investors'  
money and his own wallet. Matthews  
International Capital Management, the  
five-year-old firm in which he  
owns about a 10%  
interest, has tied its  
future to Asia's  
emerging nations;  
it runs three Asia-  
only mutual funds.  
But Asian stocks  
have been luke-  
warm performers in the past few years,  
and the three funds together have gar-  
nered just \$70 million in assets, not enough  
for the firm to turn a profit.

Landing in Thailand, Mr. Headley feels  
a sense of relief. Bangkok's more-open  
political environment is evident in newspa-  
per headlines calling Thai government  
officials "tyrants" and "bastards."

The picture brightens further once Mr.  
Headley checks into his Bangkok hotel and  
calls his boss, G. Paul Matthews, in San  
Francisco. The news: Malaysia's Mr. Ma-  
pleuse Turn to Page A6, Column 4



Mark Headley

they say imports are generally bad for  
the U.S. because they take away American  
jobs and hurt the wages of American  
workers. GOP Ways and Means Chairman  
Archer says fast-track will "require close to  
90 Democratic votes to be comfortable" of  
passage in the House.

Clinton's plan angers labor, giving  
union officials second thoughts about  
how warmly to welcome him at next  
week's AFL-CIO convention in Pitts-  
burgh.

**CONSERVATIVES LAUNCH** a new at-  
tack on national reading and math tests  
proposed by Clinton. The tests would be  
"poisoned by political correctness," charges  
William Bennett. Americans by 79% to 18%  
support national testing.

**WHO'S THE BOSS:** FCC Chairman  
Hundt, feuding with commissioners over a  
botched auction of wireless licenses, sends  
an e-mail reminding them who is in charge:  
The FCC "is, in short, personified not by  
commissioners but by the CEO (who is also  
the chairman)" and commission staff.

**THE WHITE HOUSE REJECTS** the  
Treasury Department's top two candidates  
to run the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. -  
New Hampshire banker Lawrence Connell  
and World Bank official Jon Flechter, both  
experienced Washington hands. White  
House officials instead lean toward Hawaii  
lawyer Donna Tanoue.

**ROYAL DEATH:** Americans by 56%  
to 40% think there has been too much press  
coverage about Princess Diana's death. A  
majority believes the British monarchy has  
less of a future than before she died. Over  
80% support press restrictions on coverage of  
Princes William and Harry.

**SOCIAL SECURITY OVERHAUL** gets  
increased attention after the budget deal.

Treasury Secretary Rubin, Budget Direc-  
tor Raines and Economic Council Chief  
Sperling meet to plot strategy. The Senate  
Budget Committee creates a task force led  
by New Hampshire Sen. Gregg. Clintonites  
say the first goal will be a campaign to  
convince the public that the system needs a  
bold fix. In the poll, 83% already support  
major changes.

Americans by 55% to 23% approve of  
the balanced-budget agreement. If the gov-  
ernment starts having a surplus, 48% back  
using the money for higher spending on  
education and health care. Only 25% would  
reduce the national debt, while 21% would  
opt for tax cuts. Clinton aides say they won't  
use any projected surplus for spending.

"Everyone should stop trying to  
spend money we don't yet have," Sperl-  
ing says.

**MINOR MEMOS:** Prince Albert vs.  
Prince Charles: While positive feelings to-  
ward Gore drop to a personal low of 38% of  
Americans, that beats the 18% who feel  
positively about the heir to the throne of  
England. ... After the flap over Gore's  
fund-raising phone calls, potential White  
House rival Gephardt jokingly introduces  
the vice president by saying, "Whenever  
we've 'called up' Al Gore, he's been there.  
He's always answered 'the call.'"

-RONALD G. STAFFER

ranging from crowded public scho-  
rooms to allegations of police bi-  
Mr. Giuliani is "not great toward il-  
people," says Mary Hall, a city  
employee. "He's not for the poor. U  
circumstances would I vote for him

At the same time, New York City  
safer, cleaner and wealthier place  
was when Mr. Giuliani took over 3  
ago, and most of those gains are vi-  
black as well as white neighborho  
Gamble, a 37-year-old import sp  
with U.S. Customs, says his great-  
Harlem used to ask him to take  
suburban Westchester County to s-  
don't get those calls anymore. S  
shop along 125th Street, in her ne-  
hood," he says, adding that the r  
removal of the street vendors  
crowded sidewalks also helped.

**No More 'Balkanization'**

To Mr. Giuliani, such comments  
he needs to hear. Blacks "see that I  
to them in a different way than prop-  
used to be in this office. I'm going to  
very hard for you . . . and I'm not go-  
condescend to you. But I'm going to  
the same from you."

That explains, he says, why he de-  
early in his term to dissolve city c-  
designed to serve the interests of b  
Latinos, Jews, Asians, and gays an-  
bians. The departments were evider  
"Balkanization," he says, and jettis-  
them was his way of telling consti-  
"Let's just relate to you as citizens  
city."

But sometimes in New York, the  
issue can resonate in very different v-  
The stunning drop in the crime rate  
helped make Mr. Giuliani popular in r-  
of the city's liberal white neighborho  
But for some blacks, who say they  
seen a sharp rise in police arrogance  
brutality, there are deep misgivings:  
don't like the things that have been g-  
on with the police. I have a problem  
the end justifying the means," says T-  
Irvin, 33, manager of the X-Press clot-  
store in Harlem. Still, he adds, "the  
ways at night are safe. You see a l-  
Caucasians on the trains at night, and  
didn't see that in the '80s."

**Among Blacks, 20% Support**

Then, there is the political calculu-  
blacks are feeling marginalized, it may  
because Mr. Giuliani likely doesn't in-  
their votes to win. He defeated Mr. Di-  
in 1993 after getting only 5% of the bl-  
vote. Current polls show the mayor lik-  
to get about 20% of black votes, and he  
a comfortable lead over Ms. Messinger.

Mr. Giuliani says election results de-  
matter in doling out city services -  
people who think he gives blacks l-  
attention because they didn't support h-  
in 1993 have "a bigoted view of the wor-  
If that were the case, he says, he wo-  
have concentrated the city's services  
predominantly white Staten Island, wh-  
he carried by a huge margin. Instead,  
says, "Crime is down in African-Ameri-  
neighborhoods" more than in many o-  
parts of the city.

Nowhere was the mayor's attitude  
ward the race issue more evident than  
his handling of the opening of the Art  
Ashe Stadium, just before the U.S. O-

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WSJ 9/19/97

Petersburg TimesSeptember 19, 1997

## *Church, state join in common cause: schools*

By JIM DeBROSSE

ST. PETERSBURG — For decades, churches and public schools have gone their separate ways in America, divided by constitutional barriers and increasing enmity over the values being taught in the nation's classrooms.

Now faith and education leaders in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties are hoping they can team up to help solve the lagging achievement of youngsters in inner-city schools — an effort that has the blessing U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley, who visits St. Petersburg today.

Riley is hosting a religion and education summit at the St. Petersburg campus of the University of South Florida, where 300 education, religious and community leaders are expected to attend, including Gov. Lawton Chiles and Mayor David Fischer.

The summit is a response to violent racial disturbances that rocked St. Petersburg in October and November of 1996. Riley has attended two similar summits in the last 18 months, in Massachusetts and Delaware, aimed at finding an appropriate bridge between church and state on education issues.

The goals of the summit here are to encourage family involvement in education, to develop alternatives to suspension and expulsion and to ensure that every child learns to read well by the end of third grade. Educators are calling on clergy to help raise an army of volunteer tutors to work with students in the highest-poverty schools in Pinellas and Hillsborough.

"We're hoping the faith community will see a major role in improving education, and a role that doesn't come into conflict with any constitutional restrictions," said Stanley Williams, the secretary's regional representative in Atlanta.

"If schools are going to improve, it's going to take strong family-school relationships. And the one organization that can bring those two together are the churches," Williams said. "We envision pastors using the pulpit to sell strong family-school ties."

Williams said a successful school-church partnership in St. Petersburg "could create a formula that could be taken throughout the region and the country."

Riley also will speak today to fourth-graders at Campbell Park Elementary School in St. Petersburg about the importance of national education standards. President Clinton has urged voluntary national tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math — an idea that has been attacked by both liberals and conservatives as too much federal intrusion.

Riley defended the tests in an interview Thursday, saying they were needed to "focus the country on the absolutely critical importance of mastering reading in the early years and mastering math before you go into high school."

The tests are also a way to let parents and teachers know if students are on the right track. "There's no benefit whatsoever in not having that information in teachers' hands and in parents' hands," Riley said. ■

## 1. Boston Globe

September 19, 1997

### *A test for the US House*

This week's House vote against nationwide student tests in reading and math was based partly on a demonstrably wrong argument - that such tests are superfluous.

"We know where we are with our kids.... States already administer hundreds of tests," said Representative John Edward Porter, an Illinois Republican. "Further tests don't add anything."

Circle false on your answer sheet.

The testing currently done by states is a hodgepodge, including a handful of commercially marketed tests that compete with one another and tests developed within individual states and school systems and given nowhere else. The results can be useful locally but give little sense of how states, schools, and individual students compare with their counterparts nationwide.

Indeed, many states grade their tests with standards that exaggerate their own performance. This creates the so-called Lake Wobegon effect - nearly all the states are above average.

Such obvious bunkum is dangerous, since it allows teachers and administrators to avoid confronting their own mediocre results. Yet it occurs in state after state.

The closest thing to national testing is done by the National Assessment of Educational Progress - surveys that by law cannot include more than 3 percent of students. According to those surveys, 35 percent of Wisconsin fourth-graders read at a proficient or advanced level for their grade, but Wisconsin says 88 percent met the standards of its own reading test. Only 15 percent met the National Assessment standard in Louisiana, but 88 percent met the state standard. In math, state officials rated eighth-graders higher than the National Assessment did by 27 percent in Michigan and 65 percent in Georgia.

Universal tests are the only way to identify the schools and classrooms that need help.

Fortunately, the Senate approved President Clinton's modest proposal for voluntary national testing of fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math. The House, in conference, should agree. The results are not superfluous; they are essential.■

## 1. The NewsHour (PBS)

September 18, 1997

### *PENCILS DOWN...*

House Republicans — along with a number of Democrats — voted to ban funding for national educational standards. Elizabeth Farnsworth provides excerpts from the three hours of debate. Followed by a discussion with the NewsHour's regular panel of regional commentators.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Last January, in his State of the Union Address, President Clinton proposed two national tests. The President wants all fourth graders to be tested in reading and all eighth graders in math. The administration's plan set off a political firestorm culminating this week in the House of Representatives.

For three hours Tuesday evening the House of Representatives debated a question that most members would agree goes to the core of public service — what's best for America's children?

REP. STENY HOYER, (D) Maryland: Mr. Chairman there was a book written by Jonathan Kozol some years ago. The title of that book was *Death at an Early Age*. The premise of that book was that we do not have high expectations of some young people — minority, young people — educationally deprived young people, economically deprived young people. And because we do not have high expectations that they will perform, guess what, they meet those expectations. They are low ones.

But if we had a way to assess all of our students, then their parents would know that our expectations were not high enough for their children or that our performance in getting them to our expectations were not successful.

Rep. Goodling leads the opposition.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: At issue was President Clinton's plan to develop a standard national reading test for fourth graders and a math test for eighth graders. The tests would be voluntary. States and local school boards would have the option of participating.

REP. BILL GOODLING, (R) Pennsylvania: Nonsense! What federal program do you know, once it was started, is voluntary?

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Republican Bill Goodling spoke from 22 years of experience as a teacher, principal, school superintendent, and school board president.

REP. BILL GOODLING: As soon as School A decides to do the test they are going to demand that School B does the test and then School C is going to demand that they get what School B got, and it won't be long until as a matter of fact it will be a national individual test.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Goodling's voice has been the strongest in Congress opposed to national testing, and on Tuesday, he was lining up support for an amendment to the education spending bill that would ensure no money could be spent on the President's plan.

REP. LINDSEY GRAHAM, (R) South Carolina: Take some time to find out how much money is being spent at the local level and see if this \$100 million program does any good, or we should take the \$100 million and give it to the classroom teacher, who will actually meet their child every day and see if they can help produce a better result.

Test supporters cite children falling behind.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Throughout the evening members came to the floor to highlight the merits of national testing and expose its shortcomings.

REP. JAMES MORAN, (D) Virginia: Today we are behind other nations in educational achievement. 40 percent of our children are not reading at the level they should be; 20 percent of our 8th graders are not even taking Algebra. We know these statistics because we recently conducted studies comparing the achievement of our students with those in other countries. This analysis is a valuable tool for educators and the administration is trying to conduct a similar analysis to determine how local school districts compare nationally. It is the same kind of approach to find out what we need to be doing to better serve our students.

REP. CALVIN DOOLEY, (D) California: And what the voluntary testing will allow — will allow that parent and those schools to gain a greater understanding of whether or not they need to be doing a better job; whether or not they ought to be making some improvements in the way they're trying to educate their children and how they make them more proficient in reading. We're going to be doing a better job in giving schools and again parents the information they need to know whether or not they ought to be doing something and trying to develop some of the basic math skills which are critical to an individual's future success.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: One of the one of the main arguments against national testing was fear of expanding the federal government's role in education.

REP. CHARLES NORWOOD, (R) Georgia: What this debate is really about is not testing, but it is about curriculum. Testing is just the next step in a liberal agenda for Washington to seize control of our local schools. My folks at home don't want that. They don't think the Department of Education should run their local schools. If the federal government established testing on which all of our school systems are judged, the next step will be for the federal government to establish a national curriculum

to match the tests.

REP. ASA HUTCHINSON, (R) Arkansas: We need to keep control of our children's education in the hands of the local people who work daily with our children and our parents to properly educate them. They are the most qualified to assess their educational needs. We do not need to justify an even more bloated and unmanageable Department of Education. Let's invest the money in our children, not in our administrative paperwork.

Congressional Black Caucus say tests could stigmatize minorities.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Republicans were nearly united in opposing national testing, but they were joined by members of the Congressional Black Caucus, which resulted in an interesting debate among Democratic liberals.

REP. MAXINE WATERS, (D) California: The CBC cannot support any testing that may further stigmatize our children and force them into lower educational tracks and special education classes. I recently reviewed the test results of a test in California. It may have been the achievement test. And it told me what I already knew; the kids from Beverly Hills did very well, the kids from Compton and from Watts did not do as well. Our children are failing because, in many cases, there's just plain lack of resources in districts that are poor, that don't have the resources.

REP. MAURICE HINCHEY, (D) New York: Some of said that testing establishes a stigma. Well, what kind of stigma is worse than the stigma of not being able to do simple mathematics, or what kind of stigma is worse than the stigma of not being able to read and write, to be able to communicate properly?

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: But Republicans held solid. And with the support of some 70 Democrats, they easily approved Bill Goodling's amendment blocking any funding for national testing. However, the House vote sets up a confrontation with the Senate, which last week just as easily approved funding for national testing.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Now, the national testing debate as seen by the NewsHour's regular panel of regional commentators: Patrick McGuigan of the Daily Oklahoman; Mike Barnicle of the Boston Globe; Lee Cullum of the Dallas Morning News; Bob Kittle of the San Diego Union Tribune; and Cynthia Tucker of the Atlanta Constitution. Cynthia Tucker, should there be national testing?

CYNTHIA TUCKER, Atlanta Constitution: Absolutely, Elizabeth. This is one country about to go into the 21st century, competing with nations around the world, and all American students ought to be taught the same things. It strikes me as ludicrous to say local school systems know what their children need to learn. It's not as if this nation is separated into all of these distinct geographical regions anymore and all Southern children need to know is about agriculture. All American children need to meet a minimum standard of mathematics and reading. And that is not —not only not bizarre, it's a very reasonable proposal.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Pat McGuigan, should there be testing so that all students are taught the same thing?

PATRICK MCGUIGAN, Daily Oklahoman: Absolutely not. I think that a nationalized federal test is a bad idea. I think education should be local and personal; it should not be federal and bureaucratized. I join the critics, both left and right, in questioning the utility of all the money that's going to be spent on this. And I would much rather see —even though I'm dubious about the entire federal role in education —I would much rather see all of that money sent to the states, most of which are already testing. Here in Oklahoma we have a criterion reference test spread throughout the elementary and secondary years. And I'd much sooner trust the findings of the Oklahoma superintendent of public instruction than I would the federal U.S. Department of Education. I disagree with Cynthia on this one.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Mike Barnicle, should all this —money be sent to the states, as Pat says, or should there be national testing?

MIKE BARNICLE, Boston Globe: Well, I think there probably should be "a" test. I think any test that gets children up for taking a test, that gets them into the discipline of having to take a test is probably a good thing. But that's not really the issue, and I think most of us realize it. I mean, you heard in that piece that preceded us a pack of politicians talking like politicians instead of parents.

The real problem with public education in this country is parental involvement; it's discipline in the schools; it's the sad fact that too many adults today know more about the death of Princess Diana than they know what their children are going to have for homework this evening. They know that the school day is too short. They know that the school year is too short. They know that the kids are not getting what they ought to out of public school. They know that by the time they get to the fourth grade or the eighth grade for the math test it's too late for many of these children. The schools have to get back to the basics, and people in this country have to get the feeling that they're getting the best bang for their buck in public education, which they certainly are not now. I have seven kids, and I know I'm not.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Bob Kittle, is that right, that the issue is not really testing but these other matters that Mike just talked about?

ROBERT KITTLE, San Diego Union Tribune: Well, the real issue, Elizabeth, is accountability. And that's why we need a national test. We cannot hold —our parents cannot hold public officials —school board members cannot hold our schools accountable unless we know how they are doing. And we don't know how they are doing when we have this patchwork of tests that is now being used throughout the country. It's impossible for me as a parent in San Diego, for example, to know whether the schools my children attend are doing as well as the schools say in Oklahoma or in Georgia.

And that's why we need one yardstick to measure how students are doing. And with that yardstick then we can take the schools that are not performing well, whether they're in the inner city or elsewhere, and redirect our energies there, see what can be done, what kind of remedial action might be taken to help schools that are not performing well. And the schools that are

performing well, perhaps we can learn from them how to do things better.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Lee Cullum, do you agree with that, that the yardstick is what we really need?

LEE CULLUM: Yes. I do agree with that, Elizabeth. I have talked to a number of people the last two or three days about this issue, and I certainly find those who share the concerns expressed on that tape and expressed by Patrick McGuigan in Oklahoma City, but I also called a couple of educators whom I respect, one a woman named Liza Lee here in Dallas, who runs a private school but is very interested in public education. She says that a national test would be an efficient but blurry snapshot of where we are right now.

And it is not—it's a limited look at intelligence and achievement, but it could be useful. I also talked with Don Hearse at the University of Virginia, who is giving his life to working with elementary schoolchildren. And he says that the test, in principle, is a good idea, but you have to be very careful of the content, especially in math. You want the questions to be questions that are susceptible to factual objective answers and not the fuzzy stuff that Lynch Haney quite correctly complains about. So my own view is yes, have the test, be careful of the content, and don't let it become a tracking mechanism. Don't let it become a part of the permanent record of schoolchildren today.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Bob Kittle, what about the argument that's made that this is not a proper role for federal government, that this is too much big brother getting involved in local issue?

ROBERT KITTLE: I appreciate the concern. We don't want, in my view, to have national education standards driven by a bureaucracy in Washington. But that's not what this testing plan would do. To begin with, it's voluntary. And states and school districts can participate, if they choose to. They will if it's a good test. If it's not a good test, they won't. And there's no way to force them to participate. But beyond that, the testing mechanism, as it was altered in the Senate wouldn't be the Department of Education that would draw up the test; it would be an independent bipartisan board that I think we can trust to come up with some objective, non-politicized standards in reading and mathematics so that we can all see how our children are doing.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: And, Mike Barnicle, are you concerned about—are you concerned that this would give too great a role to the federal government?

MIKE BARNICLE: Yes, I am. I wouldn't want a bunch of bureaucrats from the Department of Education, as well intentioned as they are, you know, having their hands over all over public education in New England and Massachusetts. But, again, it strays from the issue. Public education is the core of this country. It's the foundation of this country. The vast majority of people are educated in public schools, in Boston, and I would imagine all over the country, are being marginalized by politics and you heard the politics of the test in the preceding clip.

They're being marginalized by teachers unions. The kids end up not getting what they ought to get out of the school day. You're going to many libraries and many larger school-urban school systems in this country. You'll find books where President Kennedy is still alive or a man has not yet landed on the Moon. We have to get back to the basics of education as it was thirty, forty, and fifty years ago in this country, where from K through 5, or K through 6, kids learn how to read, write, do math, speak English, and have nice penmanship. That's a critical need I think before we even get into testing.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Pat McGuigan, do you think that because of the problems that everybody's just run through the federal government—I mean, are you not willing to accept the argument that the federal government might be the only way to solve this problem nationally, for there to be national testing?

PATRICK MCGUIGAN: Sure. Well, first of all, I don't think that the public schools are the foundation of the country. I think the foundation of the country is individual human liberty: ordered liberty, government that respects the rights of individuals. I think nationalizing education in this direction would just be another step in doing some things that have not served the country well.

I believe we're going to wind up having a replay if we go this direction, even though Bob is right about the change made in the Senate, that it's a private consortium that'll oversee it in corporation with the Department of Education. I think we'll see a replay of the national history standards fight and what was it, the humanities standard fight before that, because of the polarization that's occurred around these issues. There are lots of testing instruments out there that are very credible and respected, many of which even incorporate the cultural sensitivities that Rep. Waters was talking about in the segment before we spoke.

So I think those testing instruments are there. They're available from the private sector for individual schools and school systems to use. That is a better way to go. Let's get more coal, more coal down into the ranks of our school systems, more resources for our teachers, and better teachers, and better facilities for our kids, rather than yet another testing instrument. I don't think this is a good idea.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Lee Cullum, you said you were for these tests but you didn't want them to be used for tracking and other purposes that might stigmatize some people as—that's a concern, as we heard in the piece. How would you avoid that?

LEE CULLUM: Well, I think you treat it as an indication of where things stand now. You treat it as a guideline to what needs to be done next, but you don't build a database of these test scores. That's how you do it. They don't remain. I think the American way is always to expect people to grow and develop and change. The European way, as you know, is to track people from age 11 or so. They take a very definitive test, and they either go the academic route or the more vocational route. That's not the American idea, and I think this test can be arranged in a way that does not violate the American idea that one can always change and grow and develop.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: And, Cynthia, what do you think about the argument that Maxine Waters and others have made, that the results will be used to stigmatize groups?

CYNTHIA TUCKER: I think it's a ridiculous argument, Elizabeth. The fact of the matter is, is that children coming out of poor school systems, be those children black, white, or brown, are already stigmatized. It's not as if employers don't already know that those children don't have basic skills. They do. Furthermore, it is insulting to suggest that African-American children and Latino children in poor neighborhoods can't master standardized tests. They can. It —Congresswoman Waters was right to suggest that they don't have the resources they need at the moment in many cases, so let's improve the resources. But how will we know that they have measured up to a basic standard unless we test them. And those children absolutely can meet those standards.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Bob Kittle, has this gotten too political, in your view, this whole question?

ROBERT KITTLE: Oh, absolutely. It is a shame actually that we don't have just a private sector solution to this. And, you know, many, many school districts have for years used the Iowa test of basic skills that's used by private schools and public schools. And it provides a benchmark that is not politicized. Unfortunately, it's not used widely enough. It's not used universally. So we need a universal test. And it's too bad that it takes on all of the political baggage that it does, but I just think that with changes made in the bill in the Senate that this is a very sensible idea; we need it; and I hope the House will come around to the idea that this does make sense. It's a way to improve our schools, and that's what it's all about.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Pat McGuigan, just very briefly, too political?

PATRICK MCGUIGAN: Yes. I think it's become too politicized and could increase if we go this direction. If we want models of what works, you don't have to look further than a city like Chicago, where there's a lot of folks who are very challenged economically and yet have succeeded through schools like Marva Collins Westside Preparatory, a private school, and a Catholic school like Providence St. Mills. Those are models —if we want to talk about intervening in ways that will positively affect the delivery of education to our most challenged children, it'd be better to go in empowering those kinds of models than to go towards a national test like this.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Well, thank you all very much.■

## 1. The Atlanta Journal

09/18/97Section: EDITORIAL; Page A; 20

### *School block grants a step toward states*

AMID THE debate concerning national testing of students, the Senate made an interesting move last week: attaching an amendment to strip the U.S. **Department of Education** of much of its influence. The amendment would transform many federal education programs, such as aid for magnet schools, charter schools and immigrant education, into block grants to states. The move would affect 30 percent of the department's budget.

While we are opposed to the federal testing initiative being pushed by President Clinton, we are delighted to see this Senate amendment arise to weaken the federal government's fiscal power over state and local school boards. We have always believed the U.S. Department of Education has been ripe for abolition, or at least merger into another federal agency. Any role for the federal government in education should be small. Schooling our children should always be a local issue, managed, administered and prepared by state and local school boards without the federal mandates that often accompany federal dollars.

Education became a Cabinet post during Jimmy Carter's presidency, when he broke it away from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1979. Since then, Carter's move has created more paperwork and headaches for states and local school boards under the constant supervision of federal officials concerning federally funded programs.

Remarkably, the status of the \$33 billion federal department may play a vital role in whether President Clinton wins congressional approval of his national testing program. The bill will now go to a congressional conference committee. We have opposed the testing program, but the debate over the issue has served one good purpose: putting the spotlight once again on the question of the need for such a large federal education department. ■

# 1. The Christian Science Monitor

September 17, 1997

## *Taking Notes on Japanese Schooling*

Tori Marlan Special to The Christian Science Monitor

NIIGATA, JAPAN — When Takehiko Sawada taught junior high school in Osaka, Japan, an eighth-grader in his homeroom became a chronic truant.

"He tried to put on a school uniform, but he just couldn't," says Mr. Sawada, who's now with the Osaka City Board of Education. "At first his parents were worrying. But finally they came to the conclusion it's not so important to rush him."

Sawada's solution? He'd visit the student at home. They would talk or play Nintendo. Then, if the student was agreeable, they'd settle down for some serious tutoring. The student eventually went on to high school and graduated from college.

Sawada beamed with pride recently when relating this story to a group of educators from Illinois who spent two weeks touring schools in Japan. They were hoping to glimpse what makes Japanese students consistently outperform their American counterparts on international tests, and to gain some understanding of Japanese culture and society.

Sawada's story reinforced what some of them had already concluded: Japanese students excel for reasons beyond what they learn in the classroom.

Sent by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Chicago, the delegation visited elementary, junior high, and high schools in Osaka and Niigata. They saw crowded classrooms, few visual aids, and surprisingly few computers. The ideals of American education - a small teacher-student ratio, student participation, exercises in critical thinking - were mostly absent from the classes they observed.

"In an English class in Niigata, there were 40 kids or more," says Marvin Edwards, superintendent of Elgin Area District 46. "The teacher talked so low you couldn't hear.... Then she asks, 'Does everybody get it?'"

"They couldn't have gotten it because they couldn't have heard it," he goes on. "But they said, 'Yes.' We went to a math class and the kids were extremely noisy. All my life I've been hearing about Japanese education. Now, I see it's not about their education, it's about what they do in addition."

In Japan, school is the center of children's lives, and the functions of parents and teachers tend to merge. At school, students learn everything from morals to how to use chopsticks, and are responsible for serving lunch and cleaning the school after classes.

It is common for teachers to visit students' homes. Teachers and parents communicate through notebooks about tests, homework, and behavior.

Classes are held 220 days a year - including two Saturdays a month - as opposed to 180 in the United States. Compulsory education ends after ninth grade, and only students who pass entrance exams go on to high school and college. Because there is enormous pressure to do well - scores determine entrance to the best schools - private after-hours cram schools, or jukus, are a popular supplement.

Critics say the emphasis on academic achievement comes at the cost of independent thinking. Students wear uniforms and are otherwise encouraged not to stand out. The Ministry of Education sets a national curriculum and approves textbooks. Classes are geared toward average learners, and, some argue, bore the gifted and lose the slow learners.

As the US delegation was winding down its tour, a disturbing crime touched off calls for reform: Police arrested a 14-year-old suspect in the beheading of a school boy in Kobe. The killer blamed his behavior on the educational system and a society that "rendered me invisible."

The arrest prompted Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto to ask, "Where did we go wrong?" An associate professor at Tokyo Metropolitan University was quoted in a newspaper as saying, "I assume that the school system, which pushes students to the wall, will have to be transformed."

According to Junichi Kanza, of the Osaka City Board of Education, the system is already becoming "Americanized." Class size is shrinking, from about 48 students per class 10 years ago to about 40 today, while the dropout rate is increasing (from 2.5 percent in 1995 to 3 percent in 1996 in Osaka). Mr. Kanza says the changes reflect societal shifts. The birth rate has decreased since the mid-1980s, and more students are working nights rather than studying.

An advisory panel to Japan's Ministry of Education recently proposed many reforms, including eliminating Saturday classes and tailoring instruction to individual needs. Experts wonder whether American-style reforms will jeopardize quality, but at least one big difference will remain. Property taxes in the US fund compulsory public education unevenly, while in Japan the government picks up the tab. Regardless of locale, students in Japan have access to the same resources.

The homogeneity of the culture greatly contributes to academic achievements, according to Andrea Kerr, a Chicago public schools administrator and part of the delegation. "Everyone has the same goal, and that's to improve life for the Japanese people."

The US educators left Japan saying they gained a better understanding of Japanese culture and built links for future exchanges. "The contacts we made with our colleagues in Japan have already allowed us to begin to plan ... exchanges," says Merle Erlich, a history teacher at Streamwood High School's World Languages and International Studies Academy in Chicago.

"The experience of traveling to other cultures makes you more sensitive when teaching about them," she adds. "I have a different kind of respect and closeness to the Japanese people that I didn't have before."■

# 1. USA Today

## September 17, 1997

### Opinionline

What commentators are saying across the USA

*President Clinton has proposed standardized national tests on reading for fourth-graders and mathematics for eighth-graders. Some reactions:*

The New York Times in an editorial: "President Clinton's proposal for a national test that would offer detailed comparisons among individual students, schools and states has run into heavy weather

A voluntary national test is far from the 'federal takeover' House Republicans suggest. On the contrary, the test would empower parents by allowing them to know how well their children and schools were doing - and to hold politicians and school officials accountable as never before. Perhaps that is why some in Congress want to abort the plan."

The Plain Dealer, Cleveland, in an editorial: "With a battle brewing over his proposal for a national test for schoolchildren, President Clinton noted: 'If there's one place politics ought to stop in America, it's at the schoolhouse door.' . . . In America, politics begins at the schoolhouse door. Critics say the exams would waste students' time and taxpayers' money while further injecting the federal government into local affairs. Supporters argue that a nation that lags so far behind others academically simply cannot afford such a haphazard approach. Clinton's rhetoric about increased standards for all Americans sounds good. But good ideas can be perverted in Congress and hijacked by bureaucracy. The idea of national testing ought to be debated - politics and all."

The Indianapolis Star in an editorial: "Most Americans . . . see it (testing) as a way to make schools accountable. In that respect, testing can be helpful. But the president's concentration on national testing, by design or not, serves to distract attention from the growing demand for parental choice, vouchers and relaxing the iron grip of teacher unions on public education."

David Gergen, editor at large, U.S. News & World Report: "The notion of national standards and testing holds rich promise for our schools

National tests may yet pass Congress, but they risk being so mauled politically that few states will participate in them. Clinton, who has a fine record in education reform, must now salvage all he can on testing. In coming months, he should rebuild a durable mainstream coalition that will advance us toward national standards as well as testing. Parents and students want the best in education - and they certainly deserve it."

St. Petersburg Times, Florida, in an editorial: "The debate over Clinton's proposal to create a national testing program . . . achieves something positive. It focuses more attention on public education. That accomplishment alone does not justify moving ahead with a controversial proposal that has more to do with achieving political goals than improving local schools."

The Boston Globe in an editorial: "President Clinton's push for national testing . . . deserves enthusiastic support. In a broad national commitment to improve the nation's schools, testing is only one part, but a part that is crucial

Tests do not teach, but they help identify what teaching works and where it is needed."

The Houston Chronicle in an editorial: "What do these (SAT and PSAT) tests tell us? They tell parents and taxpayers that overall achievement in the public schools remains unsatisfactory and that significant progress . . . is uneven and slow. National tests would merely confirm what Americans already know."■

## 1. Los Angeles Times

\* 09/17/97; Edition: Home Edition; Section: National Desk; Page A-14

# ***Clinton Test Plan Suffers House Defeat Schools: A 295-125 vote denies funding for proposal. But education initiative has many supporters in Senate.***

By JANET HOOK; SAM FULWOOD III  
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

WASHINGTON — In a setback for the White House's top education priority, the House on Tuesday voted to deny funding for President Clinton's proposal to create national reading and math tests for schoolchildren.

The vote was 295 to 125, as a bipartisan coalition of 220 Republicans and 75 Democrats joined in opposing the Clinton proposal. The House's one Independent voted with the minority.

Conservative Republicans opposed the testing plan as an unnecessary federal intrusion into education, while many black, Latino and liberal Democrats complained that the tests would stigmatize children in underprivileged school districts.

The vote—which came on an amendment to a broad social spending bill—puts the House on a collision course with Clinton, whose aides are expected to urge him to veto the spending bill if it blocks the testing plan. But Clinton still has many allies in the Senate, which voted, 87 to 13, last week to finance a compromise version of the testing initiative.

The issue will have to be resolved in a House-Senate conference committee that will meet to iron out differences between the two versions of the spending bill.

GOP critics of national testing were heartened by the strong House vote against the plan, but some acknowledged it will be a tough fight in conference because many Republicans in the Senate backed the testing compromise.

A stalemate or veto fight over the testing program could stall funding for a wide swath of social programs, because the larger bill provides funds for the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1.

The proposal for annual national testing of schoolchildren was first suggested by Clinton in his State of the Union speech earlier this year. He is calling for national tests of reading ability for fourth-graders and mathematics ability for eighth-graders. States and school districts would not be required to participate in the testing program, but would be encouraged to do so.

Officials at the Education Department estimate it would cost about \$32 million to design the reading and math tests and up to \$100 million to fully implement them. The testing is proposed to begin by spring 1999.

Responding to concern that the plan would get the government too closely involved in school curriculum, Clinton backed the Senate-passed compromise that calls for the test to be designed by the National Assessment Governing Board, an independent agency created by Congress.

But that compromise did not satisfy House critics, who rallied around the amendment by Rep. William F. Goodling (R-Pa.), chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee, that would prohibit the use of federal funds to create and implement the tests.

Goodling, who spent years as a school principal and administrator, argued that American students are already tested enough.

"You don't help those who are not doing well in education with one more standardized test to tell them 'You're doing poorly,'" said Goodling. "If we have \$100 million to spend, let's help children become reading ready, help parents become better teachers and you don't do that by testing."

Many liberal Democrats—including members of the House's black and Hispanic caucuses—joined such conservatives in opposition, warning that the tests would hurt students in poor districts who are getting inadequate educations through no fault of their own. They argued that tests are a politically appealing alternative to spending programs to improve urban classrooms.

But other Democrats defended Clinton's proposal, saying it did not amount to an unwarranted federal intrusion because participation is voluntary.

Proponents said testing was an important tool for raising academic standards and giving parents a new way to assess schools.

The House also approved an amendment to prohibit use of federal funds to pay for rerunning the 1996 election of Teamsters Union president Ron Carey. A similar amendment won Senate approval. ■

## 1. Education Daily

September 17, 1997

# ***LATEST NATIONAL TEST OFFER TOO LITTLE FOR HOUSE CAUCUSES***

**T**he Education Department is considering letting states and districts use a commercially available reading test in Spanish as an alternative to a voluntary national test for fourth-graders to be offered only in English.

"We are, in a legitimate way, trying to work these testing things out," **Education Secretary Richard Riley** told the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans yesterday.

While House lawmakers are threatening to block federal funding for President Clinton's testing initiative, Riley said ED is considering a plan that would allow schools to use Title I funds for a fourth-grade reading test in Spanish. The exam by CTB/McGraw-Hill is similar to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, on which the national tests will be based, Riley said.

Los Angeles, one of the 15 urban districts and seven states to sign up for the program, recently said it won't give the English-only reading test (ED, Sept. 8).

And a Spanish alternative alone apparently won't win back the support of many Hispanic lawmakers, who are supporting an effort by Rep. Bill Goodling, R-Pa., chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, to halt Clinton's tests (ED, Sept. 5).

Rep. Ruben Hinojosa, D-Texas, who heads the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Education Task Force, said his group wants "blind testing" and additional education support for students who don't score well on the tests.

He said blind testing — identifying scores by number so results can't be traced to an individual student — is needed to prevent discrimination against minority children, particularly in special education placements.

Riley said later at the same meeting that the tests would be designed to be fair so they would not violate federal civil rights laws.

"We have all kinds of plans for accommodations in terms of time, one-on-one testing, small group testing and oral reading of test instructions," he said.

Riley said it would be important to test limited-English-proficient students after three years of English instruction, even if they haven't mastered the language, to get them additional help if they need it. He said students' individual scores would be reported to parents in a language they understand.

### **No Chance In House?**

Hinojosa said he will support Goodling's testing amendment to the fiscal 1998 education funding bill that yesterday began its third week of debate on the House floor. The amendment was expected to be up for a vote by today.

The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) also will oppose the exams. In a strongly worded statement, caucus leader Rep.

Maxine Waters, D-Calif., said it fears misuse of results.

"Widespread misuse of educational testing has disproportionately penalized poor and minority children," said Waters in a statement. "The CBC cannot support any testing that may further stigmatize our children and force them into lower educational tracks."

The Senate last week voted to support the testing program as long as it is turned over to an independent, bipartisan board (ED, Sept. 12).

The White House and ED "have seen they have the votes in the Senate, but they have no way of winning in the House," Hinojosa said.

Clinton was scheduled to meet with the Hispanic caucus last night, when the testing issue was sure to come up. — Rebecca S. Weiner■

## 1. Los Angeles Times

\* 09/17/97; Edition: Home Edition; Section: Metro; Metro Desk; Page B-2

# *Standardized Test and More Slated for Schools*

By RICHARD LEE COLVIN

Times Education Writer

First it was on, then off, then on again. When legislators left Sacramento last weekend, they had given Gov. Pete Wilson the prize that he had insisted on all summer: a standardized test that would make it possible to compare the performance of school districts, schools and even individual pupils across the state.

**Who:** All public school students in grades 2 through 11 will take the test.

**What:** An "off-the-shelf" test—immediately available from a testing company—for each grade. From grades 2 through 6 it will cover math, reading, written expression and spelling. Grades 7 through 11 will cover those subjects plus history, social studies and science. The test will be "norm-referenced," meaning that student performance will be measured against a national average.

**When:** The State Board of Education will choose a set of tests—from recommendations by Supt. of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin—no later than January. Students will take them by the end of May and the results will be available—for each pupil, school and county—by the end of June.

**Why:** Since the 1960s, California has lacked a way to measure the performance of its schools against those nationally. For the past three years, the state has not even had its own testing system.

**Cost:** \$35 million a year. Districts will be reimbursed \$8 per test.

**Local impact:** Virtually all of the state's districts gave standardized tests this year—but 56 types, making comparisons impossible. When the state picks one exam, all districts will have to fall in line. Those choosing to stick with their current tests will also have to give the one selected by the state.

**Language:** Wilson wanted pupils tested only in English. Democratic legislators, especially Latinos, wanted students tested in their first language—usually Spanish—for as long as they receive instruction in that language. A compromise requires students to be tested both in English and in their primary language during the first 12 months that they attend California schools. After that, districts must use English exams, but have the option of testing in both.

**Other tests:** The new test is not the only one students can expect. By January, the state will adopt standards for what students should know in math, reading, writing, history and science. Then a second set of tests—created just for California—will be given in grades 4, 5, 8 and 10 to measure students' progress against the standards. These will not produce results for individuals, merely for schools and districts.

**That's not all.** In a year, the first statewide test will no longer be bought off the shelf, but will be customized to California's new standards. While that will reinforce the importance of those learning guidelines, it will make it difficult to compare results to a national average.

**Still other tests:** The Clinton administration is pushing Congress to adopt voluntary national testing—to measure reading levels among fourth-graders and the math proficiency of eighth-graders—beginning in spring 1999. To date, seven states and about 15 large school districts have said they would participate. The U.S. Senate has endorsed the idea, which would cost up to \$117 million a year. But the House will vote today on a proposal to block it.

The administration argues that such tests are needed because current testing programs only sample students to compare states—and don't generate scores for individual pupils, schools and districts. ■

# Daily Education News

Wednesday, September 17, 1997

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Norman Greenberg, Editor

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## 1. USA Today

September 17, 1997

### *House blocks national school test plan*

By Mary Beth Marklein

USA Today, page A1

The House of Representatives Tuesday rejected President Clinton's plan for voluntary national education testing, a program Clinton deemed his top educational priority.

The 295-125 vote passed an amendment banning the U.S. Education Department from spending any new money on the tests.

"The president's federal testing program (is) a needless experiment that ignores the hard work of state and local authorities," said Rep. William Goodling, R-Pa., co-sponsor of the amendment.

Clinton's proposal to test fourth graders in reading and eighth graders in math is not dead, however, because funding could be included in a final bill to be worked out by House and Senate leaders.

The House vote contrasts sharply with Thursday's vote in the Senate to approve the tests 87-13. The Senate vote placed control of the tests under a bi-partisan independent panel rather than the Education Department as Clinton proposed.

**Education Secretary Richard Riley** urged support of the Senate plan, calling the House action "a vote against empowering parents and teachers...to prepare students for success in the 21st century."

House opposition came from a coalition of conservatives and liberals. Rep. Charles Norwood, R-Ga., saw the plan as "an attempt (by federal government) to take control of local schools." Civil rights groups argued tests would be biased against low-income and immigrant children with limited English-speaking skills. ■

# 1. Houston Chronicle

September 17, 1997

## *National tests plan rejected*

### House vote sets up fight with Senate

By GREG McDONALD

Houston Chronicle Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The House rejected President Clinton's controversial plan for national education testing standards Tuesday, setting up a major battle with the Senate, which last week passed a compromise plan relying on voluntary participation.

House opponents, who prevailed, 295-125, argued that the plan would trample states' rights and further isolate poor and minority school districts already lagging in achievement levels.

"Our children aren't failing because of a lack of tests. Our children are failing because of a lack of resources," said Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., who joined with most members of the House Black and Hispanic caucuses to help conservative Republicans reject Clinton's plan.

She said parents already know that "rich kids" test better than "poor kids," and further testing would do nothing to address the nation's "crisis in education." She and dozens of other lawmakers contended that crisis could only be solved by putting more money into "classroom instruction and construction."

The vote came on an amendment to the 1998 labor, health and education appropriations bill offered by House Education and Workplace Committee Chairman William Goodling, R-Pa.

Goodling, a former schoolteacher and principal long at odds with Clinton over his goal of establishing national standards for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math skills, said there was no nationwide consensus for establishing universal achievement levels.

His amendment would block funding for the continued development and implementation of the president's testing plan, which is expected to cost \$100 million.

While Goodling did not rule out establishing uniform standards in the future, he said it would be more prudent now to spend federal education dollars on classroom improvements and better teacher training.

More conservative Republican supporters of Goodling's effort said they would never accept "Washington-based standards" for determining achievement levels, declaring those matters best left to state and local officials.

Mounting a blistering attack on the Clinton plan, GOP members of the Georgia delegation repeatedly characterized the testing proposals as an assault on individual states' rights that would ultimately lead to the federal takeover of local classrooms and school boards.

"It's a matter of control. The power to test is the power to control," said Nathan Deal of Georgia.

He said Washington bureaucrats next would want "the power to determine local curriculums" and that would eventually lead to the "selection and training of teachers at the federal level."

Other opponents weren't as strident, but they maintained that allowing Washington to set national standards would amount to trespassing on local affairs.

"We don't need the federal government and national organizations getting involved in our local school districts," said House Majority Whip Tom DeLay, R-Sugar Land. "We don't need more testing to identify the problems (in education). We know the problems ... we need to devote more resources to them.

"Let's send a signal to this administration — improve our schools not our tests," he said, urging support for the Goodling amendment.

The Clinton administration knew long before Tuesday night's vote in the House that the president's plan would likely be defeated with the support of both Republicans and Democrats. That was why Clinton agreed in a compromise with the Republican-controlled Senate to make his national testing program for reading and math voluntary. Seven states have already signed on, but he has had a hard time so far convincing others.

In hopes of attracting more support, the president agreed in the Senate-passed version to hand administrative authority for the program to the National Assessment Governing Board, an independent agency created by Congress to oversee education matters. He has offered to allow the states to appoint representatives to the board.■

## 1. Philadelphia Inquirer

September 17, 1997

### *House blocks school testing plan*

**Lawmakers from both parties allied against Clinton's top educational priority. He has threatened a veto.**

By Robert Green

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — An alliance of conservatives and liberals in the House voted last night to block President Clinton's top educational priority, voluntary national tests in reading and math.

The 295-125 vote occurred on an amendment to an \$80 billion spending bill for the Education, Labor and Health and Human Services Departments. House Democratic leaders had said last week the testing plan was doomed.

The Senate last week passed its version of the spending bill for the 1998 budget year starting Oct. 1. Before doing so, it overwhelmingly approved an amendment that lets Clinton go forward with the plan to offer reading tests to fourth graders and math tests to eighth graders starting in March 1999 and would put an independent, bipartisan board in charge of the tests.

Clinton, who had made the tests his top educational priority during his State of the Union address earlier this year, said in a statement from the White House that the House vote was "unacceptable, and it will not stand."

Clinton and Education Secretary Richard W. Riley said the administration will work hard to make sure the testing program is included in the final version of the bill, which will be worked out in negotiations between the House and Senate.

The Senate also passed, 51-49, an amendment converting many Education Department programs into block grants, effectively stripping the department of much of its spending power. The possibility of a comparable amendment being debated in the House led President Clinton to issue a veto threat earlier in the day.

In the House debate on testing, conservative Republicans joined with black and Hispanic Democrats behind an amendment to prevent the department from spending any more money to develop the test. The administration wants to begin offering the tests in the spring of 1999.

"Testing is just the next step in a liberal agenda for Washington to seize control of local schools," said Rep. Charlie Norwood (R., Ga.).

Some Democrats argue that blacks and Hispanics from impoverished districts would be branded as inferior students when the real problem is lack of money for safe buildings, books and teachers.

The Congressional Black Caucus "cannot support any testing that may further stigmatize our children and force them into lower educational tracks and special education classes," said Rep. Maxine Waters (D., Calif.), the caucus chairwoman. "The national testing proposal provides no enforceable safeguards against the misuse of test results that could harm our children."

Rep. Bill Goodling (R., Pa.), chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee, argued that children already take a variety of private national tests, state tests, local tests and classroom tests.

The poor performers have been identified without the help of spending \$100 million on federally sponsored tests, he said.

Clinton's allies emphasized that the tests would be voluntary and give people the information they need to push school reforms. State standards may be lacking when held against the standards in a national test, and children who move from one state to another need a fixed measure, they said.

"We are talking about a test to be sure that fourth graders can read and eighth graders can do math," said Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro (D., Conn.). "It's no more and no less than that. It will empower parents and school boards to hold school boards accountable."

Other supporters accused Republicans of being hypocritical by cutting spending that would help impoverished schools meet the high standards in the national tests.

"We're going to flunk the test in showing that we don't put enough money into construction, we don't put enough money into remedial programs, we don't put enough money into special education programs, into migrant ed programs," said Rep. Sam Farr (D., Calif.).

Only three House Republicans voted in favor of the test: Reps. Michael P. Forbes of New York, Steve Horn of California and Nancy L. Johnson of Connecticut. ■

## 1. The Washington Post

09/17/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: A Section; Page A20

# *House Votes Down Clinton Plan for National Reading, Math Achievement Tests*

By Rene Sanchez

Washington Post Staff Writer

The House last night rejected President Clinton's plan to give students national tests in reading and math, dealing him a significant setback on an initiative that has divided educators and state lawmakers across the country.

The vote sets the stage for a showdown with the Senate, which last week expressed strong support for national testing but set new terms for how it should be managed. The proposal, which would be an unprecedented step for the nation's schools, is one of the top priorities of Clinton's second term. But its fate depends on how Congress resolves its deep differences on the subject later this month.

After several hours of contentious debate on the federal government's role in education, lawmakers in the House voted 295 to 125 to support a measure introduced by Rep. William F. Goodling (R-Pa.) that prohibits federal money from being spent on the tests. Clinton wants schools to begin using the tests on a voluntary basis in 1999.

Opposition in the House to Clinton's plan crossed party lines and led to rare political alliances. More than 70 Democrats joined Republicans in opposing the tests. Many conservative lawmakers denounced the plan as an unnecessary federal intrusion into the affairs of local schools. Some liberal voices in the House, including the Congressional Black Caucus, also warned that the tests would unfairly stigmatize poor or minority students who have no choice but to attend disadvantaged schools.

Other lawmakers said that students are already assessed each year with an array of state and local tests and called Clinton's plan too vague and too costly. "We know where we are with our kids. . . . States already administer hundreds of tests," said Rep. John Edward Porter (R-Ill.). "Further tests don't add anything."

Goodling, chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, also suggested that reaching a compromise with the Senate over national tests could be difficult. He called its 87 to 13 vote to support the tests but shift control of them from the Education Department to an independent board "positively, totally inadequate, unacceptable."

Clinton reacted with dismay to the House vote. In a statement last night, he said the House "cast a vote for the status quo and against better schools. . . . They have voted against a plan to improve our schools by raising standards, empowering parents and increasing accountability."

Lawmakers who supported the voluntary tests said that they could spur the kind of school improvements that parents nationwide are demanding. But while White House officials said they hoped the size of the Senate vote would ultimately preserve the tests in some form, some of the president's allies on the issue conceded that he may have an uphill fight.

"The administration does need to do a lot more work," said Rep. David R. Obey (D-Wis.).

Clinton contends that the tests would give parents a better picture of how schools are performing and would prompt educators to set higher academic standards for students. The standards that most schools use to assess students vary greatly among states, and are often criticized for being weak.

Under Clinton's plan, fourth-graders would take a test in reading and eighth-graders would take one in math. Each exam would last 90 minutes.

But to date, only seven states, including Maryland, and 15 of the nation's largest urban school systems — the District is not among them — have agreed to use the tests. Many governors remain skeptical of the idea.

On a separate issue yesterday, Clinton vowed to veto a measure the Senate approved last week that would radically change how \$13 billion in federal money for education is spent.

The proposal would turn most targeted federal education programs into open-ended block grants to local school districts.

The House has yet to take up that matter.■

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**A NATIONAL TEST CLINTON'S ASSESSMENT PROGRAM...**

DOCUMENT 1 OF 44

SBEE9726100124

EDITORIALS

\* A NATIONAL TEST CLINTON'S ASSESSMENT PROGRAM DESERVES SUPPORT

445 Words

3069 Characters

\* 09/17/97

The Sacramento Bee

METRO FINAL

B8

(Copyright 1997)

After a lot of haggling and, finally, some sensible compromise with the Legislature, Gov. Pete Wilson is getting the *statewide*

- \* academic skills test he had made a cornerstone of *his agenda this* year. Unfortunately for President Clinton and his equally
- \* high-profile effort to get a national testing program through Congress, there looks to be less room there for common ground.

If the president isn't able to convince Congress -- a prospect that now looks unlikely in the House -- parents and students will lose the chance for an objective comparison of their individual, school and school-district performance to their counterparts across the nation. That kind of measurement, developed and administered with care, has the potential to drive needed reform in public education.

- \* The Senate has overwhelmingly approved the national test, to be given to fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math in districts that volunteer to administer it. But a growing number of critics in the House threaten to scuttle the plan altogether. They
- \* are an odd alliance of conservative Republicans, who claim a national
- \* test would constitute dangerous federal meddling in local school matters, and urban Democrats, who say the tests would unfairly stigmatize poor and minority schoolchildren who are relegated to impoverished schools that don't prepare them to perform.
- \* It's hard to see how a national test could amount to federal
- \* intrusion when Clinton has stipulated it would be entirely voluntary.
- \* Those districts that don't see any value in the test simply don't have to participate. (In doing so, however, they may anger parents who are increasingly wary of inflated grades and want some objective assessment.)

The president has also agreed, at congressional urging, to

- \* transfer control of the formulation and administration of the test from the federal Department of Education, which conservatives

- \* complain is run by liberal partisans, to the National Assessment Governing Board, an independent body that enjoys broader trust.

As for the complaint about stigmatizing poor and minority

- \* children, wouldn't a national test, scored by school, finally expose the shameful inadequacy of so many impoverished urban and rural schools, thus making a powerful argument for the additional attention and resources they deserve? Is it OK to let children languish in such conditions as long as we don't attach any numbers to them?

- \* Many of the test's details remain to be worked out -- the kinds of questions the tests would contain, how they would be scored and so on -- and more controversy will undoubtedly follow. But parents want and deserve concrete measures of their children's progress and the performance of schools their tax dollars support. Clinton is trying to give them that, and the House should get on board.

I0607 \* End of document.

# 1. Chicago Sun-Times

September 16, 1997

## *In passing national testing, Senate fails*

BY DENNIS BYRNE  
SUN-TIMES COLUMNIST

It's not as if the country isn't already burdened enough with folks who believe in their boundless right to test, poke, examine and inject your children.

Now comes President Clinton and his friends in the education establishment who, in their superior wisdom about what is good for your kids, want to subject them to national reading and math tests.

Coming to a vote in the House this week, perhaps today, is a showdown over Clinton's grand plan to test every kid in the nation. Clinton said in his State of the Union address that such tests are necessary so we know "who needs help, what changes in teaching to make, and which schools need to improve."

As if we don't already know. Already subjected to endless batteries of standardized tests, this generation of children is the most overtested in history. From that, endless databases and studies have been constructed —and ignored —spelling out in exquisitely painful detail which children and schools are failures. What children clearly don't need now is someone trying to grab more of their fleeting childhoods, as well as their teachers' energies, for the sake of performing in another test.

A national test is, at best, a costly redundancy, administered for the benefit of an ever-enlarging and profitable industry whose commodity is the testing and tsk-tsking of the nation's children. Testing is required, this self-serving industry says, because the nation is in the throes of a national educational crisis.

What crisis? America's public education system had been good enough to create a body politic capable of long sustaining what is the most prosperous, most stable, most secure and most powerful self-governing nation in the world's history. From it has sprung innovation, ingenuity and creativity unmatched by any other country.

True, some, even many, schools have produced failures, because they have been overwhelmed by problems created by real national crises —the breakdown of family and of community values. But some schools have achieved failure all on their own, and for that we can thank the educational establishment itself: The education schools that inculcate such foolish notions as "whole language," the foundations that have redefined basic educational skills to mean living skills instead of academic achievement; the school systems that have adopted "school-to-work" concepts that would force children to make lifetime career choices when they should be outside playing ball.

This is the establishment that would have us believe that such "national" (notice that the word "federal" is scrupulously avoided, even though it is a distinction without a difference) testing is "voluntary." Yet the establishment's own catechism, kept conveniently in the background, acknowledges that national testing is only the first step in a nationalized education system.

Marc S. Tucker, a member of the education establishment's inner circle that's influential with the Clinton administration, well summarized the nationalization concept in a Nov. 11, 1992, "I-still-cannot-believe-you-won" congratulatory letter to first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. And now that you've won, he wrote, here's your prescribed course, which includes eventual creation of a nationwide "system of professional and technical standards" that must be mastered by any Americans seeking entry into various careers. It will be a system, Tucker wrote in the lengthy letter, that "literally extends from cradle to grave and is the same system for everyone." Such changes, of course, will require "radical changes in attitudes, values and beliefs." I imagine so.

The Senate, unfortunately, last Thursday bought the idea of national tests, 87-13. The vote came after a "compromise" was adopted to allow an "independent" agency, the National Assessment Governing Board, to run the tests.

However, tougher going is expected in the House. An amendment, sponsored by Rep. Bill Goodling (R-Pa.), chairman of the Education and Workforce Committee, that would ban testing next year may have a good chance of passing this week. The difference then would have to be ironed out by a House-Senate conference committee.

Meanwhile, testing supporters will pitch national testing as something that is, at worst, harmless. Which, I suppose, is why the Clinton administration originally tried to do an end run around Congress and institute \$13 million in testing on its own. As if the people Americans had elected to make their laws had no choice in the matter. As if the only people who Americans could trust with their schools are the very people who have messed them up in the first place.

*Dennis Byrne is a member of the Sun-Times editorial board. ■*

## 1. Associated Press

09-16 3:08p

# *Clinton threatens veto over block-granting education money*

WASHINGTON (AP) - Senate-passed legislation that would strip the Education Department of much spending power will be vetoed if the House also passes the measure, President Clinton said Tuesday.

Clinton issued the threat as the House prepared to resume consideration of a spending bill for the Education, Health and Human Services and Labor departments.

Last week, the Senate tacked on an amendment to its version of the spending bill. The amendment by Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., would convert much federal aid for kindergarten through 12th-grade education into block grants.

Gorton said the amendment, passed by a 51-49 vote, would put more dollars in local classrooms. But Clinton said the amendment would destroy a variety of programs, including drug prevention, bilingual education and vocational rehabilitation.

It also would deny funds for voluntary national tests, which the Senate had overwhelmingly voted to support, Clinton said. ■

## 1. The Washington Times

09/16/97; Edition: 2; Section: A;NATION; Page A8

Governors shy from school tests

### 'Politics got very messy,' so group withdraws from panel

By Carol Innerst

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Further indicating that President Clinton's plan for national testing is in trouble, the National Governors' Association yesterday withdrew from the panel overseeing development of the tests.

"The politics got very messy," said John Barth, the NGA's director of education policy studies and its representative on the National Test Panel.

"We operate out of a consensus vote here, and we don't have a consensus," Mr. Barth said. "Some governors are very opposed."

The NGA has never taken a position on the national tests, he said. The group participated in the panel as a means of keeping governors informed.

Although he said nothing as "formal" as a letter of resignation had transpired, Mr. Barth worked at his NGA office yesterday while the National Test Panel met at a hotel in downtown Washington.

Indicative of the sentiment of many governors, Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating, a Republican, issued a statement in which he said the Clinton plans for national school testing are "seriously flawed and appear to have been designed by bureaucrats who've never been near a classroom."

"If they really feel the need to spend the taxpayers' funds on school testing, the administration should just give block grants to the states to help finance their testing programs, most of which are way ahead of this proposal," he said.

Only six states, including Maryland, have signed on to the president's proposal to administer voluntary national tests in fourthgrade reading and eighth-grade mathematics.

The governor of one of those states, Michigan's John Engler, a Republican, threatened to back out if the testing authority remains with the U.S. Department of Education rather than an independent and bipartisan board.

Addressing that issue, the U.S. Senate on Thursday passed compromise legislation that endorsed national testing but vested policy decisions with a strengthened National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), the independent panel that sets policy for the 28-year-old congressionally mandated National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The tests Mr. Clinton has proposed are individualized and shortened versions of NAEP reading and math tests.

The Senate compromise satisfied Diane Ravitch, assistant secretary of education in the Bush administration, who supports voluntary national testing but fought to have it taken out of the Education Department and put in the hands of the NAGB. Miss Ravitch, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and New York University, resigned from the National Test Panel in July over its politicization.

The 16-member National Test Panel was assembled by the Council of Chief State School Officers and MPR Associates, a California-based consulting firm, to draw up a blueprint for the national tests. Wilmer Cody, the commissioner of education in Kentucky and former superintendent of schools in Montgomery County, is the chairman of the panel, whose future seems questionable in light of the Senate action.

A House coalition of conservatives and liberals seems inclined to go along with Rep. Bill Goodling, Pennsylvania Republican and chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, and kill funding for national testing in a vote scheduled for this afternoon. The issue then would go to a conference committee

## 1. Sun-Sentinel Ft. Lauderdale

09/16/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: NATIONAL; Page 1A

# ***NATIONAL TESTING, LOCAL DEBATE; THE QUESTION: WOULD IT BE YARDSTICK OR COSTLY REDUNDANCY?***

By JILL YOUNG MILLER

Washington Bureau

The debate has raged in the hallways of Congress and the hallways of South Florida schools: Should the federal government be involved in local school districts' business?

President Clinton's call for national student tests faces a showdown vote in the House this week, possibly today. Clinton says the tests would give the nation a clearer picture of how students are performing.

But critics say they worry about federal intrusion into school curriculums \_ and about the growing test burden on students.

"I don't see any need for it," said Van Ludy, executive director of the Palm Beach County Classroom Teachers Association. "We're tested to death already, especially in Florida."

Clinton wants to make his proposal to test the nation's fourth-graders in reading and its eighth-graders in math a hallmark of his second term. Those grade levels are considered crucial for measuring reading and math skills.

If Congress approves, the voluntary program would start in 1999. But getting school districts to buy into it may be difficult.

Only seven states and 15 urban school districts \_ including Broward County \_ have volunteered to adopt the program, which Clinton began pushing in his State of the Union address in February.

"We test our youngsters anyway," said Broward County School Board chairman Abraham Fischler. "We figured that we would then be able to compare ourselves with other large urban districts throughout the country."

Florida has not endorsed the plan, which is supported by Alaska, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina and West Virginia. Among the urban districts signing on are New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta and Philadelphia.

The U.S. Education Department has estimated that the tests would cost about \$32 million to develop. Rep. Bill Goodling, R-Pa., chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, said he would rather send the money to the classrooms.

"Yet another test isn't going to improve the academic performance of a single American child," Goodling said. "As every American farmer knows, you can keep weighing a hog, but it won't get any fatter."

Goodling has sponsored an amendment that would effectively kill the tests by banning the use of federal money to develop them. The House GOP leadership is backing the measure, along with the "vast majority" of Republicans, a congressional aide said.

Despite strong opposition in the House, however, Clinton scored an important victory last week when the Senate overwhelmingly supported his plan.

The Senate-approved measure would shift control of the new tests from the U.S. Education Department, as the president proposed, to an independent board. Still, Clinton praised the Senate's 87-13 vote as "very good news" and a step to ensure that "children will master the basics of reading and math."

But Florida Education Commissioner Frank Brogan said he had "grave concerns" that national student tests could lead to national curriculum standards that would not be rigorous or challenging enough, at a time when Florida is trying to make its own strides.

This is the first full school year for Florida's new across-the-curriculum standards for elementary, middle and high school students. It is also the first school year for the new Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, which will be administered to fourth-, eighth- and 10th-graders in January.

Palm Beach County schools are not likely to join Broward in embracing Clinton's plan "until we understand more" about them, said Marc Baron, director of research, evaluation and accountability for the district.

"It is unclear at this moment what exactly this test is going to look like," he said. "The question would be to what extent this testing program would serve to help the district understand its students better."

Teachers already have "a barrage" of tests to administer, Ludy said.

"I do get concerns from teachers: 'If so much time is taken testing, when are we supposed to teach?' "■

## 1. Chicago Tribune

09/16/97; Edition: NORTH SPORTS FINAL; C; Section: KIDNEWS; Page 3

### *tough news. in your face.*

Uh, drug-free zones? More teens have seen drug deals at school than in their neighborhood, a new survey says. Want the scary statistics? The survey, conducted for the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, found this: 41 percent of high schoolers and 18 percent of middle schoolers had witnessed drug deals on school grounds. Compare that with the 25 percent of high schoolers and 12 percent of middle schoolers who had seen drug deals in their neighborhoods. Also, a fourth of high school students said a kid in their school had died from an alcohol- or drug-related incident in the past year.

Fitting in: It's tough starting a new school, right? Imagine how tough it would be with big, burly Secret Service agents surrounding you. (Or maybe you'd like that...) So we have to wonder how Chelsea Clinton must feel as she starts college at Stanford. But her Secret Service agents will be young and will dress casually and ride bikes so they don't stick out so much.

This is only a test: Chelsea's dad, the president, is pushing for 4th through 8th graders to have **national tests**. He says that schoolkids should have to meet set standards before they can advance. He wants 4th graders across the U.S. to be tested in reading and 8th graders in math. Opponents say the government shouldn't butt in on school business like that. ■

## 1. Los Angeles Times

\* 09/16/97; Edition: Home Edition; Section: National Desk; Page A-5

### National Perspective / EDUCATION

## *Debate Over National School Tests Offers Real-Life Lesson in Politics*

**Clinton's proposal to create exams seems modest, but it is enmeshed in epic dispute over who decides what society teaches its children.**

By ELIZABETH SHOGREN  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON — The intensity of the battle over national education tests seems way out of proportion with what's at stake: only \$15 million in initial funding to develop the exams, and no federal mandate requiring anyone ever to take them.

But education officials and political analysts agree that by trying to institute the first national academic tests in reading and math, President Clinton is wading into a debate of epic scale.

It is a dispute that is likely to engulf the House this week, when opponents of national exams try to prohibit the Clinton administration from proceeding with the testing initiative. They are expected to win handily, setting the stage for a later showdown with the White House and Senate.

At its heart is a struggle as old as the republic itself, one that has waxed and waned in intensity but has never been fully resolved.

"This is the latest installment in the age-old dispute about who controls the schools—the federal government or the states," said Neal Katyal, an associate professor of law at Georgetown University. "It goes back to the Civil War, when the states did not want to educate blacks and the federal government forced them to put a guarantee of education for all citizens in their constitutions."

One of Clinton's top legislative priorities is to create a national test of reading ability for fourth-graders and mathematics ability for eighth-graders. All states and school systems would be encouraged to participate in the testing program, but none would be required to do so.

The proposal has become a legislative lightning rod in Congress, particularly in the House. Rep. William F. Goodling (R-Pa.), chairman of the House Education and Work Force Committee, is sponsoring a proposal to prohibit the administration from spending any money to draft or administer the tests. The Goodling provision will be offered as an amendment to a sweeping education- and labor-spending bill as early as today, and House leaders are confident it will pass.

The Senate last week voted in favor of the tests, but its measure would alter the way they are developed and administered. After the House vote, the Senate and House will try to strike a compromise. The outcome is uncertain.

Clinton's advisors and Education Secretary Richard W. Riley say they will urge the president to veto the final education and labor appropriation if it includes the House provision to deny funding for national tests.

The latest skirmish in this long-running battle has created strange alliances. The Congressional Black Caucus, the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People and many liberal Democrats have joined forces with Republicans and groups like the Christian Coalition, Eagle Forum and Traditional Values Coalition to oppose the exams.

The motivations for opposing the tests, however, are very different. Conservatives argue that the federal government is about to usurp a power that the country's framers meant to belong to the states. Liberals worry that the tests could stigmatize students who, through no fault of their own, are receiving inadequate educations at their public schools.

"Our founding fathers knew very clearly what they were doing when they determined that education should be a local issue," said Sen. Charles Hagel (R-Neb.).

Conservatives fear that national tests represent a first step along a slippery slope of federal involvement in neighborhood schools.

"Parents want to continue to have control over education, and they feel this is another attempt by the Clinton administration to push on parents what they believe," said Andrea Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition, a conservative lobbying group. "It's based on the assumption that the parents don't know best; government knows best."

Conservatives fear that once the national tests are in place, local schools will feel pressure to adapt their teaching plans to ensure that their pupils perform well on the exams. "We're concerned with the effect it will have in creating a national curriculum," Sheldon said.

Even supporters of the tests say the opposition is understandable in light of the traditional feeling that education is a local and state prerogative.

"Historically, there has never been a national test that potentially all students could take," said Wayne Martin of the Council of Chief State School Officers, which represents the heads of state school systems across the country. "It's something

brand new, and some people are viewing it as suspicious."

The debate over control of the schools is a battle the administration has fought before. The same charges were lodged against Clinton's Goals 2000 initiative, which is providing money to every state to develop improved academic standards and help students attain them. Last year, when congressional Republicans tried to abolish the Department of Education, they argued that getting rid of the agency would restore power over the schools to local communities and states.

When they attacked the Department of Education, however, many Americans interpreted their actions as an assault on education in general.

"Republicans have a very hard time distinguishing their antipathy for a department they don't like and a public commitment they say they have to improving education," said William Galston, professor of public affairs at the University of Maryland and a former Clinton advisor on education.

This murkiness turned out to be politically damaging for Republicans in 1996. Some Democrats are marveling that Republicans are willing to take up the battle again so soon.

"If they want to be known as the party against public education, so be it," said Paul Begala, an assistant to the president whose focuses are education and politics.

**Polls show that the Education Department is among the government's most popular agencies.** In fact, many Americans seem to overestimate its role in education, given that federal funds account for only about 6% of school budgets on average.

Ironically, the last time national tests were on the drawing board, it was a Republican president, George Bush, who proposed them. Most Republicans seemed to support them at the time, although some conservatives maintained they would undermine state and local authority over education. Many Democrats opposed them, arguing it would be unfair to test children without first improving schools so they would have a chance to score well.

This time around, most Democrats support Clinton's initiative. Notable exceptions are the House black and Hispanic caucuses, whose resistance reflects their sensitivity to the discrimination that minority children have faced through much of the country's history.

"Widespread misuse of educational testing has disproportionately penalized poor and minority children," said Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Los Angeles), chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The Republican battle against national testing seems politically risky. A recent Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, for example, indicates that about two-thirds of Americans believe national tests would significantly improve student performance.

Nonetheless, Galston and other administration officials note that the GOP campaign against national tests seems even more fierce than previous education skirmishes.

\*

"As a veteran of the education wars, I am stunned by the intensity of the paranoia on this subject and its disconnection to any facts that I can observe," Galston said. "I can't imagine a sensible human being who would be threatened by broad-based rigorous tests in core subjects like reading and mathematics."

But some independent policy analysts say the vehemence of the debate is not that surprising.

"The amount of debate and tension is about what you would expect it to be, not because education has become so political, but because education is political, in the sense that it is about how we pass on our legacy to the next generation of folks," said Michael Casserly, executive director of the Great City Schools, a Washington-based organization that represents big-city school systems.

"That's an eminently political activity," Casserly said. "Nothing is fought over more passionately than people's kids." ■

## 1. Houston Chronicle

September 15, 1997

### ***HISD's Paige rejects U.S. test in English only*** **Spanish-excluded reading exam prompting concerns**

By MELANIE MARKLEY

Copyright 1997 Houston Chronicle

While Congress debates President Clinton's proposal to test students nationally, some urban superintendents — including Houston's — are unhappy with plans to give the reading exam in English only.

If the test is approved by Congress, Houston Superintendent Rod Paige said he will recommend giving only the eighth-grade math portion since the Clinton administration decided not to give the fourth-grade reading portion in Spanish as well as English.

Paige, one of 15 urban superintendents who initially agreed to give Clinton's proposed voluntary tests, said it would be unfair to exclude such a large percentage of Spanish-speaking students who aren't yet fluent in English.

The proposal, which was approved by the U.S. Senate last week, will be considered by the House this week. Some predict it will fail in the House.

The proposed testing program, which would first be administered in 1999, involves a reading test for fourth-graders and a math test for eighth-graders.

While acknowledging the proposal's questionable fate, Paige said he still supports the idea behind the national test.

"Our interest is in accountability," Paige said. "Our interest is in getting to compare our students with students across the United States."

"TAAS (the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills) is a Texas test and I think a very good one. But we also are interested in how our students compare with those students in New York, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles and Miami. So we are willing to step up to the bat and take national examinations."

The Council of Great City Schools, which represents the nation's 50 largest school districts including Houston, has issued a statement criticizing the Clinton administration's decision not to develop the reading test in languages other than English.

"The decision would exclude from the benefits of the program many of the nearly 300,000 fourth-graders from the 15 cities that have recently volunteered to take the national tests," the statement says.

Henry Duvall, the council's director of communications, said Los Angeles has decided not to give the reading portion and others also are considering volunteering for the math portion only.

The issue, however, may soon be moot if opponents in the House have anything to say about it next week.

"We do not believe there should be standards set by Washington bureaucrats," House Majority Leader Richard Arney, R-Irving, said after the Senate's vote. "We're going to try our very best to stop the president's program — period — because we don't think it's well advised, and we think it will lead to a national curriculum."

In truth, the issue has not touched off much support among Texas leaders.

"I am very skeptical about the federal government becoming involved in a state and local matter, and as importantly, I'm skeptical about a national test which the federal government could use to promote a feel-good curriculum or mushy curriculum," Gov. George W. Bush told The Associated Press.

Paul Sadler, chairman of the House Public Education Committee, told the AP that he is "a little skeptical of national testing standards." ■

# Fo is Votes Down Clin on Pla for Natio na' Re

By Rene Sanchez  
Washington Post Staff Writer

The House last night rejected President Clinton's plan to give students national tests in reading and math, dealing him a significant setback on an initiative that has divided educators and state lawmakers across the country.

The vote sets the stage for a showdown with the Senate, which last week expressed strong support for national testing but set new terms for how it should be managed. The proposal, which would be an unprecedented step for the nation's schools, is one of the top priorities of Clinton's second term. But its fate depends on how Congress resolves its deep differences on the subject later this month.

After several hours of contentious debate

on the federal government's role in education, lawmakers in the House voted 295 to 125 to support a measure introduced by Rep. William F. Goodling (R-Pa.) that prohibits federal money from being spent on the tests. Clinton wants schools to begin using the tests on a voluntary basis in 1999.

Opposition in the House to Clinton's plan crossed party lines and led to rare political alliances. More than 70 Democrats joined Republicans in opposing the tests. Many conservative lawmakers denounced the plan as an unnecessary federal intrusion into the affairs of local schools. Some liberal voices in the House, including the Congressional Black Caucus, also warned that the tests would unfairly stigmatize poor or minority students who have no choice but to attend disadvantaged schools.

Other lawmakers said that students are

already assessed each year with an array of state and local tests and called Clinton's plan too vague and too costly. "We know where we are with our kids. . . . States already administer hundreds of tests," said Rep. John Edward Porter (R-Ill.). "Further tests don't add anything."

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Clinton reacted with dismay to the House vote. In a statement last night, he said the House "cast a vote for the status quo and against better schools. . . . They have voted

## ading, Math Achievement Tests

against a plan to improve our schools by raising standards, empowering parents and increasing accountability."

Lawmakers who supported the voluntary tests said that they could spur the kind of school improvements that parents nationwide are demanding. But while White House officials said they hoped the size of the Senate vote would ultimately preserve the tests in some form, some of the president's allies on the issue conceded that he may have an uphill fight.

"The administration does need to do a lot more work," said Rep. David R. Obey (D-Wis.).

Clinton contends that the tests would give parents a better picture of how schools are performing and would prompt educators to set higher academic standards for students. The standards that most schools use to

assess students vary greatly among states, and are often criticized for being weak.

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On a separate issue yesterday, Clinton vowed to veto a measure the Senate approved last week that would radically change how \$13 billion in federal money for education is spent.

The proposal would turn most targeted federal education programs into open-ended block grants to local school districts.

The House has yet to take up that matter.

# Testing Genes to Save a Life Without Costing You a Job

By NICHOLAS WADE

**H**UMAN genes hold a wealth of information that physicians hope will help them avert illnesses that may be passed on from one generation to the next. Yet the information, still a trickle but about to arrive in deluges, is so powerful that it will need to be handled with care.

A foretaste of its power was offered by the recent report of a genetic change, or mutation, that has been found to double an individual's lifetime risk of colon cancer; the mutation occurs in 6 percent of Ashkenazi Jews. Those who test positive for the gene can periodically have colonoscopies, in which a physician examines the colon and removes the slow-growing polyps from which colon cancer originates. The procedure is thought likely to reduce the risk of colon cancer from significant to near zero.

The finding promises to avert thousands of cases of the disease. Although the Johns Hopkins Oncology Center, where the mutation was discovered, is recommending now that only people with a family history of colon cancer be tested, the advice is likely to be extended to everyone of Ashkenazi heritage — that is, Jews of Eastern European descent, who account for the great majority of American Jews — if the preliminary estimates of the mutation's risk are confirmed. The Lerner Foundation of Cleveland has offered to pay for the test for anyone who cannot afford it. (The test can be given at Hopkins; it is not yet available in New York.)

But the knowledge comes with certain hazards. To be tested for genetic disposition to any disease exposes one to being denied a job or medical insurance. Laws to forbid such discrimination are not yet fully in place.

The new finding also risked singling out a particular group and creating the impression that people of Ashkenazi heritage are at higher risk of genetic disease — an impression that is almost certainly false. So far, the colon cancer mutation has not been found in non-Ashkenazis. A dozen other genetic diseases, including Tay-Sachs disease and cystic fibrosis, are commoner among Ashkenazis than other population groups.

"The Jewish community has been understandably concerned about the possibility of discrimination against Ashkenazi Jews on the basis of such findings," said Lois Waldman, an officer of the American Jewish Congress.

Under the human genome project at the National Institutes of Health, all three billion genetic letters in human DNA are expected to be deciphered by 2005. Will the project generate information about particular population groups that will prove to be divisive?

"This is a serious issue, that the research doesn't inadvertently stigmatize a particular group just because the group has features that make it advantageous

to study," said Dr. Francis Collins, head of the human genome project. He hastened to dispel the idea that Ashkenazi Jews are likely to have any greater burden of genetic disease than other groups.

Among population groups that are descended from a small number of founders, and have intermarried for many generations, the founders' disease-causing mutations are still often relatively common. This is true of small or once-small populations such as Ashkenazis, Finns and Icelanders, who for that reason are much studied by medical geneticists. Larger populations have more different kinds of founder mutation, though each is less common, doubtless making for the same overall burden of genetic disease, Dr. Collins said.

## So Far, the Same

The mere act of defining human populations as genetically different holds potential for mischief, even if no significant differences should emerge. So far, however, it seems that at least in geneticists' eyes all human populations will prove to be boringly alike.

The trivial differences that have developed typically take the form of genetic variants that may be somewhat more common in certain groups but are far from universal. Some 6 percent of Ashkenazi Jews may carry the colon cancer mutation, for example, but 94 percent have the same version of the gene as do non-Ashkenazis.

"I think that as more and more genetic information on the human species is emerging, there is ever more basis for saying that the level of genetic differentiation among human populations is relatively trivial," said Dr. Douglas Futuyma of the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Nonetheless, genetic ideas have led to some horrifying consequences. Reports emerged last month that up until the 1970's some 60,000 people had been sterilized in Sweden, and 11,000 in Finland, under government policies designed to weed out properties like poor eyesight and Gypsy features.

Dr. James Watson, a leading biologist and proponent of the human genome project, argues that past crimes committed in the name of eugenics should not prevent individuals from being allowed to choose the benefits that genetic engineering can offer in the future.

"Anyone who proclaims we are now perfect as humans has to be a silly crank," he writes in the annual report of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory on Long Island, of which he is president. "If we could honestly promise young couples that we knew how to give them offspring with superior character, why should we assume they would decline?"

Public opinion is probably not yet prepared for the forward kind of genetic engineering that Dr. Watson is suggesting. But the rapid progress of genetic understanding is bringing these choices ever closer.

## 1. Associated Press

09-15 8:36p

# *Education secretary pitches testing idea in North Dakota visit*

By DALE WETZEL

Associated Press Writer

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) - U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley used a North Dakota appearance Monday to campaign for national reading and math testing, but the idea got a frosty reception from Gov. Ed Schafer.

"We cannot create a federal government monitoring system that will provide better oversight, guidance or concern for student learning than do parents ... who live and work and educate their children in local schools," Schafer said.

Riley, who finished a two-day visit to Bismarck on Monday, said the proposal to administer reading tests to fourth graders and math tests to eighth graders would be voluntary. President Clinton is pushing the idea, but is encountering resistance in Congress.

A similar exam already is administered to selected students, with the results used to extrapolate national results. Riley said North Dakota students have scored well on the existing test.

Clinton's proposal seeks to expand use of the test to all students, allowing parents to know how their children compare to those in other states, Riley said.

"We think it will empower parents, and will help students and teachers work together," he said. "It will have the effect of ... focusing America on making sure every child reads well by the end of the third grade."

Rep. Earl Pomeroy, D-N.D., said he supported Riley's effort. The national tests will point out which schools are doing well in meeting educational goals, he said.

"I want to know how ... my children are doing relative to the country," Pomeroy said. "It will ultimately be against the country that they compete as they play out their own lives, and their own careers."

Riley promoted the testing proposal at a Bismarck news conference and at a subsequent appearance at the North Dakota Conference on Education Improvement.

But Schafer, speaking at the conference, questioned the tests' usefulness and said they could threaten state and local education prerogatives.

He is afraid the exams could eventually be required, and be linked to federal education aid, the governor said.

"All too often, today's voluntary tests become tomorrow's mandatory tests," Schafer said. "The federal government should, as a rule, be developing programs ... that have fewer restrictions and mandates, not more."■

## 1. Education Daily

September 15, 1997 Category: Trade

### LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**T**he Senate last week passed a fiscal 1998 education funding bill that would send most federal K-12 funds to local districts in block grants and would give an independent board control over voluntary national tests. The House hopes to pass its version of the appropriations this week, after voting on whether to bar spending on the national tests.

#### Awaiting the President's Signature ...

Student Aid Guidelines H.R. 1866: Would allow colleges and universities using need-blind admissions to award institutional aid based on financial need, and to exchange information through an independent third party. The bill would extend a provision in the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act that is set to expire Sept. 30.

Last action: The Senate passed H.R. 1866 on July 30, but amended it to extend the provision for four years, rather than permanently. The House approved the change by voice vote Sept. 8 (ED, Sept. 9).

Next action: President Clinton is expected to sign the bill.

#### Recent or Upcoming Action ...

Fiscal 1998 Appropriations/National Tests H.R. 2264: Would boost the Education Department's budget from nearly \$29.47 billion this year to about \$34.3 billion in fiscal 1998, including mandatory spending on programs such as student loans. It would increase spending on Title I and special education, set aside \$205 million for comprehensive school reform, level-fund Safe and Drug-Free Schools grants, and cut Goals 2000 funding from \$491 million to \$387 million (ED, Sept. 11). It also would provide \$100 million for charter schools and \$435 million for state formula grants for school technology. State Student Incentive Grants would be eliminated. S. 1061: Would send about \$11 billion in Title I, Goals 2000, bilingual, technology and vocational education funding to school districts as block grants (ED, Sept. 12). Special education state grants for school-age children would get a substantial boost, to \$3.95 billion. School construction would get \$100 million, and State Student Incentive Grants would be cut to \$35 million. A reconstituted National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) would oversee President Clinton's voluntary national tests. Both bills would set aside \$260 million for a childhood literacy program in fiscal 1999 and raise the maximum Pell Grant to \$3,000.

Last action: The Senate passed S. 1061 on Thursday, 92-8.

An amendment to grant NAGB oversight of the national tests passed 87-13, while an effort to halt the block grant plan failed 51-49. The House debated its bill last week, moving funds among programs and out of Goals 2000 and into special education.

Next action: The House is scheduled to continue debating and could pass its bill tomorrow. One pending amendment that is part of a bipartisan deal would block ED spending on the national tests. House and Senate negotiators will draft a compromise plan for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1.

Key Senate Democrats already have said they would bar the block grant plan, and the White House is threatening a veto if the legislation would halt Clinton's testing initiative.

Omnibus Education S. 1: The GOP bill would allow states to use existing Title VI block grant funds for public and private school choice, would raise special education funding starting with a \$1 billion hike next year, and would authorize a school choice demonstration program for low-income families (ED, Jan. 23).

S. 12: The Democrats' bill would require the federal government to pay up to half of the interest on school construction bonds and authorize \$1.75 billion for reading programs and \$1.8 billion for school technology.

Last action: House Speaker Newt Gingrich and other top Republicans lobbied for school choice and tax breaks for K-12 education savings accounts last Tuesday, during a House Early Childhood, Youth and Families Subcommittee hearing (ED, Sept. 10). The House Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee held a hearing Friday in Cleveland to discuss ways to improve K-12 education.

Next action: The House early childhood panel plans a charter schools hearing tomorrow.

Private School Tax Breaks H.R. 2373, S. 1133: Would allow parents tax-free withdrawals from an education savings account to be used for expenses including private K-12 tuition, transportation, tutoring and computers (ED, Aug. 4.) Last action: During a House Early Childhood, Youth and Families Subcommittee hearing Tuesday, House Speaker Newt Gingrich and other top Republicans lobbied for several school choice plans, including tax breaks for K-12 education savings accounts (ED, Sept. 10).

Next action: The House Ways and Means Committee is expected to work on H.R. 2373 this month. No action is scheduled in the Senate.

Vocational Education H.R. 1853: The House plan to reauthorize the Carl D.

Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act would allot school districts at least 90 percent of the basic state vocational grant, up from 75 percent, and shave the state set-asides to 2 percent for administration and 8 percent for leadership. It also would lower the minimum school district grant to \$10,000. Increases in vocational funds would be allocated under a census and poverty formula for the next three years. By 2002, the formula would be weighed 40 percent on the same population and 60 percent on its poverty rate (ED, July 24).

Last action: The House passed its bill, 414-12, on July 23.

Next action: The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee expects to vote on a combined vocational and job training

bill Wednesday. The draft bill would keep the programs' funding authority separate (ED, Aug. 28).

HEA Reauthorization H.R. 6: The bill would reauthorize funds for all existing Higher Education Act (HEA) programs, which expire Sept. 30. After the House writes new legislation for student aid and other programs under HEA, it will be substituted into H.R. 6.

Last action: The Education Department's inspector general pressed the House postsecondary education subcommittee in July to create a post for a nonpolitical student aid manager (ED, July 30).

Next action: The House Postsecondary Education, Training and Life-Long Learning Subcommittee has scheduled a hearing for Thursday on ED's troubled direct loan consolidation center (ED, Aug. 29). The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee expects to work on its bill next year.

Juvenile Justice H.R. 1818: Would authorize an unspecified amount for state block grants that could be used to fund programs that encourage juveniles to stay in school; help coordinate local education, juvenile justice and social service programs; and leverage funds for scholarships in troubled neighborhoods.

H.R. 3, S. 10, S. 718: Would allow schools access to FBI juvenile felony records as part of an omnibus juvenile justice bill. H.R. 3 also would require states to have plans for schools to notify parents if juvenile sex offenders are enrolled in their child's school. S. 882, H.R. 2408: Would authorize \$50 million per year through fiscal 2002 in grants for after-school activities aimed at cutting juvenile crime.

Last action: The Senate Judiciary Committee passed S. 10 on July 24, with a 12-6 vote. The House passed H.R. 1818, with a 413-14 vote July 15. H.R. 2408 was introduced Sept. 4 by Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif.; referred to the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

Next action: The Senate could vote on S. 10 in October.

#### **Just Introduced ...**

Education Infrastructure S. 1160: Would provide \$1.9 billion over five years to pay interest on state and local bond issues to finance K-12 school repair, renovation, modernization and construction projects, similar to S. 12.

Last action: Introduced Sept. 10 by Sen. Thomas Daschle, D-S.D.; sent directly to the Senate floor.

Next action: No action is scheduled.

Property Taxes S. 1149: Would ensure property taxes, which often provide most local education revenues, are paid by bankruptcy estates and corporate debtors. The bill would prohibit bankruptcy courts from devaluing property during legal proceedings under most circumstances and would ensure property tax liens are paid before other bankruptcy expenses.

Last action: Introduced Sept. 4 by Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa; referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Next action: The committee could take up the bill this month, and it could move to the Senate floor by October.

Higher Education Day Care S. 1151: Would authorize \$60 million over three years to support on-campus child care for low-income parents pursuing postsecondary education.

Last action: Introduced Sept. 5 by Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn.; referred to the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee.

Next action: No action is scheduled.

Technology Donation Awards H.R. 2427: Would recognize businesses that donate technology to local schools in special ceremonies hosted by the Education Department.

Last action: Introduced Sept. 9 by Rep. Lynn Woolsey, D-Calif.; referred to the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

Next action: No action is scheduled. — Laureen Lazarovici, Jonathan Fox■