

1. The New York Times

08/03/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section 1; National Desk; Page 23, Column 1

Proposal for School Testing Is Facing Wide Opposition

By PETER APPLEBOME

While President Clinton has achieved most of his proposals for college tuition assistance, the road appears to be much tougher for the other truly striking element of his education agenda, a proposal for a voluntary national test of fourth graders for reading and eighth graders for math.

The proposal for the test, which is now being developed by the Education Department, is under attack from the left, right and middle.

A combination of liberals suspicious of standardized tests, conservatives wary of expanding the Federal role in education and advocates of national testing unhappy with the way Mr. Clinton has structured his plan have all attacked the proposal.

In Congress last week, the chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Work Force, Representative Bill Goodling, Republican of Pennsylvania, made two moves in an effort to block the test. On Wednesday he introduced an amendment to the Education Department's appropriations bill that would cut off Federal money for the test, and on Friday he introduced a resolution that would call on the department to stop planning for the test.

For the amendment to become part of the appropriations bill, it would require the approval of the Senate as well as the House. The resolution would simply state the position of the House. The House is scheduled to vote on both after it returns from an August recess.

The Administration said that neither the amendment nor the resolution would keep it from going ahead with the test.

The plan to develop a national test for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math is supported by many mainstream education groups, and in July, 15 of the nation's largest urban school districts offered their support when Mr. Clinton asked for it.

But so far only six states have agreed to take part, leading Mr. Clinton to accuse the nation's Governors of "dragging their feet" on overhauling educational.

Mike Cohen, special assistant to President Clinton for education policy, said that the states and cities supporting the test accounted for about 20 percent of the nation's students.

The process so far has been a vivid lesson in the difficulties of national initiatives to improve education in a country wedded to local, decentralized schools.

Chester Finn, a senior fellow at the conservative Hudson Institute, said: "I thought in January that maybe this was one of the odd Nixon-in-China moments when the Democrats could deliver the liberal critics and enough Republican Governors and Congressmen could deliver the conservatives for it to come together. But if this falls apart it will be because of liberals who hate the word 'testing' and conservatives who hate the word 'national,' and it looks like that's beginning to come true."

As support has grown for higher standards for the nation's schoolchildren, most education analysts say that a logical outgrowth is that something that is routine for other industrialized countries — a national test to measure how students perform from school to school and region to region.

When President Clinton unveiled his ambitious education agenda in his State of the Union Message in January, a central element was a voluntary national test. The hope was that it would be so widely used that it would become the country's first truly national test of student achievement. Currently, tests like the National Assessment of Educational Progress are given to large samplings of students, not to all.

The President's plan was greeted with a good deal of praise, particularly from business and mainstream education groups like teacher's unions. It seemed a logical, if ambitious, extension of a decade of discussion about national standards, beginning with the educational goals introduced in the Bush Administration.

July, 1997

And by limiting his proposal to tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math, where there is consensus about what children should know, Mr. Clinton tried to sidestep the fractious debate about course content that has marked development of standards in subjects like American history and English.

But the plan also ran up against the fierce defense of a decentralized system of American education, and the reluctance of states and districts to cede a larger role to the Federal Government.

The proposal ran into a buzz saw of opposition from the left and the right. Conservative groups, like the Eagle Forum, saw the test as a huge step toward a national curriculum and a nationally mandated education policy.

Some liberal groups, who see standardized testing as stifling education, culturally biased and overdone, were also critics of the proposal from the start.

Since then, some advocates of national testing have withdrawn their support from Mr. Clinton's version. Diane Ravitch of New York University, who headed the Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the Bush Administration, resigned in July from the steering panel designing the test.

Dr. Ravitch said that what was evolving had the potential to become politicized and tainted, not an independent, nonpartisan test. And she said Mr. Clinton was making a major mistake by pursuing the development of national tests without Congressional support.

While the Administration officials concede that Representative Goodling's action in the House could be a major obstacle to the tests, they said they were also confident that they had the authority to go ahead without Congressional authorization.

And Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, which represents the nation's 15 largest urban school districts, said the endorsement by the council reflected the belief that a national test was a crucial part of raising school performance.

"It's going to significantly spur performance over the long run," Mr. Casserly said. ■

Daily Education News

Friday, August 1, 1997

1. The Washington Times

07/31/97; Edition: 2; Section: A;NATION; Page A7

Goodling plans effort to stop national tests

Critics fear rise of national curriculum

By Carol Innerst

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce is trying to put the brakes on the Clinton administration's promotion and development of voluntary national reading and mathematics tests.

Rep. Bill Goodling said yesterday he plans to offer an amendment to the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill that would require the **Department of Education** to suspend its national testing program "until the department seeks and receives congressional authorization for the tests."

The administration's bypass of Congress in advancing the tests has been a sore point with the Pennsylvania Republican and others in the GOP. The amendment is a last-ditch effort to involve Congress in the process.

"It's probably the most controversial issue to come before Congress this year," he said. "Why would you want to move ahead without congressional approval on something as controversial as individual national tests?"

"I've never heard of developing and disseminating a standardized test in a year and three or four months," he added. "It's usually a four-to-five-year procedure."

The amendment, expected to come to the House floor today, bans use of funds made available in the Improving America's Schools Act "to develop, plan, implement, or administer any national testing program in reading or mathematics."

Exceptions are made for the congressionally mandated National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS).

The administration insists it has the statutory authority to proceed without congressional approval by using money from the Fund for the Improvement of Education.

President Clinton in February proposed the \$90 million, five-year plan to develop new national tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade mathematics as a yardstick for measuring state, district, school and individual progress toward higher academic standards being set by the states.

In a "Dear Colleague" letter circulated Tuesday, Mr. Goodling says the federal government in 1997 spent about \$540 million to test students. The bulk of that - \$476 million - was budgeted for Goals 2000 grants to states to develop state standards and assessments. The letter stresses "state."

National tests, although touted as voluntary, are much debated and have opposition on the left and the right of the political spectrum.

"I am concerned that the concept of this national test has not received thorough deliberation to date . . .," Barbara Neilsen, state superintendent of education for South Carolina, told Mr. Goodling.

"In Virginia, taxpayers have already paid once for new state tests and standards," said State Board of Education President Michelle Easton. "Why should we now have to pay again for national tests which we don't want and don't need?■"

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14

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Daily Education News

Thursday, July 31, 1997

1. The Washington Post

07/31/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: A Section; Page A04

Lamar Alexander Rebuts Clinton On National Educational Tests

By Ceci Connolly

Washington Post Staff Writer

Two days after President Clinton tweaked the nation's governors for failing to join him in a crusade for national education standards, Republican Lamar Alexander rose to their defense today accusing Clinton of promoting a lousy idea.

"I can understand his impatience but I think sometimes it's a good idea to drag your feet if you're going down the wrong road," the former Tennessee governor and education secretary said in the closing session of the National Governors' Association summer meeting.

The problem with creating new national tests at the federal **Education Department**, Alexander said, is that "it makes a difference who the secretary of education is — whether it's Dick Riley or Lamar Alexander or Phyllis Schlafly or Marion Barry."

An unsuccessful presidential candidate in 1996, Alexander urged governors to take the lead on reform by abolishing tenure, setting rigorous academic standards and letting parents enroll children in alternative educational programs such as charter schools and home schooling.

He also called for a dramatic revamp of the Education Department in which a handful of administrators in Washington would send checks to individual families to make their own school selections. "The federal role for schools would be the same as for colleges," he said after the speech. "Most federal money for colleges goes directly to the students."

While Alexander spoke the language of the governors, Microsoft CEO Bill Gates talked the future, introducing them to notions such as "digital nervous system" and "living an Internet lifestyle." The 41-year-old business leader told the governors they can make business more efficient and more appealing if they make better use of new technologies such as the Internet and electronic mail.

"Citizens are interested in more information if they can easily reach out and get it," he said. "If we do this right, they can participate in more forms and on a more regular basis in the democratic process."

Clicking on a laptop computer as he demonstrated the material available online, Gates proclaimed: "This Internet is really something!"

He showcased efforts in Florida, Wisconsin and Washington where citizens can tap into a computer to renew driver's licenses, check out government job postings, read committee testimony and send a message to officials.

In an otherwise apolitical, 30-minute speech Gates put in one plug to refrain from taxing Internet business activity. "The Internet is in its infancy," he said. "It's important we allow the innovation to flourish."

The public agenda for the three-day NGA confab focused on children's issues. But behind the scenes the governors spent much of their time haggling on the telephone with officials in Washington over the just-completed tax and budget deal.

Overall, the governors applauded the agreement, but they were dismayed their pleas for revisions in the new welfare law were not heeded. They took credit for preventing a per capita Medicaid limit and winning a compromise on children's health benefits. Nevada Gov. Robert J. Miller (D), said at the closing news conference: "This budget package contains an enormous amount of suggestions made by governors." ■

1. Education Daily

July 30, 1997 Category: Trade

ED PREPARED TO MONITOR INCLUSION IN NATIONAL TESTS

The Education Department plans to randomly police schools giving voluntary national tests in reading and math to ensure they don't skew results by excluding some students.

"We didn't want this to be a heavy-handed federal program, but we are going to guarantee [the test] is being used in an appropriate way," Gary Phillips, ED's executive director of the national testing program, told a teacher's conference in Washington, D.C.

To encourage a level playing field, Phillips said, ED may hire an independent evaluator or use a monitoring system like the one for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), on which the national tests of fourth- graders in reading and eighth-graders in math are to be based.

During NAEP exams, 25 percent of schools are selected randomly for policing and receive no advance notice.

If schools cheat, "we'll know that," Phillips told American Federation of Teachers members at the biennial conference on teaching standards and quality.

"It'll be reported in a public document," he added. "If civil rights are violated [by excluding some students], our lawyers are ready to step in and do what needs to be done."

He said the test results will include data on how many students are eligible to take the test and how many actually take it, with separate categories for students with disabilities.

Phillips was responding to concerns from Frances Wever, president of the Federation of Teachers in El Paso, Texas, that the national tests will be misused and their results rendered meaningless.

The exclusion of some students from testing programs has been a national concern, and recent amendments to federal special education law will require disabled students to be included in state- and district-wide assessments (ED Supplement, July 17).

Six states and 15 city school districts have signed up for the voluntary tests (ED, July 28).

ED now plans to award contracts in mid-August to develop the test questions, a month earlier than expected. Field tests are expected next spring. — Dave Boyer■

1. Associated Press

07-30 9:51a Category: Local

Education officials defend local standards

By MIKE GLOVER

Associated Press Writer

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) - A study listing Iowa as the only state not moving toward setting statewide school standards ignores the state's role as a pioneer in testing its students, officials said.

The study misses the point that Iowa has been a leader in developing standardized student tests given around the nation for decades, Iowa Department of Education spokesman Klark Jessen said Tuesday.

The survey by the American Federation of Teachers, a 900,000 member education union, found all states except Iowa are moving toward setting some kind of statewide standards.

"Forty-nine states have determined that they can offer valuable help to local school districts," said Matt Gandal, author of the report.

"High-quality, state-level academic standards can help ensure that no matter where a student lives or whether a student changes schools, every student in Iowa will receive an equitable and excellent education," Gandal said.

But Jessen said state law requires schools to set their own standards, measure student performance and report that performance to the state.

Imposing statewide standards is best reserved for improving schools in states where education has lagged, and that's not the case in Iowa, he said.

"It appears as if the local control emphasis kind of system here has been successful," Jessen said.

President Clinton raised the issue Monday when he urged states to move toward a national testing program, a move Gov. Terry Branstad quickly rejected.

Jessen said it is ironic the state is being criticized for rejecting a national testing effort because some of the most used tests in the nation are from Iowa.

The American College Test, or ACT, is a widely used college entrance exam and is based in Iowa. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is probably the nation's most widely used test for elementary students, Jessen noted.

Though the state rejects a single, mandatory national test, more than 99 percent of the state's school districts administer the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Jessen noted.

"Iowa is a pioneer in terms of assessment, the testing of kids," Jessen said. "Iowa was offering the Iowa Test of Basic Skills back in the 1940s."

While the state does not have statewide standards, it does have a tradition of educational excellence and achievement, Jessen said.

"Iowa has had a long tradition of local control with schools," Jessen said. "At the same time Iowa does have a set of requirements of districts that they set their own goals for their students and have assessments in place and report that to us on a yearly basis."

Imposing new standards and testing requirements makes sense in states "with a wide disparity in the quality of schools," he said.

"You go to states like Kentucky and they feel the only way they could make the overall school system successful was to set overall standards," Jessen said.

And Jessen argued that the state is moving to force schools to set even tougher assessment standards as part of a strategic review of the educational system.

"Local schools need to come up with new and even more improved ways of finding out how students stand and report that to parents and community leaders," Jessen said ■

1. Associated Press

07-29 2:20p

AFT report says some states making progress on learning standards

By ROBERT GREENE

AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Only 17 states now have standards in math, science, social studies and English that spell out what children should know and when, the American Federation of Teachers said in its annual report Tuesday.

However, the teachers' union said 29 states have clear, specific standards in at least three of the core subjects, up from 21 a year earlier. Writing standards for social studies and English is generally more difficult than for math or science because the subjects are more politically loaded.

Sandra Feldman, president of the 900,000-member union, said there had been clear progress. "Most states are firmly committed to raising their academic standards, and many are making good progress," she said.

The AFT has been campaigning for tougher standards to make public schools more challenging and attractive. Uniform standards will assure that students in poor areas and those who move often will get the same chance at learning as everyone else. The report is the union's third.

Despite the progress in writing standards, the AFT said, many states still must develop tests and find other means to make sure that children are meeting those standards.

The report also said few states have high school graduation exams based on 10th grade standards and higher, only a few help low-performing students meet standards, and even fewer are trying to end promotions for students regardless of their performance.

"The major task of connecting state assessment systems with more challenging academic standards is proceeding," said Gordon M. Ambach, director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, which represents state school superintendents.

The report offered encouragement to President Clinton by calculating that state support for voluntary national tests of fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math was widespread. The AFT supports Clinton's national standards proposal.

It found that nine states planned to administer voluntary national tests for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math. Only six have told Clinton they would.

Officials from another 12 states and the District of Columbia told the teachers' union that they probably would give the tests. Iowa said it definitely would not participate.

Clinton, who was attending a governors' meeting in Las Vegas on Monday, again urged the state executives to lend their support to his push for national standards. Last week he had accused them of dragging their feet on the issue.

The AFT report said all the states except Iowa were working on common academic standards for their students. Although Iowa has standardized tests, local districts carefully guard their control of education.

The study paid close attention to the focus of standards on specific, or core, content that children should be expected to master. Critics such as E.D. Hirsch Jr. at the University of Virginia say schools, teachers and colleges of education have shunned content. By focusing on such vague goals as teaching "critical thinking," they avoid accountability, critics argue.

A weak standard, according to the report, would say this about history: "Students should be able to identify and explain how events and changes occurred in significant historical periods."

A strong standard would say: "Students should be able to describe how United States federalism was transformed during the Great Depression by the policies of the New Deal and how that transformation continues to affect United States society today."

States as diverse as California, Massachusetts and West Virginia were cited as making dramatic improvements.

The English standards for Massachusetts included a sample reading list. ■

Daily Education News

Wednesday, July 30, 1997

1. Morning Edition [National Public Radio]

July 29, 1997

National Testing

HOST President Clinton is having trouble getting the nation's governors to join his education crusade. The President wants to establish national academic standards and to create national tests in reading and math but so far only six governors have endorsed the proposals. To downplay the appearance that there is little support for his plan, the President has enlisted the help of big city mayors. Governors are key to the plans success and that is what the President told the governors yesterday at their conference in Las Vegas. MPR's Claudio Sanchez reports.

CLAUDIO SANCHEZ The President thanked the governors for their role in creating bi-partisan support for a balanced federal budget and for making welfare reform a reality. But, he told them, he couldn't understand why so many of them had not endorsed national academic standards in tests which, the President says, would show how American students are doing compared to the rest of the world.

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON The cities wouldn't do it for a long time because they thought that our kids couldn't do it. That's the truth. Because America has a higher percentage of poor kids than other countries, America has got a more diverse student body than other countries, America has got all these problems in they work in other countries and on and on and on.

SANCHEZ "American students can do it," Clinton said. On international reading, math, and science tests, for example, American fourth graders scored at the very top or near the top. But American eighth graders score much lower. The way to raise their performance, the president said, is to adopt as a nation, the highest possible academic standards, then hold educators and students accountable for meeting them. Under the President's plan, all the nation's fourth graders would take the same test in reading and all the eighth graders would take the same test in math. The results would show educators, parents and governors how well or how poorly their students are doing and how children compare school to school or state to state. This would be unprecedented in American education. This is not a power grab by the federal government, the President said. It would not chip away at local control and it wouldn't supplant a state's constitutional responsibility for education. All that the federal government would do is oversee the process and pay for the new tests. Those governors who have already created their own state test, the President said, do raise a good point about the need to avoid duplication.

CLINTON We have to work with you if we are going to ask you to participate in this, to try to reconcile these things so that you're not overburdened in terms of the administrative time, the times the kids spend and all that. I understand there are practical implementation issues. That is a legitimate concern.

SANCHEZ More than concern, though, the fear — even among some the President's supporters on this issue — is that high state tests will be driven by politics, not educational needs. Mike Bittle is an elementary school principal in Gilford, Connecticut.

MIKE BITTLE Our accountability is to children and when we start competing with each other based on test scores then we start teaching tests and not children. I think we need to be very cautious of that.

SANCHEZ Also, if teachers hear that their kids have to squeeze in another test, says Mary Reese, a principal in Edison Township in New Jersey...

MARY REESE They are going to riot because enough is enough. We also have to think of the children. We don't want to make them test weary.

SANCHEZ Another concern is how government uses test results, says principal Carol Kennedy of Columbia, Missouri.

CAROL KENNEDY We are not sure that the government isn't going to use those test results to determine how much federal funding we get. Will the state look at it and say, "Okay, then we are going to change the amount or the way your school is funded." I think there is a big issue of trust out there that is involved in all of these.

SANCHEZ There is no indication that if more governors do not adopt national standards in testing, the Clinton administration's other major education proposals will suffer. The President's push for technology, access to the internet, charter schools and his plan to help train 100,000 master teachers — especially in the inner cities, for example — are all popular. But Mr. Clinton was very clear in suggesting in Las Vegas yesterday that none of these other things is as important to him or to the nation as national standards in tests.

CLINTON I just have to say that I do not believe that we will be the leading economy in the world fifty years from now unless we can do a more uniform job of getting people out of high school with excellent, world-class educations. I do not believe that. You have to ask yourself whether you believe it. I don't believe that.

SANCHEZ White House officials say a handful of governors will sign on soon but that it won't be more than ten.

Most governors, analysts say, will continue to wait until they can actually see the tests that the President is talking about. Those tests won't be ready until the spring of 1998. I'm Claudio Sanchez reporting.■

21. The Washington Post

07/29/97: Edition: FINAL: Section: A Section: Page A04

Clinton Offers Governors Advice For Spending Welfare Windfall; President Advocates Use of Savings to Promote Jobs for Poor

By Peter Baker and Ceci Connolly
Washington Post Staff Writers

A year after he signed legislation overhauling the welfare system, President Clinton today warned the nation's governors not to divert the savings from plummeting rolls to other programs and urged them instead to use it to help the poor find work.

Meeting with his former peers at the annual conference of the National Governors' Association here, Clinton suggested that states should use their multibillion-dollar windfall to provide job training, child care and transportation so more welfare recipients can make the difficult transition to the workplace.

"I know in some state capitals there are big debates about how to use extra money," Clinton said. "But I think if we were to revert these savings to other things away from welfare reform, it would be a big mistake that would come home to haunt the states the next time there is an economic downturn. Anybody who does it, I think, would really wind up regretting it."

Clinton also used his appearance here to defend his insistence on applying regular labor laws to welfare recipients placed in job programs and implored the governors to enlist in his drive to establish national educational standards. In both cases, some governors have resisted what they consider unwelcome federal dictates.

The encounter here between the president and an organization he once headed underscored the extent of the transfer of authority from Washington to the states in recent years. Where once such meetings were filled with requests from governors to the president, Clinton knows now that for his welfare or education initiatives to succeed he needs the help of his counterparts in the state capitals. Every bit the former governor, he spiced his speech with numerous references to individual projects and success stories from different states.

For the most part, his talk was

received politely, though not enthusiastically. He was interrupted by applause just three times in 38 minutes — once when he mentioned his nomination of one of the governors, Republican William F. Weld of Massachusetts, to be ambassador to Mexico.

"The president gave another fairly good Republican speech," said South Carolina Gov. David M. Beasley (R). "He talked the right talk. . . . That he's come to this point in his midlife is exciting."

After meeting with the governors, Clinton skipped out to a local country club for an afternoon of golf with basketball star Michael Jordan, Nevada Gov. Bob Miller (D) and several former governors.

During his speech, Clinton hailed the governors for helping to move 3 million Americans off welfare since he took office but stressed the work still ahead. He singled out Maryland for praise for using its savings from falling caseloads to improve child care, transportation and training programs.

Aides said Clinton did not have any particular state in mind when he argued against diverting welfare savings. "It's just a warning signal," said senior adviser Rahm Emanuel. "It's a flashing yellow light to keep the welfare money for moving people from welfare to work."

However, the White House and the statehouses split sharply over whether welfare recipients should be treated the same as other workers in terms of minimum wage and other workplace laws. Many governors believe such requirements will make it too difficult to move indigent workers into starting jobs provided by churches and other nonprofit organizations.

Virginia Gov. George Allen (R) said employers may decide not to take a chance on welfare recipients because in addition to minimum wage they would also be forced to pay Social Security and

unemployment taxes. "We ought to knock down the burdens, not put up burdens," Allen said.

Clinton seemed open to compromise. "When people go into the workplace . . . they ought to be able to earn the minimum wage," he said. "Whether we can work some resolution of some of the other issues, I don't know, but I feel very strongly about that."

He did not win any immediate converts to his education plan. Rather than impose federal school standards, Clinton has asked the states voluntarily to adopt a uniform national set of tests for reading and math beginning in 1999 to improve students' ability to compete in a global marketplace. However, only Maryland and five other states have signed into the plan.

"This is not a federal government power grab," said Clinton, referring to a major criticism of many conservative governors. Yet he acknowledged that they have "a legitimate concern" that new tests will only duplicate examinations already used in the states.

Delaware Gov. Thomas R. Carper (D) said he is considering the Clinton proposal, but some in his party fear national educational standards will veer into social policy.

"There is a paranoia that this involves more than academics," he said. "The paranoia is even greater when they hear people in Washington are developing the standards."

Added Beasley, "We don't have any desire to move into a system of federal standards. The last thing we want is federal encroachment on a school system."

Even Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, head of the Democratic Governors' Association, said he wants some adjustments to the Clinton administration proposal. "The dilemma Democrats have is, 'Gee, this is a great idea, but if we have to pay for it, we want some flexibility,'" he said. ■

1. Education Daily

July 29, 1997

CLINTON LOBBIES GOVERNORS TO GIVE NATIONAL TESTS

President Clinton yesterday beseeched governors to climb aboard his campaign for voluntary national tests. "I know there is some resistance here," Clinton told the National Governors' Association conference in Las Vegas, pledging to help states work out logistical difficulties, such as duplicating state exams and requiring students to spend too much time taking tests.

When he announced Friday that 15 large urban school districts would administer the tests for fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math, Clinton accused governors of "dragging their feet." Only six states have pledged to give the tests (ED, July 28).

Clinton said yesterday that some governors believe the effort is "somehow a power grab by the federal government."

"Our role is to pay for the development of the test," Clinton protested, downplaying the Education Department's pledge to pay for the first-year administration of the tests and earlier statements from high-ranking ED officials expressing hope that the exams would drive curriculum decisions (ED, March 5).

The president argued that the federal government paid for the development of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which most states administer. The new tests will be based on NAEP.

NAEP, however, has an independent governing board; the new tests do not. The National Assessment Governing Board plans to discuss the national tests and their relationship to NAEP at its meeting Friday. —Laureen Lazarovici■

1. Education Daily

July 29, 1997

AFT STANDARDS SURVEY FINDS CONSEQUENCES LAG

While states have been making steady progress in writing clear standards for core academic subjects, few force students to meet those benchmarks, a new report shows.

The American Federation of Teachers' (AFT) third annual report on state standards, being released today, says 14 states have produced stronger academic goals in the past year.

AFT says 29 states have clear, specific and "content-grounded" standards in at least three of four core subjects, up from 21 states last year (ED, Aug. 6, 1996).

But the union says only seven states — Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina and West Virginia — have ended or are trying to end "social promotion" by requiring students to meet the standards before being promoted. That's up from four states last year.

And only 13 states have graduation exams based on 10th-grade standards or higher.

Forty-six states are developing, or have developed, assessments to measure whether students meet standards, up from 42 last year.

The report also faulted states for not doing enough to help students who are having trouble, with only 13 states requiring and paying for intervention programs, up from 10 last year.

More Details Sought States need to do more overall, the union said. For example, only 17 states have standards in all four core subjects — English, math, science and social studies — and AFT says 32 states' standards are not specific enough in one or more subject.

For example, an unidentified state requires students to "identify and classify various geometric figures" without specifying which figures, or what properties they should be classified by, AFT said.

As with last year's report, AFT said most states write clearer standards for math and science than for English and social studies, in which the goals tend to emphasize the "process of writing" instead of the quality of the work.

Virginia is the only state whose standards AFT deems "exemplary" in all four subjects.

AFT praised California as a model in English; Florida, Ohio and West Virginia in math; Delaware, Massachusetts and New Hampshire in science; and California, Florida and the District of Columbia in social studies.

Those states' standards are written clearly and are "detailed enough to provide significant guidance" to teachers, parents, students and assessment developers, AFT says.

For example, AFT cited a strong science standard: "Students should be able to describe the basic processes of photosynthesis and respiration and their importance to life." As an example of a weak standard, AFT cited.

"Students will compare patterns of change and constancy in systems."

The most improved states, according to AFT, are California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

AFT says President Clinton's proposed national tests for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math "could become a powerful mechanism for benchmarking state standards."

From its own survey of top state education department officials, AFT estimates 21 states and the District of Columbia probably will use the voluntary tests, to be administered in 1999. An Education Daily survey earlier this year found a less enthusiastic response, and only six states have signed up so far (ED, April 9).

The standards survey is being released in Washington, D.C., at AFT's biennial teaching conference, which ends today.

"Making Standards Matter, 1997" is \$10 from American Federation of Teachers, Order Department, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2079, (202)879-4458, or visit AFT's Web site at <http://www.aft.org>. — Dave Boyer■

1. Associated Press

07-29 1:43a For Release 9 a.m. EDT

AFT report says states push standards, but stumble on history, English

By ROBERT GREENE

AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Most states wrote or revised standards for public school academics in the past year, but less than half the states have clearly defined what public school children should know in four key subjects, a teachers union said today.

The annual report by the American Federation of Teachers said only 17 states now have standards in math, science, social studies and English that give a clear picture of what children should know and when.

However, the union said 29 states have clear, specific standards in at least three of the core subjects, up from 21 a year earlier.

The third report from the 900,000-member union, which is trying to make public education more challenging and assure that students in poor areas get the same chance at learning, found that of the 39 states that produced new or revised standards last year, 14 toughened their standards.

The report offered encouragement to President Clinton by calculating that state support for voluntary national tests of fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math was widespread. The AFT supports Clinton's national standards proposal.

Clinton, who was attending a governors' meeting in Las Vegas on Monday, again urged the state executives to lend their support to his push for national standards. Last week he had accused them of dragging their feet on the issue.

The AFT report said all the states except Iowa were working on common academic standards for their students. Although Iowa has standardized tests, local districts carefully guard their control of education.

The study paid close attention to the focus of standards on specific, or core, content that children should be expected to master. Critics such as E.D. Hirsch Jr. at the University of Virginia say schools, teachers and colleges of education have shunned content. By focusing on such vague goals as teaching "critical thinking," they avoid accountability, critics argue.

Underprivileged children with poorly financed schools have suffered the most from a lack of standards, especially when combined with low expectations and a lack of money for teaching, the report said. One student in five changes schools in a year, the report said, and those students suffer from a lack of consistent standards.

"Some students don't have access to a rich and demanding curriculum," said the report's author, Matt Gandal.

A weak standard, according to the report, would say this about history: "Students should be able to identify and explain how events and changes occurred in significant historical periods."

A strong standard would say: "Students should be able to describe how United States federalism was transformed during the Great Depression by the policies of the New Deal and how that transformation continues to affect United States society today."

States as diverse as California, Massachusetts and West Virginia were cited as making dramatic improvements.

The English standards for Massachusetts included a sample reading list.

The report had some news to cheer Clinton. It found that nine states planned to administer voluntary national tests for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math. Only six have told Clinton they would.

Officials from another 12 states and the District of Columbia told the teachers' union that they probably would give the tests. Iowa said it definitely would not participate. ■

Daily Education News

Tuesday, July 29, 1997

1. San Diego Union-Tribune

July 29, 1997

Clinton vows no education 'power grab' **But urges adoption of national standards**

By George E. Condon Jr.
COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

LAS VEGAS — Seeking to overcome reluctance to adopt national testing of elementary school students, President Clinton yesterday pledged to the nation's governors he would not allow "a power grab by the federal government."

Instead, he urged the governors to "work with us" to create national standards.

Addressing the annual summer meeting of the National Governors Association, a group he once headed, the president did not, as he had a week ago, accuse the governors of "dragging their feet" on education reform.

But his frustration was evident that so few states have rallied behind the reform banner he waved during his State of the Union address earlier this year.

In that address, he asked all states to adopt voluntary national math and science tests for fourth graders and eighth graders. But the response has been muted.

Only six states — Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, West Virginia, North Carolina and Kentucky — and another 15 urban school districts have agreed to the proposal. Many governors have opposed it as a federal threat to local control of schools and others have complained that their students already are subjected to national tests.

"This is not a federal government power grab," said Clinton, imploring the governors to give the testing a second look. "It's a question of whether there should be national standards."

Noting the presence of other tests, the president said there was "a legitimate concern" of creating too many tests for students.

"So we have to work with you if we're going to ask you to participate in this . . . so that you're not overburdened in terms of the administrative time, the time that kids spend . . . But I think we can work through those."

Urging governors to rethink their opposition, Clinton added:

"I do not believe that we will be the leading economy in the world 50 years from now unless we can do a more uniform job of getting people out of high school with excellent, world-class educations."

He insisted that the tests have "nothing to do with the federal government."

"They're not government questions, government standards, government anything," he said. "We helped (states) to develop the test."

Many of the Republican governors were unmoved by the appeal.

"I still don't know why in the heck we should do another test," said Virginia Gov. George Allen.

Clinton, who was the point governor on welfare issues in the 1980s, warned the governors that the windfall many states have enjoyed since the passage of welfare reform last year cannot be counted on to persist if the economy suffers a downturn.

He warned them to use the money they receive from Washington to move welfare recipients to paying jobs and praised the 36 states that now do that.

He prodded the governors to increase subsidies for child care and transportation for welfare recipients trying to move into jobs. Clashing with some of the governors, he also strongly urged them to make sure that those new workers be paid the minimum wage and be made eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit.■

1. Associated Press

07-28 4:02a

President seeking support for national school standards from governors

By SANDRA SOBIERAJ
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) - President Clinton has accused the nation's governors of "dragging their feet" on national school standards. Now, he is appealing directly to his former colleagues for support, warning that kids are at risk without heightened education benchmarks.

"If you don't want, even in a strong economy, tens of thousands of people standing around on the street, vulnerable to gangs and guns and drugs and violence, and costing you money - you just want to be narrow minded about - then we had better rededicate ourselves to a national commitment to excellence for every child in education," the president told a Democratic fund-raising dinner late Sunday.

Aides described the remarks as a preview, in part, of Clinton's education and welfare message to today's meeting of the National Governors Association in Las Vegas.

Clinton is pushing states to enlist in the Education Department's voluntary program of national testing and performance measures for grade-schoolers in math and science.

So far, just 15 urban school districts and six states have agreed - Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina and West Virginia - as well as schools operated by the Defense Department.

That prompted Clinton, once governor of Arkansas, to complain last week about the governors: "They've been dragging their feet."

On welfare, Clinton wants to recognize the governors for "their success up to now," in implementing the welfare law since it was passed last year by the Republican-controlled Congress, giving states greater control of welfare programs.

"But he also wants to underscore what remains to be done because welfare reform continues to be a work in progress," Lockhart said.

As for the budget-balancing compromise close to agreement on Capitol Hill, the president suggested Sunday that a deal could be completed in time for an announcement before the governors' conference.

"I want us to make this balanced budget agreement tomorrow - (one) that I hope 90 percent of the Democrats will vote for," the president said Sunday.

Policy and politics were not the only order of business planned for today: a good part of the president's schedule was set aside for golf.

Clinton recently got the go-ahead from his doctor to resume playing after knee surgery. He played 18 holes Sunday at Los Angeles' Hillcrest Country Club, switching in and out of two fivesomes during the round. ■

1. Associated Press

07-28 6:04p

Clinton prods governors on welfare, school tests

By TOM RAUM

Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) - President Clinton prodded the nation's governors Monday to accept his voluntary program of national school testing, insisting the plan wasn't a federal intrusion into states' rights.

He also warned states it would be a big mistake to divert newly freed federal welfare money into other programs.

"Anybody who does it, I think, would wind up regretting it the next time there's an economic downturn," Clinton said in an address to the annual summer meeting of the National Governors Association.

Governors, 32 of whom are Republicans, generally praised Clinton's remarks. But Republicans expressed some reservations, saying states want fewer - not more - restrictions on how they spend federal money.

And his proposal for national testing, so far endorsed by only 15 urban school districts and six states, drew GOP skepticism, despite Clinton's assertion that the plan wasn't a "power grab by the federal government."

"Most governors, I'm sure would agree with some goals, but we don't want the federal government any more involved in the education system," said Republican Gov. John Rowland of Connecticut.

Governors of both parties voiced strong support for Clinton's choice of William F. Weld to be ambassador to Mexico. Weld, a Republican, resigned Monday as governor of Massachusetts to fight for his nomination.

Clinton made a joking reference to Weld in his remarks, and some Republicans accused him of making light of Weld's predicament and not fighting hard enough for the nomination.

As Clinton was praising those governors whose states have gone along with his voluntary school testing program, he quipped: "I wish Governor Weld were here for me to thank him, but I appreciate the fact that he's willing to go to Mexico. And I hope we can get him there."

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad, chairman of the Republican Governors Association, told reporters, "I'm disappointed the president didn't submit ... (the nomination) earlier and work more forcibly for it."

He complained that Clinton had made only passing reference to Weld "and it was said in a kind of humorous vein."

Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating, also a Republican, said Weld would make "an outstanding ambassador to Mexico." He urged Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman, who is blocking the nomination, to reconsider it with "good will and an open mind."

Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, chairman of the Democratic Governors Association, called fellow New Englander Weld "a universally respected guy ... We're obviously very hopeful that he'll get the nomination."

Clinton updated the governors on progress of budget negotiations in Washington.

On welfare, he said states now have far more flexibility than they did in the past but "there's also a lot more to be done."

He urged governors not to divert federal funds freed by welfare-to-work programs and by current low unemployment figures. "It would be a big mistake that would come home to haunt the states the next time there is an economic downturn."

Clinton also praised a provision, still being thrashed out by budget negotiators, that would require workers who get jobs in private industry as part of a welfare-to-work program to be paid the minimum wage.

"I know there's been some debate about that," he said. "Whether we can work out some resolution of some of the other issues, I don't know. But I feel very strongly about that."

GOP governors expressed some skepticism, saying they weren't so concerned about the minimum wage proposal as other federal workplace regulations that would be imposed on employers who give work to former welfare recipients.

"We have some grave concerns that welfare reform could be gutted" by such a provision, said Republican Gov. David Beasley of South Carolina.

But overall, Beasley said, the former Arkansas governor "gave another fairly good Republican speech. He's come to this point in his midlife and we think it's exciting." ■

1. Education Daily

July 28, 1997

MAJOR CITIES SIGN ON TO CLINTON'S NATIONAL TESTS

Fifteen of the country's largest urban school districts—which together serve nearly 3.5 million students—committed Friday to administering voluntary national tests for fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math.

"This is a historic, wonderful and astonishing moment in American education," President Clinton told a gathering of the National Association of Elementary School Principals in Arlington, Va.

That the nation's three largest school districts — New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago—and a dozen others signed up for the tests signals that the White House is broadening its strategy to advance national standards.

A Shot At Governors

Clinton has been courting states to administer the exams, slated for spring 1999, but so far only six have signed up (ED, June 11). In fact, the president chided the governors for failing to rally around his crusade.

"If this event had gone on in 1979 or 1980 or 1983 or 1984, the governors would have been the first group out there," he said. "They've been dragging their feet," Clinton said, promising to take up the issue with them over the weekend at the National Governors' Association conference in Las Vegas.

The three largest districts are in states with Republican governors.

Other districts hopping aboard are Atlanta; Broward Co., Fla.; Cincinnati; Detroit; El Paso, Texas; Fresno, Calif.; Houston; Long Beach, Calif.; Omaha, Neb.; Philadelphia; San Antonio, Texas; and Seattle.

The announcement highlighted the administration's effort to tout the tests as a tool to advance education equity (ED, March 5).

"We celebrate these 15 school districts ... putting the lie to the notion that our children can't meet the high standards because they're from immigrant families or because they're from poor families or because they live in difficult circumstances," Clinton said.

The districts signing up for the tests have double the national average of limited-English-proficient students, and of low-income students.

Results from the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math test showed that low-income students generally scored lower than their peers (ED, Feb. 28). The national tests will be based on NAEP.

Representatives of urban districts said they hope the tests will focus national attention on the plight of often beleaguered city schools.

"Attaining the standards measured by the tests ... will require a substantial commitment by the American public to urban children," said Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools.

"It is important that the nation understands what's going on here [in urban districts] and do something about it," added Ron Prescott, lobbyist for Los Angeles schools. "This will focus a response that hasn't been focused before." — Laureen Lazarovici ■

1. Associated Press

July 28, 1997

Clinton sounds education theme at fund-raiser

LOS ANGELES - While his negotiators searched for a budget compromise with Congress, President Clinton used the themes he is advocating in the deal to shake loose dollars for Democratic candidates.

The president addressed a Sunday night fundraising dinner that was expected to bring in \$600,000 for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, at a cost of \$5,000 to \$10,000 a plate.

Aides said Clinton would not miss the opportunity to push the education tax cuts and other social spending he wants as part of a balanced budget plan.

"The president has made the principles he needs for a balanced budget deal very clear," said White House spokesman Joe Lockhart.

One of Clinton's main priorities in the budget talks is securing nearly \$35 billion in tax breaks for college students. He also wants a proposed \$500-per-child tax credit to apply to low-paid workers who owe virtually no taxes.

Sunday's speech also offered Clinton a chance to test the message he will deliver Monday before the National Governors Association in Las Vegas. There, Clinton hopes to persuade more governors to embrace the idea of national testing standards for U.S. students.

A White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Clinton wants to deliver a tough message on the need for standards without making governors feel as if he is trying to beat them up politically.

Also, Clinton will offer an assessment of the first year of welfare reform, highlighting states that have succeeded in trimming welfare rolls while acknowledging the work still needed to move people from welfare into jobs.

During the first part of his three-day West Coast swing, Clinton avoided direct references to the budget negotiations, even as Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott said progress in the talks would require "some further serious thought by the president himself."

Lockhart said Clinton is comfortable leaving the talks in the hands of his budget director, Franklin Raines. "At the appropriate time, if more direct involvement is necessary the president will get more directly involved," Lockhart said.

Two White House officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Clinton wants to be careful not to hurt a possible budget deal with on-the-road rhetoric.

The president also is getting in some recreation during his trip.

He spent much of Sunday golfing with a party that included Mayor Richard Riordan, pro golfer Amy Alcott, Rep. Xavier Becerra, D-Calif., former Democratic National Committee finance director Truman Arnold, television producer Bud Yorkin and Casey Wasserman, grandson of former MCA chairman Lew Wasserman.

The elder Wasserman was host to a Saturday night party for Clinton at his Los Angeles estate. Guests included Yorkin, Disney chairman Michael Eisner, former Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Motion Pictures Association president Jack Valenti, singer Barbra Streisand and her fiancée, actor James Brolin.

Before golfing Sunday, Clinton stopped by the three-story, Santa Monica beach house of supermarket tycoon Ron Burkle.

Burkle, owner of the Ralph's Supermarkets chain, brought Clinton out onto the second-floor balcony to take in the oceanfront view. A small crowd of bicyclists and Rollerbladers gathered along the boardwalk cheered in unison, "Welcome to California!" ■

1. The Ft. Lauderdale Sun Sentinel

July 28, 1997

Clinton seeking support for school standards from governors

LOS ANGELES (AP) — President Clinton has accused the nation's governors of "dragging their feet" on national school standards. Now, he is appealing directly to his former colleagues for support, warning that kids are at risk without heightened education benchmarks.

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1. Cincinnati Enquirer

July 26, 1997

City will join in school testing **CPS, 14 urban districts seek U.S. standards**

BY MARK SKERTIC

The Cincinnati Enquirer

Cincinnati Public Schools is among 15 big-city systems that have joined President Clinton's push for national school standards.

The schools have pledged to participate in voluntary national tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math to measure student performance across the nation.

"This commitment means that 3.5 million more children - one out of every 14 public school children in America - will be held to these world-class education standards in the basics," Mr. Clinton said Friday in an address before the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

CPS representatives at the session included school board President Lynn Marmer, Cincinnati Federation of Teachers President Tom Mooney and Kathleen Ware, the district's director of quality improvement.

Mr. Mooney said he supported the decision to adopt uniform high standards and give the exam.

"It's consistent with the standards-based reform we've been implementing in Cincinnati," he said. "Students in other developed countries consistently outperform our kids primarily because those countries have clear, national education standards and rigorous standards that are well known ... "

Ms. Marmer agreed: "These are not federal standards; they're not being set by the federal government. They are national standards. They recognize that children in Ohio, in Georgia, in New York, in California, in the world, need to learn at the same level."

Mr. Clinton used his address to prod governors for "dragging their feet" on joining the move toward voluntary national standards and performance exams. ■

1. Philadelphia Inquirer

July 26, 1997

Clinton chides states slow to adopt school tests

Six states have joined the voluntary testing program. 15 cities, including Philadelphia, also are on board.

By Peter Baker

WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — With his major education initiative stalled in the statehouses, President Clinton lashed out yesterday at the nation's governors for "dragging their feet" on improving school standards and began bypassing them by signing up some of the largest cities — including Philadelphia — for his new testing program.

Clinton's vision of a nationwide series of tests in reading and math to improve achievement in an increasingly global marketplace depends largely on the cooperation of officials outside Washington. Because any federally mandated tests would be political dynamite, he has tried to persuade states to voluntarily adopt his testing regimen.

However, months after he first issued his challenge in his State of the Union address, Clinton has enlisted only six states for the cause — Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina and West Virginia — and few other states have been clamoring to join.

During a speech yesterday to a group of elementary school principals in Arlington, Va., Clinton sounded somewhat frustrated by the response and suggested he may vent a little when he travels to Las Vegas on Monday to address the National Governors' Association.

"If this event had gone on in 1979 or 1980 or 1983 or 1984, the governors would have been the first group out there," Clinton told the principals, who cheered him boisterously. "They've been dragging their feet."

Clinton announced that 15 of the nation's largest cities had agreed to use the tests once they are developed. Besides Philadelphia, they include New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston.

Combined with Defense Department schools and the half-dozen states already on board, the cities bring the total number of elementary students affected by the Clinton plan to 8.6 million, or nearly one of every five, according to the White House.

"It means after the test is given all of them will get better education, because we'll all learn from the test results and keep working until we get the results we want in every one of those districts," Clinton said.

Under his plan, tests developed under the leadership of the Education Department would measure fourth graders in reading and eighth graders in math, beginning in 1999. Recently released tests of sample students showed younger U.S. children excelling compared with their international peers, while older pupils lagged behind.

Philadelphia School Superintendent David Hornbeck, in Washington for yesterday's announcement, praised the voluntary tests, saying they were in line with what he was already trying to accomplish with his Children Achieving reform agenda: Raise the bar for public school students.

"I think that the national voluntary tests will complement what we're doing in Philadelphia quite well," he said in an interview.

Hornbeck, school board President Floyd Alston and Philadelphia Federation of Teachers President Ted Kirsch sent Clinton a letter this week endorsing the plan and saying the tests would "contribute to higher expectations for all children." The national tests will join two other standardized tests already administered to Philadelphia's public school students: the Stanford Achievement Tests, Ninth Edition — or SAT-9 — and the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment.

Last year, the school board also voted to raise academic standards for the city's 215,000 students. Hornbeck said he hoped the national tests would also inspire a set of high school standards nationwide.

Critics, however, have branded the President's program a barely veiled attempt to interject the federal government into what traditionally has been a local prerogative, the running of schools. A number of state leaders have said they already have upgraded their standards and adopted new tests, making the national effort redundant, not to mention pricey, because states would be expected to pick up most of the cost.

Inquirer staff writer Richard Jones contributed to this article.■

Daily Education News

Monday, July 28, 1997

1. Los Angeles Times

* 07/26/97; Edition: Home Edition; Section: Metro; Metro Desk; Page B-1 Category: National

L.A., Long Beach Schools Agree to National Testing

By FAYE FIORE; JONATHAN PETERSON
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

WASHINGTON — Rejecting pervasive doubts about the role of national tests in education, 15 major school districts, including those in Los Angeles and Long Beach, signed on Friday to President Clinton's call for U.S. academic standards, agreeing to start testing fourth-graders for reading and eighth-graders for math before the end of the century.

Accusing many of the nation's governors of "dragging their feet," Clinton applauded the school districts—which in California also include Fresno's—for taking a step "that would have been literally unthinkable" just a few years ago.

Voluntary national testing remains a highly controversial issue in many states, with officials questioning everything from the type of examinations that would be administered to the political fallout that could result from poor scores.

Only seven of the nation's governors have embraced Clinton's idea. And school districts in 39 states have been unwilling so far to participate in any national plan.

A spokesman for California Gov. Pete Wilson—one of those who has steered clear of Clinton's testing initiative—gave voice to some of the skepticism that surrounds the plan. Responding to Friday's announcement, Wilson press secretary Sean Walsh said: "We're all for testing. . . . But what kind of testing is this?"

Indeed, the details of how the tests will be created and administered, who pays for them and who has access to the results have yet to be worked out.

Still, Friday's announcement broke a logjam of sorts, with the White House winning the support of schools in six of the nation's seven biggest cities, including the three largest districts—New York, Los Angeles and Chicago. The 15 school systems that agreed to implement the approach account for 7% of the nation's fourth- and eighth-graders, the White House said.

"I believe that the single most important thing we can do to give our children a world-class education is to insist on high national standards, so that we make sure we have done everything we can to see that every single child learns to succeed in the exciting world of the 21st century," Clinton told a convention of the National Assn. of Elementary School Principals in Washington on Friday.

Principals from around the country received the president's remarks with generous applause and standing ovations.

First announced in his State of the Union address in February, the Clinton proposal challenged local school districts to measure the progress of children against a national bar, with parents, teachers, principals and curricula being held to answer when students failed to hit the mark.

Children are now tested by local districts, but there are no prevailing national performance standards. Some educators and examination experts have warned that national testing could be fraught with problems. For instance, they questioned whether it is possible to test every fourth- or eighth-grade student in the country on a single day and, if not, how to prevent the answers from leaking out.

Officials from the Los Angeles Unified School District, which represents 668,000 children, said they were ready to measure their students against a national barometer and deal with the results.

"Some of our students will do very well and some of them won't," said Ronald Prescott, associate superintendent of the district. "Urban school districts have more students at risk—some students who don't speak English, some students who will probably have more difficulty with some parts of the test. But it's important that we find out and do something about it."

Referring to the frustration many parents have expressed about the state of public education, Prescott added: "Before, everybody just wanted to fire everybody else and start over. Well, we've done that and it didn't work. There is no magic bullet to solve this. The answer is just hard work. We need to sit down again and teach kids how to read."

Times staff writers David Lesher in Sacramento and Richard Lee Colvin in Los Angeles contributed to this story. ■

1. The New York Times

07/26/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section 1; Editorial Desk; Page 20, Column 4 Category: Commentary

Letters to the Editor

National Math Test Will Challenge Students

To the Editor:

Lynne Cheney distorts the idea of a voluntary national test in mathematics for eighth graders (Op-Ed, July 20). The test proposed by President Clinton does not promote any teaching method, including the fictional "whole math" Ms. Cheney fears. Nor will it overwhelm state efforts to sharpen basic skills. The optional test will offer states, schools and parents a way to determine whether children are mastering mathematics and are prepared for the higher-level courses that lead to college and good jobs.

The test will be based on the National Assessment of Education Progress tests already used by more than 40 states. Only 24 percent of eighth graders were at "proficient" level on these challenging tests. Students who are challenged to learn, learn more.

RAMON C. CORTINES

Washington, July 22, 1997

The writer is Acting Assistant Secretary of Education for educational research and improvement.

04:10 EDT July 26, 1997■

1. Associated Press

07-25 2:57p

Clinton asks for support for voluntary school testing

By LAWRENCE L. KNUTSON Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Accusing governors of "dragging their feet" on raising teaching standards, President Clinton turned today to individual school districts to join his program of voluntary school testing. Fifteen urban districts, including Los Angeles, Philadelphia and New York signed on.

"When we don't expect or encourage our children to learn, we indirectly encourage them to fail," Clinton told the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Clinton has pushed for states to enlist schools in a voluntary program of testing and performance measures for grade-school students starting in 1999 when the test becomes available.

But so far, Clinton's call has only been heeded by six states - Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina and West Virginia - as well as schools operated by the Defense Department.

He promised to take the governors to task for this when he addresses their conference in Las Vegas on Monday.

In past years, Clinton said, "the governors would have been the first group out there" to endorse national standards. "But they've been dragging their feet."

He acknowledged that some detractors might view the endorsement from a handful of school districts as a relatively modest step forward.

"I don't know how much news this will be tonight on the news or tomorrow in the papers," Clinton said. "But this commitment means that 3.5 million more children - one out of every 14 public school children in America - will be held to these world-class standards."

White House spokesman Mike McCurry said the enlistment of individual districts does not mean the administration has given up recruiting states. "The Department of Education continues discussions with states, and a number of states are looking at the suggestion," he said today.

Clinton said that new and above-average science and math scores from U.S. fourth-graders proves "we don't have to settle for second-class expectations or second-class goals for any of our children."

The president cheered a recent report, the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, which placed American fourth-graders second in science, along with several other nations, behind South Korea among the 26 countries participating.

The report also showed U.S. students doing relatively well in math.

"When we set high standards and when we insist on them, there's no end to what our kids can do," Clinton said.

The idea of national voluntary education standards, long pushed by presidents, has met with resistance from some Republican leaders in Congress, who would rather that states and local officials decide what children should learn.

Other city districts that will participate are: Atlanta; Broward County, Fla.; Chicago; Cincinnati; Detroit; El Paso, Texas; Fresno, Calif.; Houston; Long Beach, Calif.; Omaha, Neb.; San Antonio and Seattle. ■

Daily Education News

Friday, July 25, 1997

1. Associated Press

07-25 5:50a

Thirteen school districts to endorse Clinton testing plan

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Clinton's call for national voluntary school testing has won the support of 13 major city school districts, White House officials say.

The endorsements, to be announced today when Clinton addresses the National Association of Elementary School Principals, are part of his long campaign to win national approval of universal teaching and education standards.

Clinton has pushed for states to enlist schools in a voluntary program of standard testing and performance measures for grade-school students.

But so far, Clinton's call has been heeded by only six states - Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina and West Virginia - and the schools operated by the Defense Department.

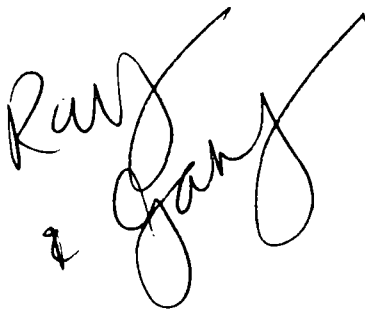
Clinton said last month that new and above-average science and math scores from U.S. fourth-graders proves "we don't have to settle for second-class expectations."

The president cheered a report on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, which placed American fourth-graders second in science, along with several other nations, behind South Korea among the 26 countries participating.

The report also showed U.S. students doing relatively well in math.

"There are a lot of people who never believed the United States' children would score in the top two in the world on any of these international tests," Clinton said. "Now they know that they were wrong, and they underestimated our children."

The idea of national voluntary education standards, long pushed by presidents, has met with resistance from some Republican leaders in Congress, who would rather that states and local officials decide what children should learn. ■



1. Richmond Times-Dispatch

July 23, 1997

... While Clinton Takes Over Lawmaking

By Robert Holland

"Local Control Could Stymie Clinton Tests" was the worried headline that Education Week, the Pew-subsidized rag of record for the U.S. education establishment, put atop the front page of a summer issue.

The fans of a centralized Ministry of Education should not fret. Although the story told of officials in Nebraska and several other Midwestern and Western states balking at participation in the Clintons' national tests of fourth-

graders (reading) and eighth-graders (math), the Clintons have a knack for exercising the power that the Constitution confers upon Congress — i.e., making the laws of the land.

In fact, despite the usual assurances that these tests would be "voluntary," President Clinton has stated variously that (1) he believes "every state must participate. . . ." and (2) that the American people "can no longer hide behind (their) love of local control of schools."

The Clintons understand perfectly that local control is the enemy and they don't intend for a minute to be stymied by it.

Like true statists, they have their ways: They can threaten to withhold money from non-cooperating states. Or they can jawbone state officials and dangle sugar plums before them (federal bribes-in-aid). Or they can call on corporate allies to threaten to deny new plants and jobs to states that refuse to use the Clinton tests (an elitist stick wielded last year at the National Education Summit with regard to national standards).

ALREADY, the Clintons' U.S. Education Department (USED) has farmed test development out to the Council of Chief State School Officers, its ally in national "systemic restructuring," despite the absence of any congressional appropriation for that purpose.

The Clintonites are simply taking tax money out of another pot to put into the testing. Only one Congressman has done much public protesting — Republican Bill Goodling, chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Goodling has not been exactly a tower of strength in opposing other Clinton power grabs. But at least he has pushed for a statement of congressional will that USED not do the tests without authorization. Last week, however, a spending restraint failed to win approval of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and

Education.

Some media pundits have portrayed the national tests as just another piddling initiative by Clinton (like his endorsements of school uniforms and curfews) that will accomplish little. They're wrong. If the Clintons get their tests going in all or most of the states, it will be a huge step toward a national curriculum (which is not only unauthorized by the Constitution but specifically forbidden under federal law).

The President has said the national tests must be used for accountability — as a measure of the fulfillment of his version of national standards. Indeed, as Chester Finn notes in the July 21 issue of *The Weekly Standard*, the chiefs' testing team appears to be largely from the establishment school of thought that children should "construct their own meaning" (even in math, which becomes "whole math") and that teachers should be mere facilitators as opposed to directly teaching pupils basic skills and useful knowledge.

Therefore, as home-schooling advocate Mike Farris has pointed out, national tests would set the stage for a national curriculum. How so? Because widely accepted guidelines for ethical standardized testing require that students be given the opportunity to learn the material on a test when there are going to be consequences for how they do on it. So there either would have to be a validity study (curriculum check) by each of the nation's 16,000 school districts (a frightfully expensive undertaking), or there would have to be one, uniform national curriculum. Guess which?

BY NO MEANS is education the only area in which this out-of-control presidency is usurping power. Jerry Taylor, director of natural resource studies for the Cato Institute, has documented a slew of case histories. A few examples:

- * When it became obvious that a Children's Environmental Act sponsored by California Senator Barbara Boxer to tighten federal environmental and health standards was going nowhere, President Clinton seized the occasion of Earth Day simply to order federal agencies to adopt regulatory changes mirroring the language of the Boxer bill.

- * Although Congress rejected a 2.9 percent Medicare payroll tax in 1994 as part of the Clintons' health-care "reform" package, the Treasury Department is endeavoring to impose it unilaterally on such limited partnerships as accounting, architectural, actuarial, consulting, engineering, and legal firms.

- * While legislation to require TV stations to provide "free" air time to politicians is bottled up in Congress, the Federal Communications Commission is preparing to issue such a ukase under authority of a Clinton executive order.

Backers of presidential activism contend it's necessary because of a do-nothing Congress. However, Congress has a duty under the Constitution to ensure that laws are made through a deliberate process of debate, amendment, and reconsideration — with ample checks and balances against tyrannical exercise of power.

Congress, in short, has a right not to act. Very often, liberty is safer when government in fact does nothing. Yet, Congress ought to act — emphatically — against Clinton's power grabbing. National testing is a cross-the-Rubicon issue: If presidential government has its way with this one, power over education is likely to shift irreversibly to Washington, contrary to the intent of the Framers of the Constitution.

It would be scandalous for a congressional leadership that became a majority in 1994 on a pledge to limit Big Government to be a mere witness to this arrogant power grab. ■

1. The Weekly Standard

July 21, 1997

THIS ISN'T ONLY A TEST

By Chester E. Finn Jr.

The saga of national education testing won't surprise those who have watched other reformist projects turn sticky and foul after brushing against the twin tar babies of the federal government and the education establishment. Once again, a worthwhile idea for upgrading American education is being muddled beyond recognition.

The tale begins in the 1980s, when governors like Lamar Alexander and Bill Clinton realized that the effort to reform U.S. schools and boost student achievement would never get far until clear academic standards were set, solid tests put in place, and real accountability mechanisms installed. It's impossible to make a successful journey if you cannot state your destination and have no markers of progress along the way. Nor should one expect much from school-choice policies — vouchers, charter schools, and the like — absent clear information for parents on the performance of individual schools.

The federally funded testing program called the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) had long reported only nationwide averages rather than offering a sense of the differences among the various states and school districts. By 1988, NAEP was changed to permit state scores and comparisons between states; and in order to distance it from the tar babies, an independent governing board was appointed to oversee the testing. For two years, I had the privilege of chairing that board, and we sought to ensure that the assessment content was sound, the tests challenging, and their results reported in relation to standards (how well should kids be doing in 8th-grade science or 4th-grade reading?) instead of simple averages and percentiles.

In 1989, George Bush and the nation's governors met in Charlottesville. There they set ambitious national education "goals" to be attained by century's end. Gov. Clinton, especially, toiled into the wee hours to draft them. Yet one essential ingredient was still missing: standards-based tests that would allow for comparisons between school systems, schools, and schoolchildren. A governor could find out from NAEP how his state was doing but not how Memphis was performing as opposed to Nashville, much less Nashville versus Milwaukee. Nor could the Robinson family see how little Jonah and Jonetta were doing compared with how they ought to be doing, or whether the Franklin School had higher achievement than the Jefferson.

There are hundreds, even thousands, of extant tests, but none of them was — or is — quite right. The "standardized" kind that most school systems use doesn't actually contain any standards — and is prey to the notorious "Lake Wobegon" effect whereby everyone is told he is above average. State testing programs don't allow scores to be compared across jurisdictions. Even NAEP is still barred from reporting on units smaller than whole states. College entrance tests such as the SAT and ACT aren't taken by everyone — and in any case they are no help in the elementary and middle grades.

U.S. testing in 1997 resembles a faulty model-airplane kit in which the pieces cannot be fitted together. Yet for those who believe in standards-based tests, test-based accountability, and results-based education reform, this is a plane that needs to fly.

In 1991, Bush and then-education secretary Lamar Alexander proposed a new nationwide testing scheme called "American Achievement Tests," but Congress would have none of it.

NAEP's governing board suggested that NAEP tests be made available for district and school-level testing, but the education establishment — and commercial test publishers — rose up in outrage. The independent board was punished for its hubris in 1994, when Congress stripped away much of its independence.

Re-enter Bill Clinton, first with a wretched program called Goals 2000 that was long on federal control of state and local reform plans but short on testing and accountability, and then, just this January, with a proposal for national testing.

Initially, Clinton's January proposal seemed modest and workable. He offered the states voluntary tests of 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade math — nothing more — based on the tests and standards already in use by NAEP at the national level. At little cost to themselves (there would be a federal subsidy, of course), states could use these tests to find out how their school systems, schools, and children were doing. The tests would also be accessible to individual communities, private schools, someday even parents.

Gov. John Engler immediately signed Michigan up, and several other states have since agreed to join. Clinton is barnstorming the land to recruit more. Judging from the many presidential events and speeches in which it now stars, the testing plan has become one of his top education priorities.

Alas, the plan had one surpassing flaw. While it was said to be "based on" NAEP's carefully developed tests and standards, Clinton was not actually going to use those tests and standards, nor did he propose to entrust the new venture to the board I once chaired. Rather, the Department of Education — without explicit congressional authority — would use discretionary dollars to launch the test-development process by contracting with a private organization. The independent board would control neither test content nor standards. Instead, the executive branch would.

Immediately, the scholar Diane Ravitch, the Education Leaders Council (a group of state education officials who don't toe the establishment party line), and I urged the administration to reconsider. We said that national testing had merit — but that anything so sensitive as these tests must be run at arm's length from the government and education-establishment tar babies. It also seemed that Congress should have something to say about the arrangements for so momentous a shift in American educational federalism.

There has been no effort to address our concerns. The Education Department has been rushing to put the original plan into operation. The independent board has been marginalized. Congress has been stiffed. Critics have been ignored. And to the extent that one can forecast real harm from procedural missteps, damage lies ahead. As often in education-reform efforts, the procedure has been hijacked by the tar babies. The hijacking takes the form of contracts that are already being signed with neither congressional approval nor independent oversight.

The main contract so far is with the Council of Chief State School Officers to develop test specifications. "The chiefs," as they're known in educator-land, are the Washington-based association of state superintendents, and they form one of the establishment's most change-averse crews. The chief of the chiefs, Gordon Ambach, is a former New York state commissioner of education, staunch advocate of a larger federal role in education — a key backer of Goals 2000, for example — and a veteran federal grant-getter. He and his group have an ancient and cozy relationship with the Education Department and can be counted on to do its bidding, down to such particulars as Spanish-language math tests and other worrisome wrinkles in the Clinton plan.

A Berkeley, Calif., consulting firm has been engaged to help the chiefs with this project. They've named three new panels: two "content committees" to shape the reading and math exams and a "National Test Panel" to advise on the whole process. (A fourth committee, to furnish "technical" advice, will appear any day now.) Several meetings have been held, and draft specifications are due this month. By September, the Education Department will let contracts for actual test preparation. A huge consortium of private testmakers and publishers is positioned to get the job — at a pricetag rumored to be near \$ 50 million. The plan is to have these tests ready to roll in 1999.

For a new federal project, it's moving extraordinarily fast, apparently so that binding commitments can be made during the current fiscal year and before Congress cranks up to do anything. (House education-committee chairman Bill Goodling, himself a former school superintendent, dislikes tests that allow children and schools to be compared and has tried — so far without success — to attach a killer amendment to various bills.)

In truth, it's moving far too quickly for something as momentous as national tests in a country that never had anything of the sort before. But haste isn't the main problem. What's

most alarming is that these tests will be creatures of the education establishment and prone to its postmodern curricular faddishness.

Consider these clues:

First, the contractor is in charge of its own advisory committees. Rather than an independent board that sets policies and tells the contractor (and the executive branch) what to do, the chiefs — in consultation with hierarchs at the Education Department — have their own handpicked panels, yet remain free to ignore them.

Second, the committees are narrowly based. Whereas NAEP's independent board contains governors, business leaders, local school-board members, and parents, the chiefs' new National Test Panel consists almost entirely of experts, interest-group representatives, and — surprise — several chiefs. Nobody knows whether it is bipartisan.

Third, and most worrisome, the two subject-matter committees, for reading and math, include only educators and experts; there's not a "consumer" or employer in the lot. And while each group contains some well-regarded scholars and teachers, each is also tilted toward today's dominant educationist bias: the theory of teaching and learning known as "constructivism." That's the approach in which children are expected to create their own meaning and teachers are supposed to "facilitate" learning instead of directly instructing their pupils in worthwhile knowledge. Constructivism is heavy on "critical thinking" and "problem solving" but light on specific knowledge and basic skills. It doesn't so much care whether you know something as whether you can look it up. It doesn't judge certain information to be important and certain books to be best, but, rather, partakes of fashionable academic relativism; it's friendly to "whole language" reading, wary of systematic phonics; it asks children to guesstimate the solutions to math problems and discounts the importance of correct answers. Tests grounded in this philosophy will be applauded by the ed-school professoriate and the deconstructionists, but they won't test the sorts of things that a governor like Engler — or, once, Clinton — really wants the children of his state to know.

Am I reading too much into lists of panelists? Probably not. People I respect in math and reading who have eyeballed these lists use words like "disaster" to describe the tests and standards that they expect to emerge.

If national testing is headed that way, the country would be better off without it. Congress should apply the brakes before a wreck occurs. Then maybe — just maybe — let a different driver take a turn at the wheel. If a fully independent version of the board I chaired in the 1980s were put in full charge, the risk of crashing would be reduced. Alternatively, the whole idea might be privatized, turned into a commercial (or philanthropic) testing program that picks up Clinton's basic concept but with no government entanglement or federal funds. We still need a means to compare achievement across state borders. But it's worth doing only if the twin tar babies can be avoided. The one thing indisputably worse than no national tests would be bad national tests. ■

1. The Washington Post

07/11/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: A Section; Page A18

Education Initiatives Off to a Slow Start; Clinton's Plan Faces Growing Opposition From Congress, State Officials

By Rene Sanchez

Washington Post Staff Writer

The ambitious education agenda that President Clinton vowed to make a defining priority of his second term, and that many educators say could bring great change to the nation's schools, is facing growing threats in Congress from lawmakers wary of its costs and from state officials questioning its scope.

Few governors have committed yet to Clinton's call to give all students national tests in math and reading, an approach that would be unprecedented in American education. In Congress, leaders from both parties have just begun debating potentially significant changes in the president's \$40 billion plan to make college more affordable.

Doubts on Capitol Hill already have led the administration to shelve a \$5 billion initiative to repair dilapidated schools, and some lawmakers also are skeptical of the cost and feasibility of Clinton's \$2.7 billion plan to recruit and train 1 million volunteers to help teach elementary schoolchildren to read.

At this point, only six governors have agreed to support national testing, and the White House is intensifying its campaign for the idea. Last month, as he announced the strong showing of American students on an international exam, Clinton pleaded with states to adopt the tests, which he wants to begin giving in 1999.

"We don't have to be afraid of the results anymore," he said. "We're not trying to punish anybody, we're trying to lift the children of this country up."

Administration officials acknowledge that serious questions surround much of Clinton's education plan, and they are now proposing several changes in college aid that more closely match Republican views. Yet they say they are confident that with time and some compromises the heart of his initiatives will emerge intact.

"There's quite a bit of work to be done to keep this going," said Marshall Smith, the Education Department's deputy secretary. "But we believe we have momentum. These are the kinds of things the American people clearly say they want."

For Clinton, the stakes are high. He has billed his education agenda as a cornerstone of his presidency, promising that it will create historic new access to college and prompt schools nationwide to demand more of students in the classroom.

But in Congress, and in many state capitals, there is growing debate about whether the course he is charting will achieve either goal.

National tests loom as Clinton's largest challenge. Under his plan, fourth-graders would take a rigorous new national test in reading, and eighth-graders would take one in math. Administration officials view the tests as a potentially powerful tool to help states and schools better judge how they are educating children.

Although schools around the country often require students to take an annual achievement test, few attach any consequence to them. Some educators also contend that the academic standards states use are often weak.

The national tests are the most politically sensitive of any idea that Clinton is advancing because they would be a dramatic step toward a national guideline for what students should be learning in core subjects.

Such standards are common in other countries, but not here. The federal government always has had a limited role in elementary and secondary education, and curriculum and testing still varies widely from state to state.

Clinton is promoting the national tests in addresses to state legislatures, and the White House is assembling business leaders who support the idea. A coalition of more than 200 technology executives have endorsed the tests, and so has the Business Roundtable, which represents many of the nation's largest corporations.

Yet so far, according to the White House's tally, only six states — Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina and West Virginia — are on board. Clinton has tried to count the nation's largest state, California, but after the chief of public schools there announced her support for the tests, aides to Gov. Pete Wilson (R) said her blessing did not mean the state would adopt the plan.

Nevertheless, administration officials say they are heartened that among the first governors to sign on is Michigan's John Engler, a prominent Republican. By summer's end, the administration says it expects to have recruited more states.

But many state leaders are quite reticent. Some want to see the tests developed first — that process will take months — and some are worried that the idea could lead to excessive federal involvement in schools.

"We already have a testing regime that we believe is comprehensive," said Tom Needle, education adviser to Ohio Gov. George V. Voinovich (R). "And the question a lot of folks are asking is, 'What is the appropriate federal role?'"

Other states are asking if the tests will be worth the trouble or the money. Clinton has said that the federal government will fund the first year of national testing. Afterward, states may have to pay for it.

The Education Department had to wage a similar battle, which was successful, over the past few years to get states to embrace Goals 2000, a program of federal grants for school reform. National tests, educators say, pose an even greater challenge.

"They'll have to do a lot of heavy lifting to get most states," said Christopher Cross, president of the Council for Basic Education, which promotes stronger classroom standards. "They have to overcome the perception in some places that there's some kind of hidden

agenda."

The fate of Clinton's \$40 billion college aid plan also is uncertain. Congressional leaders say they are willing to endorse tax breaks and other federal aid to help families pay for college, but what ultimately emerges from the budget conferences on the subject that have just begun may hardly resemble the president's proposal.

The core of Clinton's plan is a tax credit he calls a Hope Scholarship that would refund up to \$1,500 to families in each of the first two years their child attends college. That amount is slightly more than tuition at most community colleges; Clinton contends the credit will help make two years of college as universal as high school. About 60 percent of high school students now attend college.

Clinton also is asking Congress to approve a \$10,000 tax deduction for families for each child they have in college, and he wants large increases in Pell Grants, federal tuition aid to the nation's neediest college students.

Key parts of the plan already have been altered. To quell fears of grade inflation, the White House has dropped a rule in the Hope Scholarship requiring students to have a "B" average. Now, students would have to show "satisfactory" academic progress.

In another reversal, Clinton is proposing to make the full tax credit available even to students with Pell Grants. Previously, the value of a student's grant was to be subtracted from the credit. But many college leaders said that would have shortchanged the students who most need federal help.

In the balanced budget deal the White House struck with Congress, Republican leaders pledged to support "roughly" \$35 billion of tax relief for college tuition. But Republican bills in the House and Senate propose less money than Clinton wants and contain different ideas. The Republican approach appears more limited than Clinton's — it would not necessarily guarantee two free years of college — and is less of a blank check.

Some Republican leaders favor a tax credit of \$1,500 only for students whose tuition is at least \$3,000 a year. For those who pay less, the credit would be worth 50 percent of college costs. If tuition was \$1,400, the credit would be worth \$700. Republicans say the change would limit the risks of tuition inflation.

Clinton has countered with another modification to his Hope Scholarship. Now, he wants to give students a dollar-for-dollar credit for the first \$1,000 they spend on tuition and a 50 percent credit for tuition expenses after that. Under the new proposal, a student who pays \$1,500 in tuition would receive a \$1,250 credit.

At this point, college officials say they are still optimistic that the most important benefits of Clinton's package will survive Congress.

"Many of the president's ideas are still very much in play," said Terry Hartle, a vice president for the American Council on Education, which represents more than 1,500 universities. "He has made the issue of access to higher education very important in the minds of voters. Congress has to take that seriously."

One part of Clinton's agenda already has been sacrificed: \$5 billion he had pledged to help rebuild deteriorating schools. The White House dropped that in budget negotiations with Republican leaders, vowing to bring it up again next year.

That is a bitter disappointment to education officials, who say the physical condition of schools, particularly in large cities, is a dire problem. Some criticize the White House for caving in so quickly to Republican concerns about the plan.

"It would have been such a significant help," said Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of Great City Schools, which represents large urban districts. "You don't have to look much farther than the schools in D.C. to realize that."

EDUCATION AGENDA

President Clinton has vowed to lead a "crusade" during his second term to improve the nation's schools. He wants to raise classroom standards and improve access to college.

Highlights of his \$40 billion plan:

New national tests for students. Beginning in 1999, Clinton wants to test all fourth-graders in reading and all eighth-graders in math. The federal government would pay for the first year of the tests.

A package of tax credits and tax deductions to offset the cost of college tuition, including a \$1,500 Hope Scholarship that would make two years of community college free for many students, as long as they remain in satisfactory academic standing.

Increases in the maximum Pell Grant award that the nation's neediest students can receive for college.

A \$2.7 billion initiative, called America Reads, to recruit and train 1 million volunteers to help children read by the time they finish third grade.

Connecting every classroom and library to the Internet by 2000.

Expanding Head Start early childhood education programs.

~~Creating more publicly financed but independent charter schools.~~

GOODLING HOPEFUL ABOUT LITERACY LEGISLATION

The chairman of the House education committee yesterday expressed guarded optimism that Congress and the president could stitch together a compromise children's literacy program.

At the same time, Rep. Bill Goodling, R-Pa., along with GOP and Democratic members of his House Education and the Workforce Committee and reading experts voiced serious doubts about President Clinton's America Reads proposal.

During the hearing with the broad subject title of childhood literacy — not America Reads — Goodling said he looks forward to bipartisan work to develop "a proposal to help parents and teachers teach children [how] to read as early as possible."

But Goodling hinted that the legislation may not bear much resemblance to Clinton's proposal to spend \$2.75 billion over five years to train a million volunteer tutors aimed at ensuring children can read by the end of third grade (ED, April 29).

Enumerating what he called "weaknesses" in the proposal, Goodling said there was "a lack of emphasis on helping the teacher" learn techniques to help children read. He said he was also concerned about a lack of emphasis on family literacy and about the cost of the program. "I don't think there was too much thought given to volunteer training," he added.

America Reads includes \$300 million over five years for the Parents as First Teachers program as well as \$2.425 billion over five years for reading specialists to train and coordinate volunteers, including those from the AmeriCorps and College Work-Study programs.

Other committee members and witnesses were even more pointed in expressing their doubts about specific aspects of the proposal.

Rep. Frank Riggs, R-Calif., wondered whether "volunteer tutors [could] succeed where paid teachers have failed" in helping students who have difficulties learning to read.

Riggs, the chairman of the House Early Childhood, Youth and Families Subcommittee, probed witnesses on whether a national reading test should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of America Reads.

"If we are going to have a substantial investment, then we damn well better evaluate it," said Robert Slavin, co-director of the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk at Baltimore's Johns Hopkins University, who has criticized the proposal in the past for focusing on volunteers rather than classroom practices (ED, May 20).

Clinton has proposed a voluntary national test for reading in fourth grade, but Riggs and Goodling want Congress to help shape the exams, an effort the administration has resisted (ED, April 30).

Experts Voice Doubts

When Rep. Tim Roemer, D-Ind., asked witnesses what they would do if they had \$2.75 billion to spend on improving childhood literacy, none of them said they would use it for volunteer tutors, even though they were generally supportive of community involvement in improving reading.

Slavin, who developed the Success for All program, said money should be targeted to helping schools implement and evaluate proven strategies for school reform.

Reid Lyon, acting chief of the Child Development and Behavior Branch at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, favored much more teacher training.

He noted that fewer than 10 percent of classroom teachers know how to teach children with reading difficulties, and tutors would need that kind of training as well.

"To train tutors and not teachers is crazy," Slavin added.

Increased professional development for Head Start teachers was endorsed by Catherine Snow, a Harvard University education professor, and Vivian Gadsden, an associate professor of education at the University of Pennsylvania.

"The danger is that a program with volunteers and tutors could undermine the professionalization we need," Snow added, arguing that Head Start should be developed as an education program rather than a nutrition and day care program.

While several witnesses said the America Reads program could help motivate students and focus communities on reading, Slavin warned, "if we are going to have a program [simply] to make people 'feel good,' that's irresponsible."

Clinton is requesting \$260 million for America Reads in fiscal 1998. The House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee is scheduled to take up its program-by-program spending plan Tuesday, with its Senate counterpart scheduled to take action the following week — Laureen Lazarovici

Daily Education News

Thursday, July 3, 1997

1. Education Daily

July 3, 1997

REPORT LINKS SPENDING TO STUDENT SUCCESS

Schools districts that put a high portion of spending into instruction and district-level administration tend to have higher student achievement in math, but high spending in other areas has little effect, a new study says.

"Some dollars matter more than others," says a report the Educational Testing Service (ETS) released this week, touting it as the first national-level analysis in more than 30 years that links spending on specific initiatives to results.

Scores on the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) were higher in districts that spent a high ratio of their budget on instruction and central office administration, according to the report, which adjusted its findings to account for an area's relative wealth.

High ratios of spending on construction and maintenance, school-level administration and teacher education weren't associated with improved achievement.

Lower Student-Teacher Ratios

More instructional spending lowers the student-teacher ratio, and more spending on central office administration also aids efforts to push money to classrooms, ETS says.

"Larger, better-financed district offices may be more successful than principals or other administrators in ensuring that dollars actually reach the classroom," wrote ETS researcher Harold Wenglinsky.

"While principals may be better positioned than central offices to make instructional and personnel decisions, some budgetary decisions may be better left to the superintendent," he added.

Impoverished students benefit most from improving the student-teacher ratio.

The House Education and the Workforce Committee recently passed a resolution urging governments at all levels to work toward getting 90 percent of federal education dollars into the classroom (ED, June 30).

The ETS study plugged scores and school data from the 1992 NAEP math test for fourth- and eighth-graders, school district spending data, and teacher cost figures into a complex computer model. The results don't indicate how much districts should be putting into each category.

In The Courts Judges examining school finance lawsuits are increasingly turning to standards-based solutions rather than strict dollar-for-dollar equity, a trend Wenglinsky endorsed but said should become more program-focused (ED, Jan. 27).

"Courts and legislatures cannot afford ... to ignore the relative productivity of education investments," he wrote.

Experts have disagreed about whether more school spending increases student achievement (ED, July 17, 1996).

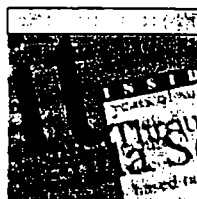
"When Money Matters: How Educational Expenditures Improve Student Performance and How They Don't" is \$9.50 from Educational Testing Service, Policy Information Center, Mail Stop 04-R, Rosedale Rd., Princeton, NJ 08541-0001, (609)734-5694,

June, 1997

JUNE 25, 1997

EDUCATION WEEK on the WEB

IN CONTEXT THE ARCHIVES TEACHER MAGAZINE THE DAILY NEWS SPECIAL REPORT



Local Control Could Stymie Clinton Tests

By David J. Hoff

Lincoln, Neb.



President Clinton has found takers when he's pitched his national testing proposal to state legislators in Maryland, Michigan, and North Carolina.

Browse
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Education Marketers

Read National Standards in our Politics Watch area for a description of the federal proposal, past articles, and a wealth of related Web links on linking a national test to high standards.

But, if he wants his 4th grade reading test and 8th grade math assessment to find their way into every school in this state, he'll have to sell them to the superintendents and local school board members who represent Nebraska's 656 districts.

"Nebraskans fancy themselves as very independent," said Kathleen McCallister, the president of the state board of education. "Nebraska is not real trusting of Big Brother."

That independence factors into almost every decision Ms. McCallister and her colleagues make here in the state capital. They don't want to alienate voters by creating mandates--such as participation in the national testing effort.

But they are willing to give local officials "the right to make their own mistakes," Ms. McCallister said.

If a local school district wants to offer Mr. Clinton's tests, "you're not going to see this board stand in the way," she said in an interview after the state board met here this month. "The bottom line is: That's a local decision."

Presidential Announcement

The president announced his voluntary national testing initiative in his State of the Union Address in February.

And, while states are not obligated to sign up for the program, Mr. Clinton said the federally funded tests would allow the states that do to gauge whether students are meeting "national standards of excellence" in reading and math. ("Clinton Gives Top Billing to Education Plan," Feb. 12, 1997.)

Within weeks, state leaders in Maryland, Michigan, and North Carolina promised to join, and Mr. Clinton traveled to their state capitals to address their legislatures.

Read our story, "Riley Faces Panel's Questions on New National Student Tests," May 7, 1997. math.

"Clinton Testing Proposal Pits Calif. Officials," April 9, 1997.

"Cost of Test
Proposal Up to
\$10 Million in
First Year,"
April 2, 1997.

In the past month, West Virginia and Kentucky officials have promised to offer the assessments once the tests become available in the spring of 1999.

The government structure and political climate in those states allow state officials to require schools' participation in such tests.

"Testing
Ventures Tied
to Standards
Take Flight,"
March 19,
1997.

But in Nebraska and some other states of the Midwest and West that take particular pride in their independence, state officials don't have the constitutional authority or the political inclination to issue a testing mandate, Ms. McCallister and other observers say.

Independent Spirit

If Mr. Clinton is to succeed in his goal of signing up every state, he and his aides will need to persuade local school leaders in states such as this one that the tests will give them results they otherwise couldn't obtain.

"Pointing to
Minn. Results,
Officials Pitch
National Test
as Change
Agent," March
19, 1997.

More importantly, federal officials will have to prove that participation in the tests will not lead to a federal takeover of community schools as some Nebraskans fear.

"We have been talking to people in a number of Western states who--particularly once they are assured it's voluntary--think it's a good idea," said Michael Cohen, Mr. Clinton's chief adviser on the national testing initiative.

"Focus on
Basics Key to
Clinton Call
for Testing,"
Feb. 19, 1997.

Mr. Cohen declined to specify which states White House aides are negotiating with, but he acknowledged that they have not been in touch with Nebraska's leaders.

Other states in the region clearly share the Cornhusker State's devotion to local decisionmaking.

Nebraska, Iowa, and Wyoming are among a handful of states that don't require schools to offer a state assessment, according to a 1996 report from the Council of Chief State School Officers.

"Political Shift
Emboldens
Clinton To
Urge Tests,"
Feb. 19, 1997.

"If a state doesn't mandate a state assessment, that would be an indicator" that it won't be interested in the national test, said Kathy Christie, a policy analyst for the Education Commission of the States, a Denver, Colo.-based consortium of state policymakers.

Still, the president is optimistic that his testing plan will sell here and across the nation.

Speaking in West Virginia last month, Mr. Clinton said he believes every state will participate in his national test when it is first offered in 1999. ("Clinton Hopes Test

Proposal Would Be Only the Beginning," May 28, 1997.)

Winning Arguments

For Nebraska to be a full participant, local officials from metropolitan Omaha to the rural plains will need to be courted.

"What local control in Nebraska means is families and communities come first," said Douglas D. Christensen, the state commissioner of education.

That doesn't necessarily mean communities won't participate in Mr. Clinton's assessment plan, he added.

Their love affair with independence cools in the face of a solid argument.

If federal officials can convince a community that scores on the national test will identify 4th graders' reading problems and 8th graders' math struggles, they may win over some of the fiercely independent rural areas in the western half of the state, Mr. Christensen said.

On the other hand, the specter of big government could be a hurdle too large to clear.

Mr. Clinton is promising the tests will yield individual test scores, raising fears that the federal government will keep children's scores on file and try to track them into careers based on how well they read in the 4th grade and add in the 8th grade.

Mr. Clinton's plan is designed to address those worries, Mr. Cohen said. The tests will be conducted so that only local officials will see the individual scores, he said.

The tests will be based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which is highly regarded by educators and testing experts.

Private testing companies will license the right to sell the national tests with a battery of their own assessments.

Those companies will score the completed tests and forward the scores to the local officials who contracted for the tests.

Neither the U.S. Department of Education nor any other federal agency will be involved in scoring, calculating, or reporting test data, Mr. Cohen said.

"We will never see any individual test score, just like we don't see individual scores on the tests school districts give now," he said. "We are miles away from that."

Different Views

Under such conditions, how many Nebraska school districts will take the plunge? Right now, it's too early to tell.

In Omaha, the state's largest district, leaders are interested in the president's proposal.

"It's an opportunity to see where we stand," said John Mackeil, the superintendent of the 45,000-student Omaha district, which enrolls 15 percent of the state's K-12 population.

"It's another means of measuring where we are. I would not see that as an invasion of local control," Mr. Mackeil said.

One school board member said the test could confirm what she suspects already.

"I think we'd stand up pretty well," said Ann Mactier, an Omaha school board member and a member of the state board of education. "I'd like to know about whether we do."

Feeling 'Gun-Shy'

Other districts, however, for financial and political reasons, may not be enthusiastic.

State-mandated caps on property taxes are forcing school officials to pare budgets. Mr. Clinton's plan is to pay testing costs for the first year, but then charge between \$6 and \$8 a student every year thereafter.

"The average school board is gun-shy," said Mike Dulaney, the associate executive director of the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, based in Lincoln.

"They're concerned about keeping the doors open," he said. "I'm not sure there's a huge focus on testing."

The school systems with the best chance of joining Mr. Clinton's plan are in cities such as Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island, and North Platte, Mr. Dulaney said.

Participation by those schools may be enough to satisfy Clinton administration officials.

"It doesn't bother me that everybody doesn't want to sign up" right away, said Ramon C. Cortines, the acting assistant secretary for educational research and improvement at the Department of Education. Mr. Cortines is organizing the team of testing experts writing the tests. (*See story, page 18.*)

"Over a period of time, people will want this," he said.

Read "[National Standards of Academic Excellence](#)," the first point of Mr. Clinton's 10-point plan.

Read about [voluntary national tests](#) on the Department of Education Web site.

Read Secretary Riley's [testimony](#) at an April 29, 1997, hearing of the U.S. House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Youth and Families on voluntary national tests for reading and math.

[Improving America's Schools: Creating Better Student Assessments](#). This newsletter, one of a series of Newsletters on [Issues in School Reform](#) from the U.S. Department of Education, provides an overview of the issues affecting state student-assessment systems, including assessment requirements under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1994.

"[Performance Standards: How Good Is Good Enough?](#)" A brief for the 1996 National Education Summit by Ann Borthwick and Kate Nolan of the New Standards Project.

[Assessment](#). This section of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory's "Pathways to School Improvement" Web site leads to several informative and well-linked articles on assessment, as well as to other resources.

[The National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing](#). CRESST performs assessment research, and its Web site contains a wealth of assessment-related information presented in a variety of formats.

[National Assessment Governing Board](#). Learn about the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the only ongoing, national test of academic progress. Read a self-critical [plan for redesigning the testing program](#), which they acknowledge "provides too little information, too infrequently, and too late."

[Student Achievement and the Changing American Family: An Executive Summary](#). This is a 1994 summary from RAND of the "continuing national debate on the quality of our children's family environment, the quality of their schools, and how changes in families and schools may be affecting the level of student achievement."

[The Use and Misuse of Test Scores in Reform Debate](#). This 1994 RAND policy brief points out that "over the last two decades, test scores have been cited, variously, as sure and certain signs of U.S. educational decline or as indicators that particular types of reform are 'working.'"

1. Education Week

June 25, 1997

Orange Co. Schools Claim Right To Federal Dollars

By Joetta L. Sack

Local school officials in Orange County, Calif., are staking their claim to federal and state education funds, citing fears that conservatives on the county school board could strip them of desperately needed money.

Local boards in six Orange County districts have passed resolutions in recent weeks that ask the five-member county board to recognize their right to accept federal funding for programs such as the Goals 2000 school reform program and vocational education — programs that have been assailed recently by conservative members of the county school board.

Nationwide, conservatives have raised concerns that federal funding for school reform and a new national testing initiative signal a federal encroachment into areas traditionally controlled by local school officials. In Orange County, two members of the elected county school board advocate a back-to-basics academics approach and have launched a campaign against accepting federal aid for some programs.

In California, county school boards are responsible for disbursing state and federal funds to the local districts and for setting the countywide education budget.

If a county board were to reject federal or state funding for a certain program, and the local school boards still wanted the money, the county superintendent would be charged with finding another conduit to flow money through, said John F. Dean, Orange County's superintendent. "If they want the money, we'll find a way to get it to them," Mr. Dean said.

Nevertheless, the board of the 2,500-student Laguna Beach school district became the latest to claim its entitlement to federal and state dollars when it passed a unanimous resolution on the subject June 10. The board acted out of fear that the county board would strip it of federal funding for school-to-work programs, according to Susan H. Mas, the president of the Laguna Beach school board. While that has not been an issue in the past, the two conservative board members have recently expressed opposition to accepting federal funds and money for Vision 2020, a state technology-training program, she said.

Checks and Balances

One of the county board members, Ken L. Williams, said he feels obligated to resist taking federal money for programs that county board members feel have not proved worthwhile. He argued that school-to-work programs have discriminated against minority students, who are frequently in such programs, and students who score poorly on assessments by "dumbing down" their basic academic skills.

A rejection of federal funding for school-to-work efforts would be "part of the checks and balances of local government," he said. But he added that he does not feel he has the support of the majority of other county board members to pass such a proposal.

Federal school-to-work funds provide essential training for students who choose vocational occupations, said Laguna Beach school board member Kathryn A. Turner, who is also a dean at Long Beach City College. In many programs, such as those related to engineering, higher academic skills are a necessity, she said.

In addition, Ms. Mas said, the training is needed for students to find employment with many of the industries located in Southern California.

Laguna Beach board members have sent their version of the resolution to all of the county's 28 local school boards, and Ms. Mas said she expected others to adopt similar language in coming weeks. ■

1. USA Today

June 23, 1997 Section: Life, Page 4D

Summertime Should Be Reading Time for Kids!

Research shows that over the summer, some children lose the reading skills they've built up during the school year. That can really set a kid's education back.

What can you do?



Encourage a child to read at least 20 minutes a day.

Read with a child at least once a week.

Encourage a child to borrow a new book from the library.

Have a child get a library card and log.

Participate in READ*WRITE*NOW!, the summer component of the America Reads Challenge. It's a great way to make reading part of summer fun! To get a free kit filled with helpful materials, contact:

READ*WRITE*NOW!
U.S. Department of Education • 1-800-USA-LEARN
<http://www.ed.gov/family>



Education Department ad appears in USA Today

At left is a quarter-page ad which ran in Monday's USA Today Life section. The newspaper provided the space free as a public service to encourage parents to read to their children this summer. Department staff composed the design and shot the photographs, which feature children of our employees. USA Today said the ad will run again in two weeks.

1. Associated Press

06-24 1:49a

Clinton's education secretary says Georgia man is example for South

By KARIN MILLER
Associated Press Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) - Curtis Aikens of Conyers, Ga., is a good example of Southern progress and where the region can go in the future, says Education Secretary Richard Riley.

Aikens is a chef who has his own television show, published two cookbooks and has been featured on national morning shows for his culinary skills. But he couldn't read until age 26.

After responding to a TV ad for a literacy program, Curtis learned and began urging businesses to provide similar, confidential programs for their employees.

"Curtis Aikens asked himself if he was doing the very best that he could do," Riley said. "When he realized the answer was no, he turned to education to help him reach his potential.

"There are thousands and thousands of Curtis Aikens across the South waiting to be unleashed through education, and thousands and millions of young children struggling to learn to read, to do basic math," Riley told the Southern Growth Policies Board.

He urged Southern officials to create a culture encouraging learning to enable people in the region to follow their dreams.

The former South Carolina governor said the region's schools are improving, with high school graduation rates on par with other areas and increases in the number of associate and bachelor degrees outpacing the national rate.

Over the past 25 years, the South has created 14 million new jobs, which is far beyond the national average, Riley said. Unemployment is remarkably low and the income gap between black and white families has narrowed.

But the poverty rate of 11 Southern states exceeds the national average and more than 1.5 million young adult Southerners has less than a high school education, he said.

And most Southern states are spending a smaller proportion of state and local budgets on education than a decade ago, Riley said.

Riley warned that the high-tech positions gone wanting in North Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana and South Carolina are "warning signs of the consequences of underestimating the importance of education."

"If our people are going to survive - much less thrive - they must be able to communicate, to think critically, to work in teams," Riley said. "And we must bring about real change in terms of how people view learning - to stay competitive, our people must pursue learning for a lifetime."

He said some Southern states are leading the nation in education reform, including Georgia, Florida and North Carolina. He didn't mention Tennessee's six-year-old school reforms.

Riley said three Southern states - Kentucky, North Carolina and West Virginia - have signed up to participate in voluntary national tests of 4th grade students' reading skills and 8th grade students' math skills.

He challenged the rest of the South to follow their lead.

"Every parent, every educator, every community needs to know whether their children can perform to world-class standards," he said.

The tests are being developed around existing national exams. Sample tests will be taken next year and Riley hopes to have all 50 states on board when the program goes fully on line in 1999.

Education Commissioner Jane Walters said Tennessee officials are discussing whether to participate and she wants to see what the tests will look like, but she likes the idea. ■

Los Angeles Times
June 18, 1997

How U.S. Students Rank

International math and science scores released last week show U.S. fourth-graders doing well in a comparison of 26 nations. But earlier results for eighth-graders in the same testing program indicated that U.S. students have fallen back by then.

4TH-GRADE MATH

■ International Average: 524

Rank	Mean score
1. Singapore	625
2. South Korea	611
3. Japan	597
4. Hong Kong	587
5. Netherlands	577
6. Czech Republic	567
7. Austria	559
8. Slovenia	552
9. Ireland	550
12. United States	545

4TH-GRADE SCIENCE

■ International Average: 529

Rank	Mean score
1. South Korea	597
2. Japan	574
3. United States	565
4. Austria	565
5. Australia	562
6. Netherlands	557
7. Czech Republic	557
8. England	551
9. Canada	549
10. Singapore	547

8TH GRADE: U.S. ranked 18th of 41 countries in math and 12th in science

Sample Science Question

A watering can is tipped so water begins to drip.

Draw line where surface of water is now.

Results: Only 1 in 5 U.S. fourth-graders answered correctly



Source: IEA Third International Mathematics and Science Study

Los Angeles Times

Pointing to Minn. Results, Officials Pitch National Test as Change Agent

By David J. Hoff

Washington

When Minnesota learned last week how its students compare with the rest of the world in math and science, the state's leaders started talking about what needs to change—from the state board room down to the classroom.

That's just the kind of discussion President Clinton hopes to spark with the national tests he is proposing in reading and math.

"A commitment to national standards is the best way we know to help local districts benchmark their own practices and to come up with ways that will help all the children achieve at a higher level," first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton said here last week at a round table discussion with members of the news media.

"We've hit a plateau in the standards movement," Marshall S. Smith, the acting deputy education secretary, added at the briefing intended to publicize Mr. Clinton's testing plan.

"States are not, in many cases, adopting really rigorous standards. ... These [national] tests are seen as a wake-up call, putting high-octane gasoline into the engine of the school reform movement," he said.

In Minnesota, school leaders and standards advocates received that jolt last week when a nonprofit organization that had paid to have students tested released the state's scores on a version of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, known as TIMSS.

The results showed that Minnesota's 8th graders ranked higher in science achievement than all but five of the 41 nations that took the test. In math, however, the state's achievement fell to the middle of the pack.

"What we have on the science side is incredible focus," said Bill Linder-Scholer, the executive director of SciMathMN, the nonprofit that paid \$380,000 for the TIMSS testing of a sample group of 5,000 students in grades 3, 4, 7, 8, and 12. Results

released last week were from the 2,000 8th graders who took the test.

"If we're really focused on what we're teaching, we really get system performance," he said.

Making Changes

But the state does not dedicate the same attention to math, Mr. Linder-Scholer said. Low-achieving students are often tracked out of higher-level courses such as algebra and geometry, he said, and teachers don't follow a standardized curriculum that emphasizes hands-on learning and problem-solving.

And even though the state has adopted standards in math and a test students must pass to earn a diploma, the TIMSS results show that neither the standards nor the test are challenging enough to stand up to international competition, Mr. Linder-Scholer said.

SciMathMN—a coalition of government agencies, businesses, and school officials—is recommending that the state push all students to learn algebra and geometry by the 8th grade and that the graduation test include open-ended questions in those subjects rather than its current reliance on multiple-choice questions.

The group also says the state should ensure that teachers are prepared to teach to a higher standard.

These are the types of changes that Clinton administration officials expect all states to start making if they choose to participate in the program that is to begin in 1999. President Clinton has been pushing national standards and testing as part of his 10-point education plan.

Setting a Benchmark

The new tests would be offered to 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math and would yield individual results—not just statewide averages, such as the ones Minnesota received from the TIMSS project last week.

"It is not an attempt to micromanage what goes on in the classrooms of America, but instead to

set a national benchmark against which local districts can measure themselves," Mrs. Clinton said last week.

And because every student would receive scores on the tests, parents could use the results to demand improved services for their children.

"This will be the first time that parents, particularly in urban areas, will have honest, accurate information about how well their kids are doing," Michael Cohen, the president's education adviser, said at the briefing. "It ought to empower parents to call for and mobilize for education reforms in ways that have been more difficult for them to do now."

Last week, North Carolina signed up to participate, joining Maryland and Michigan in making commitments to the voluntary national tests, which have not yet been written. Another eight to 10 "have expressed a serious interest" in taking part, Mr. Cohen said.

Minnesota will have a head start when it comes to its students' science and math skills. The United States participated in the international testing effort, but only Minnesota, Colorado, and Illinois paid the consortium to test a sample size large enough to compare how their students achieve compared with children in other countries.

Minnesota's students achieved higher than the national average in both tests, much as they do on the National Assessment of Educational Progress and college-entrance exams. But by doing better in science than in math, they reflected the national results.

Twenty Illinois school districts also took the TIMSS test, and scored higher in science than in math.

"It was important to get a snapshot of where Minnesota is in terms of the rest of the world," Mr. Linder-Scholer said. "In the past, there was no way to say how we were doing as a state, except in very rough form."

Massachusetts, along with schools on military bases. The tests are to be given first in the spring of 1999. ■

18. St. Louis Post-Dispatch

June 11, 1997

Clinton Cheers U.S. Pupils' Global Ranking On Tests

AP

Above-average science and math scores from fourth-graders prove that "we don't have to settle for second-class expectations," President Bill Clinton said Tuesday.

He cheered a report on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, which showed American fourth-graders second in science, along with several other nations, behind South Korea among 26 countries. Others statistically ranked second were Japan, Austria, Australia, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic.

In math, American students finished behind five other countries: Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and the Czech Republic.

Researchers said it was too early to explain what spurred the fourth-graders' performance. They analyzed the amount of homework assigned, time spent watching TV, teacher education and training, and curriculums but said no single factor in the study emerged as significant.

The report showed an average U.S. fourth-grade math score of 545 and a science average of 565, both above the international averages of 531 for math and 528 for science.

But researchers cautioned that the rankings were not exact because of differences in scoring methods among the participating countries.

Last year's report on eighth-graders ranked Americans 28th in math tests given to students in 41 countries. In science, they finished in the top half of the list, at 17.

Tuesday's report did not include 15 countries that were used in a similar study in November on tests given eighth-graders in 41 nations. Among those that did not take part this year were Switzerland, France, Russia, Sweden and Germany.

Praising the latest study in a Rose Garden ceremony with Education Secretary Richard Riley, Clinton said the results show that states should voluntarily embrace his plan for national standards. It calls for schools to use uniform tests to measure fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math skills by next year.

Clinton said, "This ought to be a clear challenge to every single state that has not yet come forward to agree to participate in the national standards movement."

So far, Clinton's call has been heeded by only six states - Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina and West Virginia - and the Defense Department schools. The idea of standards has met with resistance from Republican leaders in Congress. ■

19. Associated Press

06-11 2:51a

Canadian students rank sixth in international science test

TORONTO (CP) - Canada's Grade 3 and 4 students perform better in science than those in other countries, but do about average in math, according to one of the world's biggest education studies.

The test of 175,000 students in 26 countries was conducted by the third International Mathematics and Science Study and its outcome released Tuesday.

"The results show that Canadian students are doing as well as or better than students in other countries," said David Robitaille, a University of British Columbia professor and the study's international co-ordinator.

But Canada lagged behind other countries like Korea - which came first in all categories - Japan and the Czech Republic.

Province by province results are to be released today.

In science, the 16,000 Canadian nine-year-olds who took part were ranked sixth of 17 countries who met all the study's stringent procedures.

Canada's Grade 3 students answered, on average, 53 per cent of the science questions right, compared to an international average of 50 per cent. Grade 4 students answered an average of 64 per cent of questions correctly, compared to the international average of 59 per cent.

1. World News Tonight (ABC News)

June 10, 1997

TIMSS

PETER JENNINGS: The president was celebrating a better record today for American education. The president said that the latest math and science scores for students in grade four in 26 countries, show that American kids are performing above the international average: Second in science; only South Korea did better. And sixth in math.■

2. USA Today

June 11, 1997 Page 1

U.S. fourth-graders score well in international math, science study

By Tamara Henry
USA Today

WASHINGTON — President Clinton Tuesday hailed an international study that shows U.S. fourth-graders are above average in math when compared to students in 26 other nations and very close to being first in science.

"Today is a good day for American education," Clinton said after the reporter was released by the Education Department's National Center for Education Statistics.

The Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), billed as the most comprehensive international comparison to date with half a million participating, found U.S. fourth-graders:

- Outperformed all but Koreans and Japanese in science. Korea's average score was 697, the USA's was 565. Japan had 574; the overall average: 524.

- Were outperformed by seven countries in math. Singapore scored best with 625. The overall average was 529 and the USA's was 545.

The results mark an improvement on last November's scores for eighth-graders, who finished slightly above average in science and slightly below in math. A report on high school seniors is due in February.

"Our elementary schools are getting better at teaching the basics," says Education Secretary Richard Riley.

William H. Schmidt, U.S. coordinator for TIMSS, says the studies show "we were more similar to other countries at fourth than eighth grade." By eighth, for instance, the heart of the math curriculum in other nations moves from arithmetic to more advanced algebra and geometry.

"What we consider basics' and how we handle them in our schools matters," he says.

3. The Washington Post

06/11/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: A Section; Page A01

U.S. Soars In 4th-Grade Assessment; Pupils at or Near Top In Math and Science

By Rene Sanchez
Washington Post Staff Writer

American fourth-graders are outperforming their peers from many other countries in math and science, according to a new international study.

The study, compiled by the Education Department with the help of similar government agencies worldwide, draws a much brighter portrait of American education than the same international assessment of eighth-graders did last year. That report raised new alarm about the quality of teaching and curricula in the nation's schools because in math and science American students trailed well behind students in many other nations.

The latest findings, which were unveiled yesterday by President Clinton at a White House ceremony, present more evidence that the problems American students have in math and science are most serious, and perhaps even isolated, in middle schools. Elementary schools, the study suggests, are doing a much better job.

In all, 26 nations took part in the fourth-grade study. It does not provide exact rankings

for each nation, but it shows that the United States exceeds the average international score in math and science and places at or near the top tier of countries in both subjects.

Last year, in the eighth-grade study, American students finished below the international average in math and only slightly above it in science.

This time, the showing of American fourth-graders in science was especially strong. Fourth-graders in only one other nation — Korea — had significantly higher science scores than the United States. American fourth-graders performed roughly the same in science as students in Japan and Australia, and much better than those in Canada and England.

"Obviously this is not something we would have projected after the last test of eighth-graders," said Pascal Forgione, the commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, which supervised the report. "It seems our kids are getting a good foundation in the primary grades. But we need to focus more on the years after that."

Clinton and Education Secretary Richard W. Riley praised the results of the latest study and said that one of the primary goals the nation's governors set for schools at the start of the decade — to make American students first in the world in math and science by the year 2000 — is now in reach, at least for fourth-graders.

"But let's not kid ourselves," Clinton said. "We are still nowhere near where we need to be in these other areas."

The United States was the only nation of those participating in the study where students scored above the international average in math for fourth grade, then below it for eighth grade.

The study does not offer any core reason for the decline in scores from fourth to eighth grade among American students, and education officials yesterday did not cite any clear cause for it, either.

"Unfortunately, eighth-grade math has really become kind of the missing link in education," Riley said. "We need to focus like a laser beam on boosting math skills in the middle grades."

Many educators suggested that the roots of the problem are diverse. The study noted, for example, that eighth-graders nationwide report less enthusiasm for learning math and science than do fourth-graders. It also said that students in elementary school science classes tend to learn fewer topics in more depth than they do in later grades.

In the earlier international study of eighth-graders, one of the central criticisms of American math and science instruction in middle schools was that it is often too superficial — with teachers racing through topics and emphasizing rote drills over creative exercises.

Gerry Wheeler, the executive director of the National Science Teachers Association, which has 53,000 members, said that how the subjects are taught may be among the most important factors.

"In fourth grade, a teacher can seize on the natural curiosity of a child and roll with it without always having a lot of background in the subject," he said. "But that's much harder to do in later grades. The subject matter becomes more complex, and the competency of teachers in science or math becomes much more important."

"This latest study should be another wake-up call," Wheeler added. "We can't just sit back and say, 'Great, in four years we'll see these same fourth-graders do just as well,' because they won't. We still have to change our classroom habits."

More than 11,000 American fourth-graders from 190 elementary schools nationwide took part in the international study, which is the most comprehensive attempt ever made to compare the academic work of students from around the world. As part of the study, each student took a 90-minute exam in math and science that included multiple choice and problem-solving questions. Researchers also assessed the curricula in every nation that participated, surveyed thousands of teachers, and even examined how much homework students receive and how much they watch television.

The study found the American fourth-graders receive roughly the same amount of homework as students in other nations, and have about the same class sizes. But it also noted that American elementary schools spend slightly more time each week teaching math and science than elementary schools in other nations.

Last year, the international study of eighth-graders showed that American students scored lower than many other nations in math and science even though they tended to spend more class time on each subject and had to do more homework.

The fourth-grade study is smaller than the one that tested eighth-graders around the world. Fifteen fewer countries, including France and Germany, participated this time.

REPORT CARD

In a new assessment of 26 countries, U.S. fourth-graders ranked above average in math and science performance.

How U.S. students compared to international average overall ...

Grade 4 Grade 8

Math Above Below

Science Above Above

... and by content area:

Fourth-graders were above average in nine areas but below average in:

Measurement, estimation and number sense

cultural interference, like more social pressure to slack off. "I don't see how our children are so radically different from the rest of the world's children," he said.

Victoria L. Sherman, a second-grade teacher at Third Street Elementary School in Los Angeles, said that a recent return to basics in early education may have come too late for the eighth graders.

"These fourth-grade children are a product of teaching that is more traditional," she said. "They're only 9 years old and have been in school during the past couple years when teachers have been waking up. Teachers are saying, 'Hey, building blocks and progressive education don't work. Children have to memorize.'"

Because of statistical fuzziness, the rankings of nations in the study are imprecise. For example, the United States shares the distinction of being second in science with five other nations, including Japan and the Czech Republic, whose scores were statistically indistinguishable from its own. Nineteen other countries were ranked as having significantly lower scores in science than the United States.

Though the United States ranks children in terms of fourth, eighth and 12th grades, the rest of the world breaks them down by ages — 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds and 17-year-olds.

Some education experts said that the findings suggested that Americans were too gloomy about the state of schools.

"In fourth-grade science we are very close to achieving the national education goal of being first in the world, established in 1989," said Pascal D. Forgione Jr., commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics. "When we went around the country talking about that, there were always a lot of snickers out there. The T.I.M.S.S. report is based on data, not on conjecture, and I think a lot of Americans are going to be surprised how well we're performing."

The results of two previous international tests in this series, which examined only science skills, are not strictly comparable with those in the new study. But officials said that in the 1960's, American fourth graders ranked above average in science, while in the 1980's they were average. In 1991, a separate international survey of math and science skills found that American fourth graders scored below average in math, but above average in science.

Lois Peak, project director with the international study, said that although only 26 nations participated at the fourth-grade level, they represented a cross-section of international competition. "We still have all the high-performing Asian nations and most of the Eastern Bloc nations," she said. "The countries that did not participate tend to be countries that perform similar to us and below us, with a few exceptions."

Among its other findings, the new study showed that more American fourth graders watch large amounts of television than do children abroad. They are more likely to have computers in their homes and to use calculators and computers at school. Teachers here assign about the same amount of math homework as teachers in other countries, but American students spend more class time each week studying math and science than do children abroad. Chart: "A CLOSER LOOK: Comparing Math and Science Scores" Here's how the scores of American Fourth graders compare with the score of fourth graders in other countries according to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, released yesterday. (Source: Boston College)

04:51 EDT June 11, 1997■

5. The Wall Street Journal

06/11/97

U.S. Fourth-Graders Hit High Scores In International Math and Science Test

By June Kronholz
Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal

WASHINGTON — All the talk about tougher public-school standards just may be paying off.

In a Rose Garden ceremony, President Clinton announced that U.S. fourth graders scored above average in math, and close to the top in science, in the Third International Math and Science Study.

U.S. math scores were the same as those for Canada and Australia, significantly behind those of Singapore, South Korea and Japan, but well ahead of England's and Scotland's. Only South Korea and Japan scored ahead of U.S. fourth graders in science.

Eighth graders, who took the TIMSS test at the same time but whose results were released months ago, scored well below the international average in math and slightly above in science, leading to much national hand-wringing about declining competitiveness. Test results for 12th graders, which are expected to be as doleful as those for eighth-graders, won't be released until next year.

Mr. Clinton immediately tried to share the credit for the fourth-grade results, appropriating the announcement from the Department of Education and recalling his work as governor to establish national education goals.

But while U.S. fourth-graders fall below Mr. Clinton's often-stated goal of being first in the world, educators say that a half-decade of toughening math standards on the national, state and district levels may be paying off. Although there is no baseline test to measure the TIMSS results against, they appear to reflect curriculum changes first proposed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics in 1989 and adopted over the years by most of the states.

"It's difficult to say the standards caused the results," said Gail Burrill, president of the council, "but also very clear that these children were educated in a standards-based climate."

The math teachers' standards don't tell schools what to teach, but rather give them a broad outline. By third grade, for example, a child should be able to use addition, subtraction and multiplication to reason through and solve a word problem.

All but six states have adopted those broad standards and sent them to the school districts to write curricula, train teachers and develop tests and learning materials. The result has been growing agreement, from district to district and among the states, about what should be taught when, and how. Publishers also have begun writing textbooks to support the math standards.

But while toughened standards may be an important element in lifting student achievement, they aren't the only one, and the eighth-grade results show that clearly. Teaching older children needs more advanced training than teaching the youngest, and there's a shortage of qualified math and science teachers. About 1 in 4 math teachers doesn't even have a minor in the subject, for example.

Also, countries like Japan and Germany have a set of incentives — pass a test before going on to the next grade, or earning a diploma, or getting a job — that the states are only beginning to grapple with.

Moreover, science standards were drafted only in 1995, the same year the TIMSS test was given, and so didn't have any impact on the scores. But U.S. fourthgraders scored well because they start studying science at an earlier age and spend more time at it — an average of 3.1 hours a week — than children in most other countries.

That lesson hasn't been lost on math teachers, said the math council's Ms. Burrill. The council now is urging that algebra and geometry, long considered high-school subjects, be taught beginning with geometric shapes and simple fractions in first grade. ■

6. Philadelphia Inquirer

June 11, 1997

4th graders excelling in science

Americans ranked among the best. Math scores were high. Clinton hailed the ratings, with a caveat.

By Dale Mezzacappa INQUIRER STAFF WRITER, page A1

American fourth graders are among the best in the world in science and perform above the international average in math, according to a comparison of 9- and 10-year-olds in 26 countries released yesterday.

President Clinton immediately hailed the results in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) as a "good day for American education," but cautioned that the results raised a lot of troubling questions.

For starters, the results of the TIMSS given to eighth graders and released last fall show that while they score above average in science internationally, they score below average in math. In no other country, Clinton said, was such a drop-off evident.

Overall, American fourth graders in both math and science do better than their eighth-grade counterparts.

Clinton said the TIMSS results bolster his arguments for national standards and voluntary national testing. The President has called for a fourth-grade test in reading and an eighth-grade test in math by 1999, but so far only six states have indicated a willingness to participate.

The TIMSS tests, given in 1995 in a random sample across public, private and parochial schools, showed that in science, only Korean students significantly outperformed those in the United States. American fourth graders scored on a par with those in Japan, Austria, Australia, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic, and ahead of Britain and Canada.

In math, the United States was outscored by Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, the Czech Republic, Austria and the Netherlands.

In the eighth-grade test, 41 countries participated. Among the countries whose fourth graders did not take the test were Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, France and Russia.

"There are a lot of people who never believed the United States children would score in the top two in the world on any of these international tests," Clinton said at a Rose Garden ceremony with Education Secretary Richard W. Riley and others. "And now, they know they were wrong. . . . But let's not kid ourselves: We are still nowhere near where we need to be in these other areas, and all this fourth-grade test does is to show us that we can be the best in the world if we simply believe it and organize ourselves to achieve it."

The results showed that U.S. math students were above average in five of six areas tested: data representation, analysis and probability; geometry; whole numbers; functions and proportionality; and patterns, relations and functions. They were below average in measurement, estimation and number sense.

In science, they were above average in all areas tested: earth science, life science, environment and the nature of science, and physical science.

While the results showed that fourth-grade boys and girls did comparably well in math, boys outperform girls in science at that level.

Pascal D. Forgione Jr., commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, said the results show there is no "magic bullet" in improving test scores. He said that TIMSS doesn't simply test students but surveys parents, teachers, students and administrators about class size, amount of time spent watching television, and how much homework is assigned.

"We know that any single factor such as more homework, less TV, and smaller class size does not alone guarantee high international performance," he said.

"Our elementary schools are getting better at teaching the basics," Riley said. "Our goal now is to keep up the pace and make sure that they are learning to these high standards all the way through to high school."

But some reasons may already be evident, he said. As part of TIMSS, classrooms in several countries were videotaped and studied by experts.

Contrary to myth, American students actually spend more time in the classroom than counterparts in Japan, but the time is not used as well. The typical math class in the United States consists of the teacher putting a problem on the board and solving it. In Japan, teachers "are into math as problem solving, communication, deep thinking, making kids develop alternative strategies. We found nothing of that in our own teaching." In addition, students in most other countries learn in seventh grade what American students learn in eighth grade. "We stay with arithmetic through grade eight, while the rest of the world moves to mathematics," Forgione said. Most American students aren't exposed to algebra until ninth grade, if then. Many students in inner-city schools never take higher mathematics.

Also contrary to myth, Japanese schools do not group students by ability until 10th grade. And while American eighth graders are expected to cover 35 different topics, their Japanese counterparts study half as many.

But more research is needed before any conclusions can be reached. Forgione said he wants to give the test again in 1999 to see how the fourth graders in 1995 will do as eighth graders.

"We don't know whether the eighth graders in 1995 were like the fourth graders and lost it," he said. ■

7. Baltimore Sun

June 11, 1997

U.S. fourth-graders among best in math, science, study shows

But scores of 8th-graders fail to match those of many foreign counterparts

By Eric Lekus
SUN NATIONAL STAFF

WASHINGTON — President Clinton unveiled the results of a survey yesterday showing that American fourth-graders are among the most proficient math and science students in the world, and asserted that the news reflected an improving U.S. education system.

At the same time, Clinton and Education Secretary Richard W. Riley conceded that scores for U.S. eighth-graders have failed to meet the levels of many foreign students. Sounding a favorite theme of Clinton's second term, the two men called for the nation to adopt voluntary national curriculum standards so that U.S. middle- and high-school students can compete with their strongest foreign counterparts.

Maryland is among only a handful of states so far that have committed to national standards, which seek to ensure that all students master the same skills and levels of knowledge across a range of subjects.

"We need to focus like a laser beam on improving math in the middle grades," Riley said at a sun-drenched ceremony in the White House Rose Garden.

The Third International Mathematics and Science Study of fourth-graders found that Americans scored significantly above average in both math and science. A similar study in 1991 had found U.S. fourth-graders only slightly above average in science and below average in math.

The study, conducted in 1995, analyzed curricula, textbooks and performance exams and reviewed questionnaires of teachers, students and school administrators. Twenty-six countries participated.

Seven countries had significantly higher scores than the United States in math, while South Korea was the only country to top the United States in science.

Education Department officials said they could not break down the U.S. results by region.

Scores for eighth-graders, compiled in the same study but released in November, were much less encouraging. U.S. students scored only slightly above average in science and below average in math.

Results for 12th-graders are expected early next year.

The United States was the only country with a wide disparity between the scores of fourth- and eighth-graders, and Clinton acknowledged yesterday that the gap was disheartening.

"Let's not kid ourselves," he said.

"We are nowhere near where we need to be. All these fourth-graders are showing us that we can be the best in the world if we simply believe it and organize ourselves to achieve it."

Riley noted that classes in American schools tend to focus on several dozen topics, treating each in little depth, while many foreign countries emphasize mastery of a few crucial subjects.

Bruce Albert, president of the National Academy of Sciences, suggested that too many eighth-grade courses simply recount lessons taught in earlier grades, only with more sophisticated information.

He and other officials said foreign countries are more likely to introduce younger students to analytical subjects like algebra, geometry and physics.

"It is not a simple question of time or homework or TV," but rather has much to do with classroom instruction, said Pascal D. Forgione Jr., the Education Department's commissioner of statistics.

National curriculum standards, Clinton and Riley repeatedly stressed, would compel schools to make their classes more rigorous, thus raising the performances of U.S. students in all grades.

"This ought to be a clear challenge to every single state that has not yet come forward to agree to participate in the national standards movement," Clinton said.

Maryland is one of six states that intend to administer a national skills test, which Clinton hopes to have in place by 1999. Maryland now conducts its own standard exams for third-, fifth- and eighth-graders, with one expected for high schools soon.

Several Maryland educators said they were pleased by the report's generally upbeat message but were troubled by the drop-off for older students.

"That is a very disturbing trend," said Christopher T. Cross, president of the state school board.

He said Maryland schools are working to make their middle-school curricula more challenging, although resistance to change persists in some areas. ■

8. Los Angeles Times

* 06/11/97; Edition: Home Edition; Section: Metro Desk; Page A-1

U.S. 4th-Graders Score Strongly in Science, Math Education: Study's results contrast sharply with 8th-grade weakness, fueling calls for tougher classes.

By RICHARD LEE COLVIN; ELIZABETH SHOGREN
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

American 9- and 10-year-olds were among the sharpest in the world in science and, for the first time ever, also performed well above average in math in a new international comparison released Tuesday.

Korea beat the rest of the world in science while Japan and the United States were close

behind. In math, seven countries —led by Singapore, Korea, Japan and Hong Kong —were clustered at the top. The United States, though above average, was in a second tier with six countries, including Slovenia, Ireland and Israel.

The strong performance of U.S. students in this age group on the Third International Math and Science Study contrasts sharply with the relatively weak showing of its 13-year-olds. In results announced last fall, the older students were only average in science and below average in math.

U.S. students make less progress between the fourth and eighth grades —in either subject —than their counterparts in any of the 26 participating countries, according to an analysis by the organization that gave the test, the International Assn. for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Though education experts said they could not be sure why U.S. students fall behind after the fourth grade, the most common theory pointed toward what students are taught —lessons at the higher grades that are less in-depth or challenging than in other nations.

In a ceremony at the White House, President Clinton said the showing by the U.S. students indicated that "we are doing a very good job in the early grades, but we've got a lot of work to do in the later ones."

"There are a lot of people who never believed the United States children would score in the top two in the world on any of these international tests," Clinton said. "And now, they know they were wrong and they underestimated our children [and] underestimated our teachers."

But he said the drop-off between fourth and eighth grade shows that "our curriculum will have to be more focused and more demanding. We know we'll have to hold all of our students to higher standards as they grow older."

Clinton reiterated his proposal to monitor students' progress by giving eighth-graders a math test, pegged to international standards, starting in 1999.

The comparisons released Tuesday were drawn from the most ambitious effort ever to test students and gather information about their study habits, leisure activities and schools' teaching methods.

More than half a million students and their teachers in more than 40 countries participated in the testing program, administered mostly in 1995, and education researchers expect to mine the data for years to come.

Study director and Boston College education professor Albert Beaton said the initial analysis does not reveal any panacea for boosting student learning. Neither does it show that reforms often proposed in the United States —more time in class or a smaller ratio of students to teachers —automatically produce results.

Top-scoring Korea, for example, has the largest classes in the world, averaging 43 students. And U.S. teachers assign more homework than in countries where students performed better. One finding consistent in all countries was that most teachers say that coping with differences in the ability level of their students slows down lessons.

"If there were simple answers, somebody would have found them," Beaton said.

There did appear to be a connection, however, between academic achievement and factors outside the classroom. Students whose homes had large numbers of books, a desk and computer did better than those whose homes lacked them. The report notes, though, that it is not the books or computers themselves that made the difference —but the parental support for education that they signaled.

The most dramatic finding for the United States was how little children here learn between the fourth and eighth grades in math or science. Earlier studies have reached similar conclusions but have been criticized for technical shortcomings.

"Now we not only see the magnitude of the drop-off . . . but we really have some good ideas of why that is likely to be the case," said William H. Schmidt, a Michigan State University professor who coordinated the new research in the United States. "That's what's so powerfully important from these results."

Schmidt said what American students are taught in fourth grade is in line with what students learn elsewhere —meaning that U.S. students can master challenging material when they are expected to. But American classrooms don't move much beyond the fourth grade lessons in grades five through eight, he said.

In math, fourth-graders learn basic arithmetic, fractions, measurement and a little geometry. In science, the American students learn such basics as the body parts and their functions.

Between the fourth and eighth grades, however, other countries teach about seven new topics, such as algebra, while U.S. teachers introduce only one. In science, other countries move on to 11 new topics in areas such as physics and chemistry while American students are learning little that hadn't been introduced earlier.

"Other countries are not repeating things again and again and why is it that we think we have to?" Schmidt asked.

Gerald Wheeler, executive director of the National Science Teachers Assn., noted that some of Tuesday's results were good. But, he added, "if we don't use [them] as a wake-up call, these fourth-graders are going to walk down the same path as the eighth-graders did

and four years from now we're going to be upset wondering why they're doing just average work."

Gail Burrill, president of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, which has stressed student understanding over calculation, said the reform movement deserves some of the credit for the stronger fourth grade showing.

"It's rewarding to see that our students are beginning to have some success in math," she said. "But our hope . . . is to have all students meet higher expectations for all grade levels."

Some observers of the ongoing controversy over how to teach math were taken aback by the United States' above-average finish.

"This takes me completely by surprise," said Hung-Hsi Wu, a mathematician at UC Berkeley who argues for "rigorous emphasis on the basic, technical skills."

Math lessons in American elementary schools, he said, typically present a series of abstract facts and rules that are to be followed slavishly, resulting in "math phobia."

"The quality of instruction . . . is so poor that . . . it is difficult in the later grades to get the students to reason," he said.

Seeming to confirm Wu's criticism was the fact that U.S. teachers are among the most likely to think that remembering formulas and procedures is very important. Demonstrating the influence of math reformers, however, American teachers also are among the most likely to say that teaching pupils how to use math in the "real world" is important.

Teachers in such high-performing countries as Korea, Japan and Singapore, in contrast, are among the least likely in the world to emphasize "real world" problems.

Another sharp contrast was in the emphasis placed on the use of calculators. In nine of the 11 countries ranked ahead of the United States in math, teachers said they almost never used them in class. In the United States, a third of the teachers said they used calculators at least once or twice a month.

On the math test, U.S. students were strongest in questions requiring pupils to analyze data and understand basic probability and were weakest on fractions and proportions. Told that a recipe using five tomatoes produced a half-liter of sauce, only 43% of U.S. fourth-graders answered correctly that 15 tomatoes would produce 1 1/2 liters.

In science, U.S. students did best on life science questions. Nearly two-thirds knew that the heart serves other parts of the body by pumping blood through them. They were weakest in physical science. Only one in five could draw a line showing the position of the water level inside a watering can as it was being poured.

U.S. girls and boys did equally well in math. In science, however, boys did significantly better. ■

9. Chicago Sun-Times

06/10/97; Edition: FINAL MARKETS; Section: NEWS; Page 3

PLUS NEWS

Clinton hails school test results

Renewing his call for high national education standards, President Clinton today said the latest test scores show that American grade-schoolers are making progress and "can be the best in the world." Fourth-grade students participating in a model standards program scored above the international average in math and science, Clinton noted. "All this fourth-grade test does is to show us that we can be the best in the world if we simply believe it and then organize ourselves to achieve it," he said during a Rose Garden ceremony with Education Secretary Richard Riley. ■

10. Chicago Tribune

June 11, 1997

4TH GRADERS SCORE HIGH IN SCIENCE

U.S. RANKS NEAR TOP IN INTERNATIONAL TEST

By Joel Kirkland and Dorina Lazo, Washington Bureau
WASHINGTON

President Clinton used a hastily arranged Rose Garden ceremony Tuesday to announce that U.S. 4th graders ranked near the top in an international math and science test.

"The results today give us a road map to higher performance," Clinton said.

In the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, American 4th graders ranked second in science among 26 participating countries, behind South Korea. Others statistically ranked in second place were Japan, Austria, Australia, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic.

In math, five others outscored the U.S. They were Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Czech Republic.

The good 4th-grade test scores followed last year's disappointing report on U.S. 8th-grade students, who ranked 17th in science and 28th in math among 41 participating countries.

Clinton and administration officials expressed optimism that as younger students move into higher grades, educational performance will improve.

Education Secretary Richard Riley, along with educators and researchers, bolstered the president's call for expanding the use of national and state performance standards for elementary and secondary students.

"Our students are beginning to benefit from standards-based curricula and standards-based teaching," said Bruce Alberts, president of the National Academy of Sciences. "But I emphasize 'beginning,' because there is still much more work to be done."

Linda Vieth, an assistant superintendent in the Sunset Ridge School District 29 in north suburban Chicago, echoed Clinton's encouragement for states to develop and improve their tests. Vieth was among the first group of educators to voluntarily administer the test.

Vieth, who is also principal at Middlefork Primary School in Northfield, said the test gives a fair and comprehensive assessment of students' math and science abilities despite different cultures.

"When you have clear guidelines to lead you, that's your road map," Vieth said. "That will enable Chicago schools to achieve."

Riley and researchers said they did not know why the 4th graders scored better this year than the 8th graders did last year.

"There are no easy answers, no factors that are present in the high performers and absent in the low performers," Riley said. "All the analysis is not done, but to date we have not been able to identify any."

Some countries that had participated in the earlier testing of 8th graders didn't take part this year, including Germany, France and Switzerland.

With education as one of his top second-term priorities, Clinton chose to announce the test-score improvement in a splashy White House ceremony, rather than leave it to Education Department officials.

Clinton rejected critics of U.S. elementary and secondary schools, who have said math and science students were not adequately prepared.

Clinton said more emphasis will have to be given to maintaining high performance levels in the upper grades.

"There are a lot of people who never believed the United States children would score in the top two in the world on any of these international tests," Clinton said. "Now they know they were wrong, and they underestimated our children."

In calling for states and Congress to embrace national performance standards, Clinton also used the ceremonies to attack Republicans for blocking his proposed education tax cuts. ■

11. Minneapolis Star Tribune

June 11, 1997

U.S. fourth-graders score high in math, science in world

From News Services

U.S. fourth-graders are among the sharpest in the world in science and, for the first time ever, performed well above average in math, according to an international study.

South Korea beat the world in science, but Japan and the United States were close behind. In math, seven nations — led by Singapore, South Korea, Japan and Hong Kong — were clustered at the top. The United States, though above average, was in a second tier with six other nations.

The International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), released Tuesday, draws a much brighter portrait of the U.S. education system than last year's international assessment of eighth-graders. That report raised new alarm about the quality of teaching and curricula because math and science students in the United States trailed well behind students in many other nations.

"This report proves that we don't have to settle for second-class expectations or second-class goals," President Clinton said in a Rose Garden ceremony to announce the results.

But some experts said the real significance of the study was its indication that U.S. students start out well in elementary school but then lose ground in junior high to their peers abroad. The reasons for the drop-off are unclear, but the most common theory pointed to what students are taught in the higher grades — lessons that are less in-depth or challenging than in other nations.

"It seems our kids are getting a good foundation in the primary grades. But we need to focus more on the years after that," said Pascal Forgione, commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, which supervised the report.

Clinton said the drop-off from fourth to eighth grade shows that "our curriculum will have to be more focused and more demanding. We know we'll have to hold all of our students to higher standards as they grow older."

Calling the findings "a road map to higher performance," he urged states to embrace his plan for national standards, which calls for schools using uniform tests to measure fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math skills by 1999.

On Tuesday, Kentucky became the sixth state to do so.

Minnesota waiting

Minnesota isn't one of those states, but it's one of only three states to compare its state test results with other nations that participated in TIMSS. Results of Minnesota third- and fourth-grade achievement in math and science are expected by fall.

Those results may be tougher to predict than results released in March, which showed Minnesota eighth-graders ranking above the U.S. average. Compared with students in the 41 other nations, Minnesota eighth-graders ranked sixth in science but fell in the middle of the pack in math.

"It will be harder to top. We will be as strong as the United States, but I'm not sure we're going to be stronger," said Bill Linder-Scholer, executive director of SciMathMN, a nonprofit business, government and education partnership that promotes improved math and science instruction.

More than a half-million students and their teachers in more than 40 nations participated in the testing program, administered mostly in 1995.

Because of statistical fuzziness, the rankings of nations in the study are imprecise. For example, the United States shares the distinction of being second in science with five other nations, including Japan and the Czech Republic, whose scores were statistically indistinguishable from its own. Nineteen other nations, including England and Singapore, were ranked as having significantly lower scores in science than the United States.

Also, Tuesday's report didn't include 15 nations that were used in the eighth-grade tests last fall. Among those that didn't participate were Switzerland, France, Russia, Sweden and Germany.

Educators expect to mine the data for years to come.

Albert Beaton, director of the study and Boston College education professor, said the initial analysis doesn't reveal any panacea for boosting student learning. Neither does it show that reforms often proposed in the United States — more time in class or a smaller ratio of students to teachers — automatically produce results.

Top-scoring South Korea, for example, has the largest classes in the world, averaging 43 students. And U.S. teachers assign more homework than in nations where students performed better. One finding consistent in all nations was that most teachers say that coping with differences in the ability level of their students slows down lessons.

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Behind the drop-off

The most dramatic finding for the United States was how little its children learn between the fourth and eighth grades in math or science. Earlier studies have reached similar conclusions but have been criticized for technical shortcomings.

"Now we not only see the magnitude of the drop-off . . . but we really have some good ideas of why that is likely to be the case," said William Schmidt, a Michigan State University professor who coordinated the new testing research in the United States. "That's what's so powerfully important from these results."

Schmidt said what U.S. students are taught in fourth grade is in line with what students learn elsewhere — meaning that U.S. students can master challenging material when they are expected to learn it. But U.S. classrooms don't move much beyond the fourth-grade lessons in grades five through eight, he said.

After last fall's test results were released, the central criticisms of U.S. math and science instruction in middle schools was that it's often too superficial — with teachers racing through topics and emphasizing rote drills over creative exercises.

Gerry Wheeler, executive director of the National Science Teachers Association, said that how the subjects are taught may be among the most important factors.

But some experts said the real significance of the study was its indication that U.S. students start out well in elementary school but then lose ground in junior high to their peers abroad. The reasons for the drop-off are unclear, but the most common theory pointed to what students are taught in the higher grades — lessons that are less in-depth or challenging than in other nations.

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More than a half-million students and their teachers in more than 40 nations participated in the testing program, administered mostly in 1995.

Because of statistical fuzziness, the rankings of nations in the study are imprecise. For example, the United States shares the distinction of being second in science with five other nations, including Japan and the Czech Republic, whose scores were statistically indistinguishable from its own. Nineteen other nations, including England and Singapore, were ranked as having significantly lower scores in science than the United States.

Also, Tuesday's report didn't include 15 nations that were used in the eighth-grade tests last fall. Among those that didn't participate were Switzerland, France, Russia, Sweden and Germany.

Educators expect to mine the data for years to come.

Albert Beaton, director of the study and Boston College education professor, said the initial analysis doesn't reveal any panacea for boosting student learning. Neither does it show that reforms often proposed in the United States — more time in class or a smaller ratio of students to teachers — automatically produce results.

Top-scoring South Korea, for example, has the largest classes in the world, averaging 43 students. And U.S. teachers assign more homework than in nations where students performed better. One finding consistent in all nations was that most teachers say that coping with differences in the ability level of their students slows down lessons.

"If there were simple answers, somebody would have found them," Beaton said.

There did appear to be a connection, however, between academic achievement and factors outside the classroom. Students whose homes had large numbers of books, a desk and computer did better than those whose homes lacked them. The report notes, though, that it's not the books or computers themselves that made the difference — but the parental support for education that they signaled.

Behind the drop-off

The most dramatic finding for the United States was how little its children learn between the fourth and eighth grades in math or science. Earlier studies have reached similar conclusions but have been criticized for technical shortcomings.

"Now we not only see the magnitude of the drop-off . . . but we really have some good ideas of why that is likely to be the case," said William Schmidt, a Michigan State University professor who coordinated the new testing research in the United States. "That's what's so powerfully important from these results."

Schmidt said what U.S. students are taught in fourth grade is in line with what students learn elsewhere — meaning that U.S. students can master challenging material when they are expected to learn it. But U.S. classrooms don't move much beyond the fourth-grade lessons in grades five through eight, he said.

After last fall's test results were released, the central criticisms of U.S. math and science instruction in middle schools was that it's often too superficial — with teachers racing through topics and emphasizing rote drills over creative exercises.

Gerry Wheeler, executive director of the National Science Teachers Association, said that how the subjects are taught may be among the most important factors.

"In fourth grade, a teacher can seize on the natural curiosity of a child and roll with it without always having a lot of background in the subject," he said. "But that's much harder to do in later grades. The subject matter becomes more complex, and the competency of teachers in science or math becomes much more important."

"This latest study should be another wake-up call," Wheeler said. "We can't just sit back and say, 'Great, in four years we'll see these same fourth-graders do just as well,' because they won't. We still have to change our classroom habits."

—Staff Writer Maureen M. Smith contributed to this report. ■

12. Boston Globe

June 11, 1997

US students lagging by 8th grade, tests show

By Kate Zemike, Globe Staff, 06/11/97

The largest comparison of students from around the world provided strong new arguments yesterday for the movement toward tougher national standards and tests.

For while fourth graders from the United States scored at or near the top of the international heap in science and math, US eighth graders in the same study ranked lower against their foreign peers.

The key to the contrast, researchers said, is the difference in what's taught in US and international schools in the grades in between.

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These files require the Adobe Acrobat Reader to view, which can be downloaded at <http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>

While US students are often still learning arithmetic and basic science in middle and junior high school, their international counterparts have moved on to algebra and geometry, chemistry and physics, courses often dictated by national standards.

Students in countries that scored better than the United States in eighth grade face tough exams around that grade, exams that often determine whether they will attend university and the nature of their careers.

The test results of the Third International Math and Science Study coincide with a movement by President Clinton, and by Massachusetts and other states, to institute graduation exams and tougher standards of what students need to know to leave high school. The movement has been opposed by teachers who complain that standards are too prescriptive. Parents have successfully sued states for denying diplomas to students who fail tests.

Yesterday's results, however, suggested that such tests and standards are the key to boosting achievement.

"There's not the same focus and motivation for eighth graders in the United States as there is in other countries," said Michael Martin, deputy director of the international study and a professor at Boston College, which did the research. "Having tests by itself isn't going to do anything. It's the consequences of those tests that are the important thing in other countries."

By contrast, researchers found that class size, television watching, homework, and time in school made no difference in boosting scores. Japanese students watched as much television as US students, had larger class sizes, and spent less time in school, even when accounting for after-school Japanese "cram" schools. Students in four out of seven of the countries that outperformed the United States in math spend less time in class per week than the international average, and far less than the United States.

"Some of these easy answers aren't at the heart of it," said Pascal D. Forgione Jr., US commissioner of education statistics.

Hailing the fourth-grade results at a Rose Garden press conference, Clinton used them to reinforce his call for standards. US Education Secretary Richard W. Riley emphasized the need for such standards in the middle grades, which he acknowledged are a "weak link."

The study looked at the same test taken by about 500,000 students in 26 countries, whose schools were randomly selected from communities that offered a good balance of social and economic factors. The study also included questions about influences on learning such as TV watching, homework, class size, and teacher preparation.

Results for eighth graders in the same study were released in November. Both sets of students, as well as a group of 12th graders whose results will be released in 1998, took the test in 1995.

US fourth graders scored above the international average in both math and science. Singapore and Korea scored highest in math, with Japan, Hong Kong and the Czech Republic also doing significantly better than the United States. In science, only Korea

performance. They analyzed the amount of homework assigned, time spent watching TV, teacher education and training and curricula but said no single factor in the study emerged as significant.

Among the world's seven largest industrial democracies, only the United States, Japan, Canada and Britain participated in this year's study. Italy, Germany and France did not.

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14. Detroit News

June 11, 1997

4th-graders rank high in math, but slip by 8th grade

By Richard A. Ryan / Detroit News Senior Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON — American fourth-grade students score well in math and science but drop off by the time they reach the eighth grade, a study released Tuesday suggests.

The Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) showed American fourth-graders finishing above the international average of 26 countries in math and science.

But a study of eighth-graders released last year showed American students below the average in math. The United States was the only country in the test group in which fourth-graders finished above the average and eighth-graders dropped below.

In science, eighth-graders were above the average, but not by as much as the fourth-graders.

William Schmidt, professor of education statistics at Michigan State University and U.S. coordinator for the study, said the report shows that the middle school years are "where our problem lies."

"Our children don't start out behind the children of other countries," he said. "We fall behind them."

One reason, he said, is that by the eighth grade other countries have moved on to more advanced topics, such as algebra and geometry, while American eighth-graders are still studying basic arithmetic.

President Clinton said the report shows "we are doing a very good job in the early grades, but we've got a lot more work to do in the later ones."

Parents must remain involved, school curricula must "be more focused and demanding," and students must be held "to a higher standard," he said.

Clinton used the test results to renew his call for all states to voluntarily adopt national standards for reading and math and to agree to test fourth grade reading and eighth grade math by 1999. Michigan was the first state to agree to the program.

Good grades

Fourth-graders in the United States fared better in math and science scores than eighth-graders did in earlier tests against students from other countries. Here's how the nations ranked in the Third International Math and Science Study:

Science:

1. South Korea: 597
2. Japan: 574
- (tie) 3. United States: 565
- (tie) 3. Austria: 565
5. Australia: 562
- (tie) 6. Netherlands: 557
- (tie) 7. Czech Republic: 557
7. England: 551
9. Canada: 549

Mathematics

1. Singapore: 625
2. South Korea: 611
3. Japan: 597
4. Hong Kong: 587
5. Netherlands: 577
6. Czech Republic: 567
7. Austria: 559
8. Slovenia: 552
12. United States: 545■

16. UPI

June 10, 1997

Clinton touts education standards

WASHINGTON, June 10 (UPI) — Citing new test results as proof U.S. students can be competitive worldwide if challenged, President Clinton reiterated his call for all states to join a system of standardized testing.

The tests, based on voluntary participation by school districts nationwide, are an update of a 1991 round that put U.S. fourth-graders well below worldwide averages in math and near the top in science.

The new results show fourth-graders in participating U.S. districts improved in both broad subject areas, moving up to second place among 25 nations in science and to eighth place in math.

The eighth-grade version of the tests, announced last November, showed U.S. students slightly above the international average in science but slightly below the international average in mathematics.

Clinton told a White House briefing: "These fourth-grade examinations prove that if our educators, our parents, our schools, and the rest of us in a supporting role — if we all do the right thing that our children can achieve if we give them the chance to do it, and if we have high expectations for them."

Clinton announced Kentucky has become the sixth state to join his call for participation in the national and international series of standardized grade-school tests, next scheduled for 1999.

Fending off critics who have insisted testing should be a matter of local control, Clinton said: "We have to have the conviction that every child in America can learn, and we have to know that this report proves that we don't have to settle for second-class expectations or second-class goals." ■

17. Reuter

June 10, 1997

Clinton Hails Reports of Better U.S. Education

(14:42) By Steve Holland WASHINGTON (Reuter) - After years of embarrassing test scores, President Clinton Tuesday hailed new evidence that American schoolchildren are performing above the international average in math and science.

"Today is a good day for American education," he told a ceremony in the sunny Rose Garden where he announced results of the Third International Math and Science Study.

The private study said U.S. students scored above the international average science score and U.S. fourth-graders — 9-year-olds — were outperformed only by students in South Korea. It said that in math U.S. students averaged above the international norm and only students in Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Austria performed better. Clinton, Education Secretary Richard Riley and other senior officials were quick to seize on the results as an indication of a turnaround in American education, long criticized in some areas of the country for low standards, uninspired teaching and disinterested students. In some public schools, the process of learning is disrupted by the fear of crime and violence. Some Washington, D.C., and New York City schools have metal detectors to try to prevent students from carrying weapons inside. As recently as 1991, a similar study found fourth graders to be below average in math and above average in science but, Clinton said, "nowhere near where they are today." The president has declared improving U.S. education a priority and has proposed a large increase in education funding in a plan to balance the budget by 2002. "There are a lot of people who never believed the United States children would score in the top two in the world on any of these international tests," he said. "But let's not kid ourselves: We are still nowhere near where we need to be. We can be the best in the world if we simply believe it and then organize ourselves to achieve it." Clinton fretted that even though fourth-graders did well in the new study, eight-graders — 13-year-olds — from a similar study last November did not do well in math. He said this proved his case that all states should adopt voluntary national learning standards and tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math that he proposed soon after he took office in January for his second term. He announced that Kentucky had become the seventh state to agree to embrace the standards. The others included Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, California, West Virginia and

1. World News Tonight (ABC News)

June 10, 1997

TIMSS

PETER JENNINGS: The president was celebrating a better record today for American education. The president said that the latest math and science scores for students in grade four in 26 countries, show that American kids are performing above the international average: Second in science; only South Korea did better. And sixth in math.■

2. USA Today

June 11, 1997 Page 1

U.S. fourth-graders score well in international math, science study

By Tamara Henry
USA Today

WASHINGTON — President Clinton Tuesday hailed an international study that shows U.S. fourth-graders are above average in math when compared to students in 26 other nations and very close to being first in science.

"Today is a good day for American education," Clinton said after the reporter was released by the Education Department's National Center for Education Statistics.

The Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), billed as the most comprehensive international comparison to date with half a million participating, found U.S. fourth-graders:

- Outperformed all but Koreans and Japanese in science. Korea's average score was 697, the USA's was 565. Japan had 574; the overall average: 524.

- Were outperformed by seven countries in math. Singapore scored best with 625. The overall average was 529 and the USA's was 545.

The results mark an improvement on last November's scores for eighth-graders, who finished slightly above average in science and slightly below in math. A report on high school seniors is due in February.

"Our elementary schools are getting better at teaching the basics," says Education Secretary Richard Riley.

William H. Schmidt, U.S. coordinator for TIMSS, says the studies show "we were more similar to other countries at fourth than eighth grade." By eighth, for instance, the heart of the math curriculum in other nations moves from arithmetic to more advanced algebra and geometry.

"What we consider basics' and how we handle them in our schools matters," he says.

3. The Washington Post

06/11/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: A Section; Page A01

U.S. Soars In 4th-Grade Assessment; Pupils at or Near Top In Math and Science

By Rene Sanchez
Washington Post Staff Writer

American fourth-graders are outperforming their peers from many other countries in math and science, according to a new international study.

The study, compiled by the Education Department with the help of similar government agencies worldwide, draws a much brighter portrait of American education than the same international assessment of eighth-graders did last year. That report raised new alarm about the quality of teaching and curricula in the nation's schools because in math and science American students trailed well behind students in many other nations.

The latest findings, which were unveiled yesterday by President Clinton at a White House ceremony, present more evidence that the problems American students have in math and science are most serious, and perhaps even isolated, in middle schools. Elementary schools, the study suggests, are doing a much better job.

In all, 26 nations took part in the fourth-grade study. It does not provide exact rankings

for each nation, but it shows that the United States exceeds the average international score in math and science and places at or near the top tier of countries in both subjects.

Last year, in the eighth-grade study, American students finished below the international average in math and only slightly above it in science.

This time, the showing of American fourth-graders in science was especially strong. Fourth-graders in only one other nation — Korea — had significantly higher science scores than the United States. American fourth-graders performed roughly the same in science as students in Japan and Australia, and much better than those in Canada and England.

"Obviously this is not something we would have projected after the last test of eighth-graders," said Pascal Forgione, the commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, which supervised the report. "It seems our kids are getting a good foundation in the primary grades. But we need to focus more on the years after that."

Clinton and Education Secretary Richard W. Riley praised the results of the latest study and said that one of the primary goals the nation's governors set for schools at the start of the decade — to make American students first in the world in math and science by the year 2000 — is now in reach, at least for fourth-graders.

"But let's not kid ourselves," Clinton said. "We are still nowhere near where we need to be in these other areas."

The United States was the only nation of those participating in the study where students scored above the international average in math for fourth grade, then below it for eighth grade.

The study does not offer any core reason for the decline in scores from fourth to eighth grade among American students, and education officials yesterday did not cite any clear cause for it, either.

"Unfortunately, eighth-grade math has really become kind of the missing link in education," Riley said. "We need to focus like a laser beam on boosting math skills in the middle grades."

Many educators suggested that the roots of the problem are diverse. The study noted, for example, that eighth-graders nationwide report less enthusiasm for learning math and science than do fourth-graders. It also said that students in elementary school science classes tend to learn fewer topics in more depth than they do in later grades.

In the earlier international study of eighth-graders, one of the central criticisms of American math and science instruction in middle schools was that it is often too superficial — with teachers racing through topics and emphasizing rote drills over creative exercises.

Gerry Wheeler, the executive director of the National Science Teachers Association, which has 53,000 members, said that how the subjects are taught may be among the most important factors.

"In fourth grade, a teacher can seize on the natural curiosity of a child and roll with it without always having a lot of background in the subject," he said. "But that's much harder to do in later grades. The subject matter becomes more complex, and the competency of teachers in science or math becomes much more important."

"This latest study should be another wake-up call," Wheeler added. "We can't just sit back and say, 'Great, in four years we'll see these same fourth-graders do just as well,' because they won't. We still have to change our classroom habits."

More than 11,000 American fourth-graders from 190 elementary schools nationwide took part in the international study, which is the most comprehensive attempt ever made to compare the academic work of students from around the world. As part of the study, each student took a 90-minute exam in math and science that included multiple choice and problem-solving questions. Researchers also assessed the curricula in every nation that participated, surveyed thousands of teachers, and even examined how much homework students receive and how much they watch television.

The study found the American fourth-graders receive roughly the same amount of homework as students in other nations, and have about the same class sizes. But it also noted that American elementary schools spend slightly more time each week teaching math and science than elementary schools in other nations.

Last year, the international study of eighth-graders showed that American students scored lower than many other nations in math and science even though they tended to spend more class time on each subject and had to do more homework.

The fourth-grade study is smaller than the one that tested eighth-graders around the world. Fifteen fewer countries, including France and Germany, participated this time.

REPORT CARD

In a new assessment of 26 countries, U.S. fourth-graders ranked above average in math and science performance.

How U.S. students compared to international average overall ...

Grade 4 Grade 8

Math Above Below

Science Above Above

... and by content area:

Fourth-graders were above average in nine areas but below average in:

Measurement, estimation and number sense

cultural interference, like more social pressure to slack off. "I don't see how our children are so radically different from the rest of the world's children," he said.

Victoria L. Sherman, a second-grade teacher at Third Street Elementary School in Los Angeles, said that a recent return to basics in early education may have come too late for the eighth graders.

"These fourth-grade children are a product of teaching that is more traditional," she said. "They're only 9 years old and have been in school during the past couple years when teachers have been waking up. Teachers are saying, 'Hey, building blocks and progressive education don't work. Children have to memorize.'"

Because of statistical fuzziness, the rankings of nations in the study are imprecise. For example, the United States shares the distinction of being second in science with five other nations, including Japan and the Czech Republic, whose scores were statistically indistinguishable from its own. Nineteen other countries were ranked as having significantly lower scores in science than the United States.

Though the United States ranks children in terms of fourth, eighth and 12th grades, the rest of the world breaks them down by ages — 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds and 17-year-olds.

Some education experts said that the findings suggested that Americans were too gloomy about the state of schools.

"In fourth-grade science we are very close to achieving the national education goal of being first in the world, established in 1989," said Pascal D. Forgione Jr., commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics. "When we went around the country talking about that, there were always a lot of snickers out there. The T.I.M.S.S. report is based on data, not on conjecture, and I think a lot of Americans are going to be surprised how well we're performing."

The results of two previous international tests in this series, which examined only science skills, are not strictly comparable with those in the new study. But officials said that in the 1960's, American fourth graders ranked above average in science, while in the 1980's they were average. In 1991, a separate international survey of math and science skills found that American fourth graders scored below average in math, but above average in science.

Lois Peak, project director with the international study, said that although only 26 nations participated at the fourth-grade level, they represented a cross-section of international competition. "We still have all the high-performing Asian nations and most of the Eastern Bloc nations," she said. "The countries that did not participate tend to be countries that perform similar to us and below us, with a few exceptions."

Among its other findings, the new study showed that more American fourth graders watch large amounts of television than do children abroad. They are more likely to have computers in their homes and to use calculators and computers at school. Teachers here assign about the same amount of math homework as teachers in other countries, but American students spend more class time each week studying math and science than do children abroad. Chart: "A CLOSER LOOK: Comparing Math and Science Scores" Here's how the scores of American Fourth graders compare with the score of fourth graders in other countries according to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, released yesterday. (Source: Boston College)

04:51 EDT June 11, 1997■

5. The Wall Street Journal

06/11/97

U.S. Fourth-Graders Hit High Scores In International Math and Science Test

By June Kronholz

Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal

WASHINGTON — All the talk about tougher public-school standards just may be paying off.

In a Rose Garden ceremony, President Clinton announced that U.S. fourth graders scored above average in math, and close to the top in science, in the Third International Math and Science Study.

U.S. math scores were the same as those for Canada and Australia, significantly behind those of Singapore, South Korea and Japan, but well ahead of England's and Scotland's. Only South Korea and Japan scored ahead of U.S. fourth graders in science.

Eighth graders, who took the TIMSS test at the same time but whose results were released months ago, scored well below the international average in math and slightly above in science, leading to much national hand-wringing about declining competitiveness. Test results for 12th graders, which are expected to be as doleful as those for eighth-graders, won't be released until next year.

Mr. Clinton immediately tried to share the credit for the fourth-grade results, appropriating the announcement from the Department of Education and recalling his work as governor to establish national education goals.

But while U.S. fourth-graders fall below Mr. Clinton's often-stated goal of being first in the world, educators say that a half-decade of toughening math standards on the national, state and district levels may be paying off. Although there is no baseline test to measure the TIMSS results against, they appear to reflect curriculum changes first proposed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics in 1989 and adopted over the years by most of the states.

"It's difficult to say the standards caused the results," said Gail Burrill, president of the council, "but also very clear that these children were educated in a standards-based climate."

The math teachers' standards don't tell schools what to teach, but rather give them a broad outline. By third grade, for example, a child should be able to use addition, subtraction and multiplication to reason through and solve a word problem.

All but six states have adopted those broad standards and sent them to the school districts to write curricula, train teachers and develop tests and learning materials. The result has been growing agreement, from district to district and among the states, about what should be taught when, and how. Publishers also have begun writing textbooks to support the math standards.

But while toughened standards may be an important element in lifting student achievement, they aren't the only one, and the eighth-grade results show that clearly. Teaching older children needs more advanced training than teaching the youngest, and there's a shortage of qualified math and science teachers. About 1 in 4 math teachers doesn't even have a minor in the subject, for example.

Also, countries like Japan and Germany have a set of incentives — pass a test before going on to the next grade, or earning a diploma, or getting a job — that the states are only beginning to grapple with.

Moreover, science standards were drafted only in 1995, the same year the TIMSS test was given, and so didn't have any impact on the scores. But U.S. fourthgraders scored well because they start studying science at an earlier age and spend more time at it — an average of 3.1 hours a week — than children in most other countries.

That lesson hasn't been lost on math teachers, said the math council's Ms. Burrill. The council now is urging that algebra and geometry, long considered high-school subjects, be taught beginning with geometric shapes and simple fractions in first grade. ■

6. Philadelphia Inquirer

June 11, 1997

4th graders excelling in science

Americans ranked among the best. Math scores were high. Clinton hailed the ratings, with a caveat.

By Dale Mezzacappa INQUIRER STAFF WRITER, page A1

American fourth graders are among the best in the world in science and perform above the international average in math, according to a comparison of 9- and 10-year-olds in 26 countries released yesterday.

President Clinton immediately hailed the results in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) as a "good day for American education," but cautioned that the results raised a lot of troubling questions.

For starters, the results of the TIMSS given to eighth graders and released last fall show that while they score above average in science internationally, they score below average in math. In no other country, Clinton said, was such a drop-off evident.

Overall, American fourth graders in both math and science do better than their eighth-grade counterparts.

Clinton said the TIMSS results bolster his arguments for national standards and voluntary national testing. The President has called for a fourth-grade test in reading and an eighth-grade test in math by 1999, but so far only six states have indicated a willingness to participate.

The TIMSS tests, given in 1995 in a random sample across public, private and parochial schools, showed that in science, only Korean students significantly outperformed those in the United States. American fourth graders scored on a par with those in Japan, Austria, Australia, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic, and ahead of Britain and Canada.

In math, the United States was outscored by Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, the Czech Republic, Austria and the Netherlands.

In the eighth-grade test, 41 countries participated. Among the countries whose fourth graders did not take the test were Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, France and Russia.

"There are a lot of people who never believed the United States children would score in the top two in the world on any of these international tests," Clinton said at a Rose Garden ceremony with Education Secretary Richard W. Riley and others. "And now, they know they were wrong. . . . But let's not kid ourselves: We are still nowhere near where we need to be in these other areas, and all this fourth-grade test does is to show us that we can be the best in the world if we simply believe it and organize ourselves to achieve it."

The results showed that U.S. math students were above average in five of six areas tested: data representation, analysis and probability; geometry; whole numbers; functions and proportionality; and patterns, relations and functions. They were below average in measurement, estimation and number sense.

In science, they were above average in all areas tested: earth science, life science, environment and the nature of science, and physical science.

While the results showed that fourth-grade boys and girls did comparably well in math, boys outperform girls in science at that level.

Pascal D. Forgione Jr., commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, said the results show there is no "magic bullet" in improving test scores. He said that TIMSS doesn't simply test students but surveys parents, teachers, students and administrators about class size, amount of time spent watching television, and how much homework is assigned.

"We know that any single factor such as more homework, less TV, and smaller class size does not alone guarantee high international performance," he said.

"Our elementary schools are getting better at teaching the basics," Riley said. "Our goal now is to keep up the pace and make sure that they are learning to these high standards all the way through to high school."

But some reasons may already be evident, he said. As part of TIMSS, classrooms in several countries were videotaped and studied by experts.

Contrary to myth, American students actually spend more time in the classroom than counterparts in Japan, but the time is not used as well. The typical math class in the United States consists of the teacher putting a problem on the board and solving it. In Japan, teachers "are into math as problem solving, communication, deep thinking, making kids develop alternative strategies. We found nothing of that in our own teaching." In addition, students in most other countries learn in seventh grade what American students learn in eighth grade. "We stay with arithmetic through grade eight, while the rest of the world moves to mathematics," Forgione said. Most American students aren't exposed to algebra until ninth grade, if then. Many students in inner-city schools never take higher mathematics.

Also contrary to myth, Japanese schools do not group students by ability until 10th grade. And while American eighth graders are expected to cover 35 different topics, their Japanese counterparts study half as many.

But more research is needed before any conclusions can be reached. Forgione said he wants to give the test again in 1999 to see how the fourth graders in 1995 will do as eighth graders.

"We don't know whether the eighth graders in 1995 were like the fourth graders and lost it," he said. ■

7. Baltimore Sun

June 11, 1997

U.S. fourth-graders among best in math, science, study shows

But scores of 8th-graders fail to match those of many foreign counterparts

By Eric Lerus

SUN NATIONAL STAFF

WASHINGTON — President Clinton unveiled the results of a survey yesterday showing that American fourth-graders are among the most proficient math and science students in the world, and asserted that the news reflected an improving U.S. education system.

At the same time, Clinton and Education Secretary Richard W. Riley conceded that scores for U.S. eighth-graders have failed to meet the levels of many foreign students. Sounding a favorite theme of Clinton's second term, the two men called for the nation to adopt voluntary national curriculum standards so that U.S. middle- and high-school students can compete with their strongest foreign counterparts.

Maryland is among only a handful of states so far that have committed to national standards, which seek to ensure that all students master the same skills and levels of knowledge across a range of subjects.

"We need to focus like a laser beam on improving math in the middle grades," Riley said at a sun-drenched ceremony in the White House Rose Garden.

The Third International Mathematics and Science Study of fourth-graders found that Americans scored significantly above average in both math and science. A similar study in 1991 had found U.S. fourth-graders only slightly above average in science and below average in math.

The study, conducted in 1995, analyzed curricula, textbooks and performance exams and reviewed questionnaires of teachers, students and school administrators. Twenty-six countries participated.

Seven countries had significantly higher scores than the United States in math, while South Korea was the only country to top the United States in science.

Education Department officials said they could not break down the U.S. results by region.

Scores for eighth-graders, compiled in the same study but released in November, were much less encouraging. U.S. students scored only slightly above average in science and below average in math.

Results for 12th-graders are expected early next year.

The United States was the only country with a wide disparity between the scores of fourth- and eighth-graders, and Clinton acknowledged yesterday that the gap was disheartening.

"Let's not kid ourselves," he said.

"We are nowhere near where we need to be. All these fourth-graders are showing us that we can be the best in the world if we simply believe it and organize ourselves to achieve it."

Riley noted that classes in American schools tend to focus on several dozen topics, treating each in little depth, while many foreign countries emphasize mastery of a few crucial subjects.

Bruce Albert, president of the National Academy of Sciences, suggested that too many eighth-grade courses simply recount lessons taught in earlier grades, only with more sophisticated information.

He and other officials said foreign countries are more likely to introduce younger students to analytical subjects like algebra, geometry and physics.

"It is not a simple question of time or homework or TV," but rather has much to do with classroom instruction, said Pascal D. Forgione Jr., the Education Department's commissioner of statistics.

National curriculum standards, Clinton and Riley repeatedly stressed, would compel schools to make their classes more rigorous, thus raising the performances of U.S. students in all grades.

"This ought to be a clear challenge to every single state that has not yet come forward to agree to participate in the national standards movement," Clinton said.

Maryland is one of six states that intend to administer a national skills test, which Clinton hopes to have in place by 1999. Maryland now conducts its own standard exams for third-, fifth- and eighth-graders, with one expected for high schools soon.

Several Maryland educators said they were pleased by the report's generally upbeat message but were troubled by the drop-off for older students.

"That is a very disturbing trend," said Christopher T. Cross, president of the state school board.

He said Maryland schools are working to make their middle-school curricula more challenging, although resistance to change persists in some areas. ■

8. Los Angeles Times

• 06/11/97; Edition: Home Edition; Section: Metro Desk; Page A-1

U.S. 4th-Graders Score Strongly in Science, Math Education: Study's results contrast sharply with 8th-grade weakness, fueling calls for tougher classes.

By RICHARD LEE COLVIN; ELIZABETH SHOGREN
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

American 9- and 10-year-olds were among the sharpest in the world in science and, for the first time ever, also performed well above average in math in a new international comparison released Tuesday.

Korea beat the rest of the world in science while Japan and the United States were close

behind. In math, seven countries —led by Singapore, Korea, Japan and Hong Kong —were clustered at the top. The United States, though above average, was in a second tier with six countries, including Slovenia, Ireland and Israel.

The strong performance of U.S. students in this age group on the Third International Math and Science Study contrasts sharply with the relatively weak showing of its 13-year-olds. In results announced last fall, the older students were only average in science and below average in math.

U.S. students make less progress between the fourth and eighth grades —in either subject —than their counterparts in any of the 26 participating countries, according to an analysis by the organization that gave the test, the International Assn. for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Though education experts said they could not be sure why U.S. students fall behind after the fourth grade, the most common theory pointed toward what students are taught —lessons at the higher grades that are less in-depth or challenging than in other nations.

In a ceremony at the White House, President Clinton said the showing by the U.S. students indicated that "we are doing a very good job in the early grades, but we've got a lot of work to do in the later ones."

"There are a lot of people who never believed the United States children would score in the top two in the world on any of these international tests," Clinton said. "And now, they know they were wrong and they underestimated our children [and] underestimated our teachers."

But he said the drop-off between fourth and eighth grade shows that "our curriculum will have to be more focused and more demanding. We know we'll have to hold all of our students to higher standards as they grow older."

Clinton reiterated his proposal to monitor students' progress by giving eighth-graders a math test, pegged to international standards, starting in 1999.

The comparisons released Tuesday were drawn from the most ambitious effort ever to test students and gather information about their study habits, leisure activities and schools' teaching methods.

More than half a million students and their teachers in more than 40 countries participated in the testing program, administered mostly in 1995, and education researchers expect to mine the data for years to come.

Study director and Boston College education professor Albert Beaton said the initial analysis does not reveal any panacea for boosting student learning. Neither does it show that reforms often proposed in the United States —more time in class or a smaller ratio of students to teachers —automatically produce results.

Top-scoring Korea, for example, has the largest classes in the world, averaging 43 students. And U.S. teachers assign more homework than in countries where students performed better. One finding consistent in all countries was that most teachers say that coping with differences in the ability level of their students slows down lessons.

"If there were simple answers, somebody would have found them," Beaton said.

There did appear to be a connection, however, between academic achievement and factors outside the classroom. Students whose homes had large numbers of books, a desk and computer did better than those whose homes lacked them. The report notes, though, that it is not the books or computers themselves that made the difference —but the parental support for education that they signaled.

The most dramatic finding for the United States was how little children here learn between the fourth and eighth grades in math or science. Earlier studies have reached similar conclusions but have been criticized for technical shortcomings.

"Now we not only see the magnitude of the drop-off . . . but we really have some good ideas of why that is likely to be the case," said William H. Schmidt, a Michigan State University professor who coordinated the new research in the United States. "That's what's so powerfully important from these results."

Schmidt said what American students are taught in fourth grade is in line with what students learn elsewhere —meaning that U.S. students can master challenging material when they are expected to. But American classrooms don't move much beyond the fourth grade lessons in grades five through eight, he said.

In math, fourth-graders learn basic arithmetic, fractions, measurement and a little geometry. In science, the American students learn such basics as the body parts and their functions.

Between the fourth and eighth grades, however, other countries teach about seven new topics, such as algebra, while U.S. teachers introduce only one. In science, other countries move on to 11 new topics in areas such as physics and chemistry while American students are learning little that hadn't been introduced earlier.

"Other countries are not repeating things again and again and why is it that we think we have to?" Schmidt asked.

Gerald Wheeler, executive director of the National Science Teachers Assn., noted that some of Tuesday's results were good. But, he added, "if we don't use [them] as a wake-up call, these fourth-graders are going to walk down the same path as the eighth-graders did

and four years from now we're going to be upset wondering why they're doing just average work."

Gail Burrill, president of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, which has stressed student understanding over calculation, said the reform movement deserves some of the credit for the stronger fourth grade showing.

"It's rewarding to see that our students are beginning to have some success in math," she said. "But our hope . . . is to have all students meet higher expectations for all grade levels."

Some observers of the ongoing controversy over how to teach math were taken aback by the United States' above-average finish.

"This takes me completely by surprise," said Hung-Hsi Wu, a mathematician at UC Berkeley who argues for "rigorous emphasis on the basic, technical skills."

Math lessons in American elementary schools, he said, typically present a series of abstract facts and rules that are to be followed slavishly, resulting in "math phobia."

"The quality of instruction . . . is so poor that . . . it is difficult in the later grades to get the students to reason," he said.

Seeming to confirm Wu's criticism was the fact that U.S. teachers are among the most likely to think that remembering formulas and procedures is very important. Demonstrating the influence of math reformers, however, American teachers also are among the most likely to say that teaching pupils how to use math in the "real world" is important.

Teachers in such high-performing countries as Korea, Japan and Singapore, in contrast, are among the least likely in the world to emphasize "real world" problems.

Another sharp contrast was in the emphasis placed on the use of calculators. In nine of the 11 countries ranked ahead of the United States in math, teachers said they almost never used them in class. In the United States, a third of the teachers said they used calculators at least once or twice a month.

On the math test, U.S. students were strongest in questions requiring pupils to analyze data and understand basic probability and were weakest on fractions and proportions. Told that a recipe using five tomatoes produced a half-liter of sauce, only 43% of U.S. fourth-graders answered correctly that 15 tomatoes would produce 1 1/2 liters.

In science, U.S. students did best on life science questions. Nearly two-thirds knew that the heart serves other parts of the body by pumping blood through them. They were weakest in physical science. Only one in five could draw a line showing the position of the water level inside a watering can as it was being poured.

U.S. girls and boys did equally well in math. In science, however, boys did significantly better. ■

9. Chicago Sun-Times

06/10/97; Edition: FINAL MARKETS; Section: NEWS; Page 3

PLUS NEWS

Clinton hails school test results

Renewing his call for high national education standards, President Clinton today said the latest test scores show that American grade-schoolers are making progress and "can be the best in the world." Fourth-grade students participating in a model standards program scored above the international average in math and science, Clinton noted. "All this fourth-grade test does is to show us that we can be the best in the world if we simply believe it and then organize ourselves to achieve it," he said during a Rose Garden ceremony with Education Secretary Richard Riley. ■

10. Chicago Tribune

June 11, 1997

4TH GRADERS SCORE HIGH IN SCIENCE

U.S. RANKS NEAR TOP IN INTERNATIONAL TEST

By Joel Kirkland and Dorina Lazo, Washington Bureau
WASHINGTON

President Clinton used a hastily arranged Rose Garden ceremony Tuesday to announce that U.S. 4th graders ranked near the top in an international math and science test.

"The results today give us a road map to higher performance," Clinton said.

In the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, American 4th graders ranked second in science among 26 participating countries, behind South Korea. Others statistically ranked in second place were Japan, Austria, Australia, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic.

In math, five others outscored the U.S. They were Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Czech Republic.

The good 4th-grade test scores followed last year's disappointing report on U.S. 8th-grade students, who ranked 17th in science and 28th in math among 41 participating countries.

Clinton and administration officials expressed optimism that as younger students move into higher grades, educational performance will improve.

Education Secretary Richard Riley, along with educators and researchers, bolstered the president's call for expanding the use of national and state performance standards for elementary and secondary students.

"Our students are beginning to benefit from standards-based curricula and standards-based teaching," said Bruce Alberts, president of the National Academy of Sciences. "But I emphasize 'beginning,' because there is still much more work to be done."

Linda Vieth, an assistant superintendent in the Sunset Ridge School District 29 in north suburban Chicago, echoed Clinton's encouragement for states to develop and improve their tests. Vieth was among the first group of educators to voluntarily administer the test.

Vieth, who is also principal at Middlefork Primary School in Northfield, said the test gives a fair and comprehensive assessment of students' math and science abilities despite different cultures.

"When you have clear guidelines to lead you, that's your road map," Vieth said. "That will enable Chicago schools to achieve."

Riley and researchers said they did not know why the 4th graders scored better this year than the 8th graders did last year.

"There are no easy answers, no factors that are present in the high performers and absent in the low performers," Riley said. "All the analysis is not done, but to date we have not been able to identify any."

Some countries that had participated in the earlier testing of 8th graders didn't take part this year, including Germany, France and Switzerland.

With education as one of his top second-term priorities, Clinton chose to announce the test-score improvement in a splashy White House ceremony, rather than leave it to Education Department officials.

Clinton rejected critics of U.S. elementary and secondary schools, who have said math and science students were not adequately prepared.

Clinton said more emphasis will have to be given to maintaining high performance levels in the upper grades.

"There are a lot of people who never believed the United States children would score in the top two in the world on any of these international tests," Clinton said. "Now they know they were wrong, and they underestimated our children."

In calling for states and Congress to embrace national performance standards, Clinton also used the ceremonies to attack Republicans for blocking his proposed education tax cuts. ■

11. Minneapolis Star Tribune

June 11, 1997

U.S. fourth-graders score high in math, science in world

From News Services

U.S. fourth-graders are among the sharpest in the world in science and, for the first time ever, performed well above average in math, according to an international study.

South Korea beat the world in science, but Japan and the United States were close behind. In math, seven nations — led by Singapore, South Korea, Japan and Hong Kong — were clustered at the top. The United States, though above average, was in a second tier with six other nations.

The International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), released Tuesday, draws a much brighter portrait of the U.S. education system than last year's international assessment of eighth-graders. That report raised new alarm about the quality of teaching and curricula because math and science students in the United States trailed well behind students in many other nations.

"This report proves that we don't have to settle for second-class expectations or second-class goals," President Clinton said in a Rose Garden ceremony to announce the results.

But some experts said the real significance of the study was its indication that U.S. students start out well in elementary school but then lose ground in junior high to their peers abroad. The reasons for the drop-off are unclear, but the most common theory pointed to what students are taught in the higher grades — lessons that are less in-depth or challenging than in other nations.

"It seems our kids are getting a good foundation in the primary grades. But we need to focus more on the years after that," said Pascal Forgione, commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, which supervised the report.

Clinton said the drop-off from fourth to eighth grade shows that "our curriculum will have to be more focused and more demanding. We know we'll have to hold all of our students to higher standards as they grow older."

Calling the findings "a road map to higher performance," he urged states to embrace his plan for national standards, which calls for schools using uniform tests to measure fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math skills by 1999.

On Tuesday, Kentucky became the sixth state to do so.

Minnesota waiting

Minnesota isn't one of those states, but it's one of only three states to compare its state test results with other nations that participated in TIMSS. Results of Minnesota third- and fourth-grade achievement in math and science are expected by fall.

Those results may be tougher to predict than results released in March, which showed Minnesota eighth-graders ranking above the U.S. average. Compared with students in the 41 other nations, Minnesota eighth-graders ranked sixth in science but fell in the middle of the pack in math.

"It will be harder to top. We will be as strong as the United States, but I'm not sure we're going to be stronger," said Bill Linder-Scholer, executive director of SciMathMN, a nonprofit business, government and education partnership that promotes improved math and science instruction.

More than a half-million students and their teachers in more than 40 nations participated in the testing program, administered mostly in 1995.

Because of statistical fuzziness, the rankings of nations in the study are imprecise. For example, the United States shares the distinction of being second in science with five other nations, including Japan and the Czech Republic, whose scores were statistically indistinguishable from its own. Nineteen other nations, including England and Singapore, were ranked as having significantly lower scores in science than the United States.

Also, Tuesday's report didn't include 15 nations that were used in the eighth-grade tests last fall. Among those that didn't participate were Switzerland, France, Russia, Sweden and Germany.

Educators expect to mine the data for years to come.

Albert Beaton, director of the study and Boston College education professor, said the initial analysis doesn't reveal any panacea for boosting student learning. Neither does it show that reforms often proposed in the United States — more time in class or a smaller ratio of students to teachers — automatically produce results.

Top-scoring South Korea, for example, has the largest classes in the world, averaging 43 students. And U.S. teachers assign more homework than in nations where students performed better. One finding consistent in all nations was that most teachers say that coping with differences in the ability level of their students slows down lessons.

"If there were simple answers, somebody would have found them," Beaton said.

There did appear to be a connection, however, between academic achievement and factors outside the classroom. Students whose homes had large numbers of books, a desk and computer did better than those whose homes lacked them. The report notes, though, that it's not the books or computers themselves that made the difference — but the parental support for education that they signaled.

Behind the drop-off

The most dramatic finding for the United States was how little its children learn between the fourth and eighth grades in math or science. Earlier studies have reached similar conclusions but have been criticized for technical shortcomings.

"Now we not only see the magnitude of the drop-off . . . but we really have some good ideas of why that is likely to be the case," said William Schmidt, a Michigan State University professor who coordinated the new testing research in the United States. "That's what's so powerfully important from these results."

Schmidt said what U.S. students are taught in fourth grade is in line with what students learn elsewhere — meaning that U.S. students can master challenging material when they are expected to learn it. But U.S. classrooms don't move much beyond the fourth-grade lessons in grades five through eight, he said.

After last fall's test results were released, the central criticisms of U.S. math and science instruction in middle schools was that it's often too superficial — with teachers racing through topics and emphasizing rote drills over creative exercises.

Gerry Wheeler, executive director of the National Science Teachers Association, said that how the subjects are taught may be among the most important factors.

But some experts said the real significance of the study was its indication that U.S. students start out well in elementary school but then lose ground in junior high to their peers abroad. The reasons for the drop-off are unclear, but the most common theory pointed to what students are taught in the higher grades — lessons that are less in-depth or challenging than in other nations.

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Schmidt said what U.S. students are taught in fourth grade is in line with what students learn elsewhere — meaning that U.S. students can master challenging material when they are expected to learn it. But U.S. classrooms don't move much beyond the fourth-grade lessons in grades five through eight, he said.

After last fall's test results were released, the central criticisms of U.S. math and science instruction in middle schools was that it's often too superficial — with teachers racing through topics and emphasizing rote drills over creative exercises.

Gerry Wheeler, executive director of the National Science Teachers Association, said that how the subjects are taught may be among the most important factors.

"In fourth grade, a teacher can seize on the natural curiosity of a child and roll with it without always having a lot of background in the subject," he said. "But that's much harder to do in later grades. The subject matter becomes more complex, and the competency of teachers in science or math becomes much more important."

"This latest study should be another wake-up call," Wheeler said. "We can't just sit back and say, 'Great, in four years we'll see these same fourth-graders do just as well,' because they won't. We still have to change our classroom habits."

— Staff Writer Maureen M. Smith contributed to this report. ■

12. Boston Globe

June 11, 1997

US students lagging by 8th grade, tests show

By Kate Zemike, Globe Staff, 06/11/97

The largest comparison of students from around the world provided strong new arguments yesterday for the movement toward tougher national standards and tests.

For while fourth graders from the United States scored at or near the top of the international heap in science and math, US eighth graders in the same study ranked lower against their foreign peers.

The key to the contrast, researchers said, is the difference in what's taught in US and international schools in the grades in between.

Click here to view complete mathematics report (.pdf format) Click here to view complete science report (.pdf format)

These files require the Adobe Acrobat Reader to view, which can be downloaded at <http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>

While US students are often still learning arithmetic and basic science in middle and junior high school, their international counterparts have moved on to algebra and geometry, chemistry and physics, courses often dictated by national standards.

Students in countries that scored better than the United States in eighth grade face tough exams around that grade, exams that often determine whether they will attend university and the nature of their careers.

The test results of the Third International Math and Science Study coincide with a movement by President Clinton, and by Massachusetts and other states, to institute graduation exams and tougher standards of what students need to know to leave high school. The movement has been opposed by teachers who complain that standards are too prescriptive. Parents have successfully sued states for denying diplomas to students who fail tests.

Yesterday's results, however, suggested that such tests and standards are the key to boosting achievement.

"There's not the same focus and motivation for eighth graders in the United States as there is in other countries," said Michael Martin, deputy director of the international study and a professor at Boston College, which did the research. "Having tests by itself isn't going to do anything. It's the consequences of those tests that are the important thing in other countries."

By contrast, researchers found that class size, television watching, homework, and time in school made no difference in boosting scores. Japanese students watched as much television as US students, had larger class sizes, and spent less time in school, even when accounting for after-school Japanese "cram" schools. Students in four out of seven of the countries that outperformed the United States in math spend less time in class per week than the international average, and far less than the United States.

"Some of these easy answers aren't at the heart of it," said Pascal D. Forgione Jr., US commissioner of education statistics.

Hailing the fourth-grade results at a Rose Garden press conference, Clinton used them to reinforce his call for standards. US Education Secretary Richard W. Riley emphasized the need for such standards in the middle grades, which he acknowledged are a "weak link."

The study looked at the same test taken by about 500,000 students in 26 countries, whose schools were randomly selected from communities that offered a good balance of social and economic factors. The study also included questions about influences on learning such as TV watching, homework, class size, and teacher preparation.

Results for eighth graders in the same study were released in November. Both sets of students, as well as a group of 12th graders whose results will be released in 1998, took the test in 1995.

US fourth graders scored above the international average in both math and science. Singapore and Korea scored highest in math, with Japan, Hong Kong and the Czech Republic also doing significantly better than the United States. In science, only Korea

performance. They analyzed the amount of homework assigned, time spent watching TV, teacher education and training and curricula but said no single factor in the study emerged as significant.

Among the world's seven largest industrial democracies, only the United States, Japan, Canada and Britain participated in this year's study. Italy, Germany and France did not.

14. Detroit News

June 11, 1997

4th-graders rank high in math, but slip by 8th grade

By Richard A. Ryan / Detroit News Senior Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON — American fourth-grade students score well in math and science but drop off by the time they reach the eighth grade, a study released Tuesday suggests.

The Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) showed American fourth-graders finishing above the international average of 26 countries in math and science.

But a study of eighth-graders released last year showed American students below the average in math. The United States was the only country in the test group in which fourth-graders finished above the average and eighth-graders dropped below.

In science, eighth-graders were above the average, but not by as much as the fourth-graders.

William Schmidt, professor of education statistics at Michigan State University and U.S. coordinator for the study, said the report shows that the middle school years are "where our problem lies."

"Our children don't start out behind the children of other countries," he said. "We fall behind them."

One reason, he said, is that by the eighth grade other countries have moved on to more advanced topics, such as algebra and geometry, while American eighth-graders are still studying basic arithmetic.

President Clinton said the report shows "we are doing a very good job in the early grades, but we've got a lot more work to do in the later ones."

Parents must remain involved, school curricula must "be more focused and demanding," and students must be held "to a higher standard," he said.

Clinton used the test results to renew his call for all states to voluntarily adopt national standards for reading and math and to agree to test fourth grade reading and eighth grade math by 1999. Michigan was the first state to agree to the program.

Good grades

Fourth-graders in the United States fared better in math and science scores than eighth-graders did in earlier tests against students from other countries. Here's how the nations ranked in the Third International Math and Science Study:

Science:

1. South Korea: 597
2. Japan: 574
- (tie) 3. United States: 565
- (tie) 3. Austria: 565
5. Australia: 562
- (tie) 6. Netherlands: 557
- (tie) 7. Czech Republic: 557
7. England: 551
9. Canada: 549

Mathematics

1. Singapore: 625
2. South Korea: 611
3. Japan: 597
4. Hong Kong: 587
5. Netherlands: 577
6. Czech Republic: 567
7. Austria: 559
8. Slovenia: 552
12. United States: 545■

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12. United States: 545■

16. UPI

June 10, 1997

Clinton touts education standards

WASHINGTON, June 10 (UPI) — Citing new test results as proof U.S. students can be competitive worldwide if challenged, President Clinton reiterated his call for all states to join a system of standardized testing.

The tests, based on voluntary participation by school districts nationwide, are an update of a 1991 round that put U.S. fourth-graders well below worldwide averages in math and near the top in science.

The new results show fourth-graders in participating U.S. districts improved in both broad subject areas, moving up to second place among 25 nations in science and to eighth place in math.

The eighth-grade version of the tests, announced last November, showed U.S. students slightly above the international average in science but slightly below the international average in mathematics.

Clinton told a White House briefing: "These fourth-grade examinations prove that if our educators, our parents, our schools, and the rest of us in a supporting role — if we all do the right thing that our children can achieve if we give them the chance to do it, and if we have high expectations for them."

Clinton announced Kentucky has become the sixth state to join his call for participation in the national and international series of standardized grade-school tests, next scheduled for 1999.

Fending off critics who have insisted testing should be a matter of local control, Clinton said: "We have to have the conviction that every child in America can learn, and we have to know that this report proves that we don't have to settle for second-class expectations or second-class goals." ■

17. Reuter

June 10, 1997

Clinton Hails Reports of Better U.S. Education

(14:42) By Steve Holland

WASHINGTON (Reuter) - After years of embarrassing test scores, President Clinton Tuesday hailed new evidence that American schoolchildren are performing above the international average in math and science.

"Today is a good day for American education," he told a ceremony in the sunny Rose Garden where he announced results of the Third International Math and Science Study.

The private study said U.S. students scored above the international average science score and U.S. fourth-graders — 9-year-olds — were outperformed only by students in South Korea. It said that in math U.S. students averaged above the international norm and only students in Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Austria performed better. Clinton, Education Secretary Richard Riley and other senior officials were quick to seize on the results as an indication of a turnaround in American education, long criticized in some areas of the country for low standards, uninspired teaching and disinterested students. In some public schools, the process of learning is disrupted by the fear of crime and violence. Some Washington, D.C., and New York City schools have metal detectors to try to prevent students from carrying weapons inside. As recently as 1991, a similar study found fourth graders to be below average in math and above average in science but, Clinton said, "nowhere near where they are today." The president has declared improving U.S. education a priority and has proposed a large increase in education funding in a plan to balance the budget by 2002. "There are a lot of people who never believed the United States children would score in the top two in the world on any of these international tests," he said. "But let's not kid ourselves: We are still nowhere near where we need to be. We can be the best in the world if we simply believe it and then organize ourselves to achieve it." Clinton fretted that even though fourth-graders did well in the new study, eight-graders — 13-year-olds — from a similar study last November did not do well in math. He said this proved his case that all states should adopt voluntary national learning standards and tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math that he proposed soon after he took office in January for his second term. He announced that Kentucky had become the seventh state to agree to embrace the standards. The others included Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, California, West Virginia and

performance. They analyzed the amount of homework assigned, time spent watching TV, teacher education and training and curricula but said no single factor in the study emerged as significant.

Among the world's seven largest industrial democracies, only the United States, Japan, Canada and Britain participated in this year's study. Italy, Germany and France did not.

14. Detroit News

June 11, 1997

4th-graders rank high in math, but slip by 8th grade

By Richard A. Ryan / Detroit News Senior Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON — American fourth-grade students score well in math and science but drop off by the time they reach the eighth grade, a study released Tuesday suggests.

The Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) showed American fourth-graders finishing above the international average of 26 countries in math and science.

But a study of eighth-graders released last year showed American students below the average in math. The United States was the only country in the test group in which fourth-graders finished above the average and eighth-graders dropped below.

In science, eighth-graders were above the average, but not by as much as the fourth-graders.

William Schmidt, professor of education statistics at Michigan State University and U.S. coordinator for the study, said the report shows that the middle school years are "where our problem lies."

"Our children don't start out behind the children of other countries," he said. "We fall behind them."

One reason, he said, is that by the eighth grade other countries have moved on to more advanced topics, such as algebra and geometry, while American eighth-graders are still studying basic arithmetic.

President Clinton said the report shows "we are doing a very good job in the early grades, but we've got a lot more work to do in the later ones."

Parents must remain involved, school curricula must "be more focused and demanding," and students must be held "to a higher standard," he said.

Clinton used the test results to renew his call for all states to voluntarily adopt national standards for reading and math and to agree to test fourth grade reading and eighth grade math by 1999. Michigan was the first state to agree to the program.

Good grades

Fourth-graders in the United States fared better in math and science scores than eighth-graders did in earlier tests against students from other countries. Here's how the nations ranked in the Third International Math and Science Study:

Science:

1. South Korea: 597
2. Japan: 574
- (tie) 3. United States: 565
- (tie) 3. Austria: 565
5. Australia: 562
- (tie) 6. Netherlands: 557
- (tie) 7. Czech Republic: 557
7. England: 551
9. Canada: 549

Mathematics

1. Singapore: 625
2. South Korea: 611
3. Japan: 597
4. Hong Kong: 587
5. Netherlands: 577
6. Czech Republic: 567
7. Austria: 559
8. Slovenia: 552
12. United States: 545■

Massachusetts, along with schools on military bases. The tests are to be given first in the spring of 1999.■

18. St. Louis Post-Dispatch

June 11, 1997

Clinton Cheers U.S. Pupils' Global Ranking On Tests

AP

Above-average science and math scores from fourth-graders prove that "we don't have to settle for second-class expectations," President Bill Clinton said Tuesday.

He cheered a report on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, which showed American fourth-graders second in science, along with several other nations, behind South Korea among 26 countries. Others statistically ranked second were Japan, Austria, Australia, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic.

In math, American students finished behind five other countries: Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and the Czech Republic.

Researchers said it was too early to explain what spurred the fourth-graders' performance. They analyzed the amount of homework assigned, time spent watching TV, teacher education and training, and curriculums but said no single factor in the study emerged as significant.

The report showed an average U.S. fourth-grade math score of 545 and a science average of 565, both above the international averages of 531 for math and 528 for science.

But researchers cautioned that the rankings were not exact because of differences in scoring methods among the participating countries.

Last year's report on eighth-graders ranked Americans 28th in math tests given to students in 41 countries. In science, they finished in the top half of the list, at 17.

Tuesday's report did not include 15 countries that were used in a similar study in November on tests given eighth-graders in 41 nations. Among those that did not take part this year were Switzerland, France, Russia, Sweden and Germany.

Praising the latest study in a Rose Garden ceremony with Education Secretary Richard Riley, Clinton said the results show that states should voluntarily embrace his plan for national standards. It calls for schools to use uniform tests to measure fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math skills by next year.

Clinton said, "This ought to be a clear challenge to every single state that has not yet come forward to agree to participate in the national standards movement."

So far, Clinton's call has been heeded by only six states - Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina and West Virginia - and the Defense Department schools. The idea of standards has met with resistance from Republican leaders in Congress.■

19. Associated Press

06-11 2:51a

Canadian students rank sixth in international science test

TORONTO (CP) - Canada's Grade 3 and 4 students perform better in science than those in other countries, but do about average in math, according to one of the world's biggest education studies.

The test of 175,000 students in 26 countries was conducted by the third International Mathematics and Science Study and its outcome released Tuesday.

"The results show that Canadian students are doing as well as or better than students in other countries," said David Robitaille, a University of British Columbia professor and the study's international co-ordinator.

But Canada lagged behind other countries like Korea - which came first in all categories - Japan and the Czech Republic.

Province by province results are to be released today.

In science, the 16,000 Canadian nine-year-olds who took part were ranked sixth of 17 countries who met all the study's stringent procedures.

Canada's Grade 3 students answered, on average, 53 per cent of the science questions right, compared to an international average of 50 per cent. Grade 4 students answered an average of 64 per cent of questions correctly, compared to the international average of 59 per cent.

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In mathematics, Canadian students were about average, ranking eighth.

Grade 3 students got 47 per cent of their math questions right - the same as the international average - and Grade 4 students answered 60 per cent of the questions correctly, just above the 59 per cent average for that grade.

The data will be useful in helping educators pinpoint our system's strengths and weaknesses and enable them to make improvements, said Richard Jones of Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Office.

The international study compares science and mathematics achievements of 500,000 students in more than 15,000 countries in three age categories. ■

20. The Financial Times

06/11/97; Edition: London Edition; Section: NEWS: UK; Page 11

Scots and English lag behind in maths

By Simon Targett
Education Correspondent

Big class sizes, lax homework regimes and an over reliance on calculators explain why children in England and Scotland perform so badly in mathematics, according to research to be published next month by the National Foundation for Educational Research.

The NFER, which surveyed more than 6,000 pupils in 134 schools as part of the largest ever international educational study, also suggests that teachers in England and Scotland could have lower expectations than those elsewhere.

The two countries are among the worst performers in mathematics, according to a world league table published yesterday by the Third International Mathematics and Science Study.

The reputation of English schools is salvaged only slightly by the performance of pupils in science. England is among the world's top performers, just behind South Korea, Japan, the US and the Czech Republic.

In a survey of maths tests for nine year olds, carried out in 26 countries, England fell below the international average in all categories except geometry and data representation, analysis and probability.

Of 17 countries which satisfied basic comparative criteria — such as sample participation rates, age specification and classroom sampling procedures — England came tenth, just behind Scotland.

Singapore topped the list, followed by South Korea and Japan. Also ahead of England and Scotland were Ireland, the US and Canada — which were outperformed by England during the last international study six years ago — and Hong Kong and the Czech Republic.

Ms Wendy Keys of the NFER said England's international position had "deteriorated" in recent years. She said there were "various factors" for the decline.

According to NFER research, to be published next month, class sizes are a significant problem. The average primary school class size is 28, higher than in the Netherlands, Hungary, the US, Canada and Scotland.

Fewer than half the English pupils (47 per cent) were set homework at least once a week. In Scotland, the figure was 57 per cent. That compares with Hungary (99 per cent), Singapore (98 per cent) and Japan (89 per cent).

Ms Keys said teaching methods were also a contributory factor, with 11 per cent of teachers teaching the whole class compared with more than 60 per cent in Singapore, Japan and the Netherlands.

The research points to heavy use of calculators in the classroom. In England, more than half the pupils (53 per cent) used calculators at least once a week, whereas in Singapore and Japan, just 1 per cent did so.

Ms Keys said the research showed that nine out of 10 pupils in England and Scotland thought they did well in mathematics. She said that, in view of the countries' performance, "it could suggest that teachers are accepting standards lower than they should". ■

21. San Francisco Chronicle

June 11, 1997

Skepticism Over Clinton Race Effort Campaign intended to improve relations

By Louis Freedberg, Chronicle Washington Bureau

Against a background of conflict on issues such as affirmative action and immigration, President Clinton's plans for a national dialogue on race have met with deep skepticism among many civil rights leaders.

Clinton will spell out details of the yearlong initiative, which the White House has titled "One America in the 21st Century," at commencement ceremonies at the University of California at San Diego on Saturday.

White House officials said the president will host town meetings on race, and each month over the next year will make a major policy pronouncement on a facet of the problem. Next summer, he will issue a report mapping a fuller agenda for the nation on how to improve race relations.

Heading the entire effort will be a seven-member advisory group to be named this week. Among its possible appointees are William Winter, a former Democratic governor of Mississippi, and John Hope Franklin, an eminent African American historian.

The initiative comes as a Gallup poll released yesterday indicates that although blacks report more satisfaction with their personal lives compared to years past and whites express more favorable attitudes toward blacks, a majority of both groups are pessimistic that race problems will ever be solved.

Perhaps reflecting this pessimism, African Americans on both sides of the political spectrum expressed doubts about the administration's initiative.

"I am not only skeptical, I'm weary," said the Rev. Cecil Williams of Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco, who was arrested two years ago protesting the UC regents' decision to end affirmative action. "I keep hearing that things are going to be done, but I keep waiting for something significant to happen. I keep wondering how much longer we can wait."

By contrast, Ward Connerly, the UC regent who led the campaign on behalf of Proposition 209, which eliminated the use of race and gender in college admissions and government contracts, suggested that Clinton's initiative will be pointless as long as he continues to defend affirmative action.

"I don't know how he is going to lead us into the 20th century on race if he is a strong proponent of preferences," said Connerly. "He has been on the wrong side of this legally, and he is on the wrong side of public opinion as well."

Administration officials said they chose California to begin the initiative because the state's diversity represents the new face of race relations. Also, they said, the controversies over Proposition 209 and Proposition 187, which denies benefits to illegal immigrants, provide fertile soil in which to plant the seeds for racial reconciliation.

"We think California is the first state to feel the tremendous effects of this new diversity and has reacted in a way that is anti-immigrant and anti-affirmative action," said Maria Echaveste, the White House Director of Public Liaison. "The president wants us to start the dialogue in a positive way but to do it in a place where people are thinking about these issues."

Last week, Jesse Jackson met with Clinton and detailed concerns about the state of race relations in America and what he considers inaction by the administration in dealing with them.

"The basic structure of federal civil rights law enforcement is in a shameful disrepair that renders it weak and ineffective," Jackson wrote in a three-page letter to Clinton before the meeting.

Jackson said more aggressive government action is needed in areas like affirmative action to close the "opportunity gap" along with additional spending to close the "investment gap."

"Discussion on race will not rebuild schools full of asbestos and lead paint," he said.

But White House officials said solving the problems of race will require more than money. They pointed to a recent flap over racist remarks made by a Texaco executive in discussing a federal discrimination lawsuit. In the secretly taped conversation, the executive described black employees as "black jelly beans." "Everyone has a view of what the right way to tackle these issues is," said Echaveste. The Texaco incident, she said, had nothing to do with "lack of resources or impoverished people."

But David Bositis, senior analyst at the Joint Center for Political Studies, a research

institute focusing on African Americans, said he doubted the sincerity of the administration to deal with the issue, criticizing it for its support of the welfare reform bill and of legislation making it more difficult to appeal the death penalty and weakening habeas corpus rights in criminal trials.

"Race is a problem that has occupied some of the most serious intellectual, moral and political minds for 300 years, so how are a bunch of young Clinton aides going to change the face of race relations in the United States?" Bositis asked.

Others are taking a wait-and-see approach. "In a country in which there has been an attack on race-conscious policies, there may be some purpose served in reminding Americans that this is a racially stratified society," said Troy Duster, director of the Institute for Social Change at UC Berkeley.

Said the Rev. Amos Brown of the Third Baptist Church, who is a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, "Whatever they do, I hope they move from rhetoric to results." ■

22. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

June 11, 1997

Poll shows blacks, whites view racial situation differently

By Bob Dart, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Washington — As President Clinton prepares a major speech on race relations, a national poll released Tuesday shows that black and white Americans have dramatically different perceptions of how they get along with each other.

Whites have a much rosier assessment — perceiving fewer race problems, less discrimination and prejudice, and greater opportunities for blacks. African-Americans, meanwhile, perceive exactly the opposite.

The perceptual differences foreshadow difficulties in finding a federal fix. Black respondents believe more government programs such as affirmative action are needed to remedy lingering problems, while white respondents believe race relations have improved so less government relief is warranted.

The poll's findings that "persistent gaps remain between blacks' and whites' attitudes and perceptions" indicate that Clinton faces a tough job of building a multi-racial consensus and focus for the trumpeted, but thus far vague initiative on race relations that he will unveil on Saturday.

"White Americans don't see a major problem," said Frank Newport, editor-in-chief of the Gallup Poll, which conducted the exhaustive survey. "Ergo, they don't see the need for governmental intervention." ■

23. Denver Post

June 11, 1997

Colorado teacher honored

By Janet Bingham Denver Post Education Writer

Colorado teacher Sharon Simpson stood beside President Clinton as a representative of America's fourth-grade teachers Tuesday as the president announced a strong showing by American fourth-graders on an international math-and-science test.

Simpson, who teaches at Ponderosa Elementary School in the Cherry Creek district, was in Washington as one of two Colorado elementary school teachers to receive this year's Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. The other Colorado Award winner is Michelle Barone, a teacher at Fulton Elementary in Aurora.

More than 100 elementary school teachers from throughout the nation will receive the presidential commendation Thursday — but Simpson was the only one to accompany Clinton onto the podium during Tuesday's announcement.

"I was pretty excited," Simpson said during a telephone interview.

She said Clinton shook her hand, then turned to quickly dab on some sun block before they walked together from the Oval Office to the Rose Garden where fourth-grade results were announced from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study.

Those results show that American fourth-graders are close to becoming first in the world in science — outperformed only by students in Korea. In math, U.S. fourth graders performed above the international average of 26 nations.

The study did not determine why the fourth-graders performed better than U.S.

The study did not determine why the fourth-graders performed better than U.S. eighth-graders, who were below the international average in math. Those results were announced last fall.

The study also did not determine factors that produce world-class performance. The best-performing countries weren't necessarily those with smaller class sizes. And they weren't necessarily those with students who spend with more time in class, do more homework and watch less television.

However, videotapes of some of the eighth-grade classrooms tested show that teachers in high-performing countries such as Japan do a good job of developing concepts and teaching problem-solving. Such strategies also are used by Presidential Award winners such as Simpson.

"I don't think kids should have to wait until they've mastered all the basics before they can be involved in problem-solving," Simpson said. "That's like saying basketball players shouldn't shoot a basket or play in a pickup game until they've mastered dribbling or turning on the right foot. It takes away all the fun. I try to teach the important concepts of mathematics in a fun way."

Students in her class blow bubbles to learn about the relationship between the diameter and circumference of a circle. They discover which detergent gives the largest average size bubble by blowing bubbles onto a desk, measuring the diameter of the wet circle left after the bubble pops, calculating the circumference and graphing the results.

They also do string art projects to explore the characteristics of a circle, creating patterns based on a given diameter and circumference.

Barone, who helps write science units in addition to teaching, also stresses hands-on projects. In a unit on simple machines, students experiment in groups with inclined planes, wedges, screws, levers, the wheel and axle, pulleys and gears.

In a food-chain unit, students observe the interdependence of chameleons, crickets, ryegrass and earthworms in a terrarium. In a unit on rocks and soil, they gather rocks, put them in a can and shake the can until it turns to powder, dust and dirt.

Barone also teaches third-graders to tutor first- and second-graders in addition and subtraction.

At the awards ceremony Thursday, each presidential award winner will receive a grant of \$7,500 from the National Science Foundation to be used at school. ■

24. Associated Press

06-11 2:37a

Divisions arise in both parties as House panel begins work on tax bill

By ROB WELLS

AP Tax Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - As House tax writers prepared to consider an \$85 billion tax cut package, divisions emerged in both parties over the scope and details of tax relief.

Early Tuesday evening, House Democrats debated but failed to reach agreement on a competing tax package.

Meanwhile, the chief House Republican tax writer, Rep. Bill Archer of Texas, encountered stiff resistance from fellow Republicans over his plan to abolish the corporate alternative minimum tax, according to Republican officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

These disputes served as a backdrop of today's scheduled House Ways and Means committee hearing on a plan to deliver a net \$85 billion tax cut over the next five years.

Archer's proposal, unveiled Monday, calls for \$19.2 billion in tax relief by repealing the corporate alternative minimum tax - originally designed to ensure that businesses pay at least some tax regardless of how many deductions they have - and increasing the exemption from the individual minimum tax.

Several lawmakers complained at a closed-door Republican leadership meeting that the proposal was politically ill-timed and would swiftly fall to a challenge from Democrats unless Republicans removed it themselves.

"It's on shaky legs," said one Republican lawmaker, speaking on condition of anonymity. They wanted to eliminate the proposed repeal of the corporate alternative minimum tax and use the resulting proceeds to provide additional relief from estate taxes and a larger child tax credit, sources said.

In a brief interview after he met with Speaker Newt Gingrich, Archer strongly defended the provision. "I think it's one piece in there that gives us the opportunity to increase jobs and productivity and make this country competitive in the world marketplace in the next century," he said.

He added that several Democrats had asked him to make changes in the alternative minimum tax.

Although researchers and educators said they were pleased with the results, they added they could only guess at why fourth-graders did so well and why eighth-graders didn't.

They don't know why students at both grades did better in science than in math or what specific factors the United States could change to improve achievement in both areas.

"We don't have any clear-cut answers to those questions at this moment," Mr. Forgione said. "We know that single factors such as more homework, less TV and smaller class sizes do not alone lead to higher performance."

As part of the test, students, teachers and principals were questioned about their educational habits. Students were asked how much television they watch, how much they study after school and how much educational material such as books and magazines are in the home, among other things.

Teachers were asked what teaching strategies they use, what materials they use, how much time they spend teaching math and science and how much homework was assigned.

Principals were asked about curriculum and their schools' educational climate.

The answers destroyed some popular myths about education, such as the impact of class size, homework and television watching.

For instance, Korea had the highest score in science but averaged 43 students in a class. U.S. schools, which did almost as well, had about 20 students per class. And some of the countries near the bottom had much smaller class sizes.

The presidents of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the National Science Teachers Association said they believe that a strong push to reform science and math education helped the fourth-grade scores.

The scores are evidence that changes made over the last decade in how teachers teach are working, said Gail Burrill, the mathematics council president.

Dr. Fred Johnson, the science association president, credited the strong push for national standards in both subjects.

Dr. Schmidt said the difference in performance by American fourth- and eighth-grade students in the international study comes down to focus.

Fourth-graders here and in other countries have a clear-cut focus on basic arithmetic skills. Eighth-graders in other countries continue to focus on a few higher math and science concepts, while U.S. students work on scattered arithmetic skills, Dr. Schmidt said.

"I think the message there is that our middle school curriculum is just not up to par," he said. "Our children don't begin behind other children, they fall behind."

Dr. Albert Beaton, international director of the study, said the report gets just as much attention in other countries as it does in the United States.

"We know around the world this has received a great deal of press interest, even in countries where we don't test," Dr. Beaton said.

"The thought of being really low is very unpleasant, but it is great impetus for education reform." ■

26. Associated Press

06-11 2:37a

Divisions arise in both parties as House panel begins work on tax bill

By ROB WELLS AP Tax Writer

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families a flat \$1,500 tax credit and a direct \$10,000 deduction for college expenses. Rep. Charles Rangel of New York, lead Democrat on the Ways and Means Committee, complains Archer's proposal would effectively exclude low-income students at community colleges with lower tuitions.

Capital gains. Married couples making less than \$41,200 and single persons earning less than \$24,650 in taxable income would pay only 10 percent on profits from investments. Couples or individuals earning more would see their rate fall to 20 percent from the current 28 percent for everyone. The bill would protect from tax any gain on the sale of a house up to \$500,000 for couples and \$250,000 for individuals.

Estate taxes. Archer would raise to \$1 million from \$600,000 the value of estates exempt from inheritance taxes. Many argue this would greatly benefit families trying to pass farms and small businesses to the next generation. Critics note, however, that the exempted amount increases gradually - the full exemption would not take effect until 2014.

The proposal also creates "American Dream" savings accounts, or nondeductible IRAs with tax-free earnings. Withdrawals for first-time purchase of a house would also be exempt from taxes.

Already controversial, however, are Archer's proposals to remove the tax benefit for ethanol, a corn-based fuel used in parts of the Midwest, and to tax Indian tribes' commercial activities. Should both pass the House, they could run into stiff partisan opposition in the Senate, where farming and Indian interests are better represented. ■

28. The Christian Science Monitor

June 11, 1997

US 4th-Graders Shine in Science And Math, but Fade by 8th Grade

Scott Baldauf

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

BOSTON — If the world's fourth-graders were gathered in a single classroom, American students would be near the front of the class.

This is one of the findings released June 10 from an international study on math and science students. In science, American students are outperformed by only one country, Korea, and rank about even with Japan. In math, American students are outperformed by students in seven countries (including Korea and Japan), but they perform better than students in 12 countries (including England and Greece) and are similar to those in six countries.

While the study, called the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), helps to draw international comparisons between the world's top school systems, it also raises as many questions as it answers. Why, for instance, do Americans perform above average in fourth-grade math and science but drop below average by eighth grade?

"There's no single factor that would explain this," says Pascal Forgione, commissioner of education statistics at the US Department of Education. "There's more homework, more TV, and smaller class sizes both in the high-performing countries and in the low-performing countries. At the moment, there's no silver bullet."

One cause for America's relatively poor performance in eighth grade might be found in the curriculum, Dr. Forgione adds. In fourth grade, US students are learning roughly the same material as their counterparts overseas. In eighth grade, they are learning what students in other countries covered in seventh grade.

Educators note that the US is one of the few countries in the study that does not have nationally devised standards of what students should know and be able to do. Advocates for math and science teachers also say teachers should get more than four years of undergraduate training in their subject area and more ongoing training.

"The good news is that TIMSS gives direction to look at those areas that we have always thought were most significant, such as curriculum, textbooks, teacher training, staff development," Forgione adds.

OTHER key findings include:

- * Having educational resources in the home (such as computers, 100 or more books, and a student's own study area) was strongly related to math and science achievement in every country.

- * Gender differences in math achievement were small or nonexistent in most countries.

- * Fourth-graders spend more time learning math than science in most countries. ■

29. Associated Press

06-11 1:07a

U.S. 4th-graders No. 2 in science, No. 6 in math

By SONYA ROSS

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Pointing to new, above-average science and math scores from fourth-graders, President Clinton is urging states to embrace national testing standards.

The president on Tuesday cheered a report on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, which placed American fourth-graders second in science, along with several other nations, behind South Korea among the 26 countries participating. Others statistically ranked in second place were Japan, Austria, Australia, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic.

In math, U.S. students trailed five other countries: Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and the Czech Republic.

"There are a lot of people who never believed the United States' children would score in the top two in the world on any of these international tests," Clinton said. "Now they know that they were wrong, and they underestimated our children."

The report, which was released simultaneously at a news conference by the researchers at Boston College, showed an average U.S. fourth-grade math score of 545 and a science average of 565, both above the international averages of 531 for math and 528 for science.

The report showed an average U.S. fourth-grade math score of 545 and a science average of 565, both above the international averages of 531 for math and 528 for science.

Researchers cautioned that the TIMSS rankings were inexact because of differences in scoring methods among the participating countries.

Tuesday's report did not include 15 countries that were used in a similar TIMSS study last November on tests given eighth-graders in 41 nations. Among those that did not participate this year were Switzerland, France, Russia, Sweden and Germany.

Clinton, praising the latest TIMSS study in a Rose Garden ceremony with Education Secretary Richard Riley, said the results prove that states should voluntarily embrace his plan for national standards, which calls for schools using uniform tests to measure fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math skills by 1999.

"This report proves that we don't have to settle for second-class expectations or second-class goals," Clinton said. "This ought to be a clear challenge to every single state that has not yet come forward to agree to participate in the national standards movement."

So far, Clinton's call has been heeded by only six states - Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina and West Virginia - and the Department of Defense schools. The idea of standards has met with resistance from Republican leaders in Congress, who would rather overhaul existing education programs.

Last year's report on eighth-graders ranked Americans 28th in math tests given to students in 41 countries. In science, they finished in the top half of the list, at 17.

Clinton said much work remains to raise scores of older students. "We know our curriculum will have to be more focused and more demanding. We know we'll have to hold all of our students to higher standards as they grow older," he said.

Riley said the evidence was clear that "math at eighth grade is a weak link," and adopting national standards as Clinton has suggested would go a long way toward rectifying that.

"We need to focus like a laser beam on improving math in the middle grades," Riley said.

Researchers said it was too early to explain what spurred the fourth-graders' performance. They analyzed the amount of homework assigned, time spent watching TV, teacher education and training and curricula but said no single factor in the study emerged as significant.

Among the world's seven largest industrial democracies, only the United States, Japan, Canada and Britain participated in this year's study. Italy, Germany and France did not. U.S. students outperformed their British and Canadian counterparts in science, were statistically tied with Japan and several other countries and scored below their peers in South Korea. ■

"The limitation on the exclusion would be \$400,000 except that so much of the exclusion that is not claimed on the death of the first spouse may be claimed by the estate of the other spouse." Rangel's plan said. "This permits family owned business interests with values up to \$2 million to pass with no estate tax in the case of a married couple."

The cost would be \$1.9 billion over five years, according to the plan.

Rangel's proposal would also phase in a per-child tax credit for children under age 18, starting at \$300 per child in 1998.

The credit would stay at \$300 per child until 2001, when it would grow to \$500 per child. It would be phased out for families with incomes between \$60,000 and \$75,000 a year and it would be refundable.

The cost over five years is estimated at \$71.2 billion.

Rangel's plan has no AMT provisions, but does include a one-year extension of the research and experimentation tax credit, at a cost of \$2.1 billion, and a one-year extension of the work opportunity tax credit, with certain modifications.

The orphan drug tax credit would be made permanent under Rangel's plan.

On education, Rangel's plan would spend \$37 billion over five years to implement modified versions of Clinton's tax credits.

"The alternative substitutes a 20 percent nonrefundable HOPE credit for tuition costs for the administration's deduction," the proposal says.

The plan would spend \$3.4 billion to extend permanently the tax credit for employer-provided educational assistance, with reinstatement of the exclusion for graduate education.

Also at the Democratic Caucus, Rep. Jim McDermott, D- Wash., proposed an alternative that would strike all the tax cuts in Archer's tax bill.

Instead McDermott would replace them with a refundable income tax credit of 2 percent on the first \$20,000 of payroll taxes or self-employment income for people filing a joint return. McDermott's plan would produce a maximum tax credit of \$400 for those filing a joint return and \$200 for all others.

Several Democrats said they found McDermott's proposal appealing, but one Ways and Means Democrat termed it a "non- starter" to replace Rangel's plan as the party's main alternative.

Rep. Collin Peterson, D-Minn., who heads the tax task force of The Coalition, a group of moderate-to-conservative Democrats known as the "Blue Dogs," offered another alternative, scheduled to be unveiled formally by the Blue Dogs today.

Democrats said Tuesday they needed more time to run the numbers and get the distribution analysis ready for their alternative.

Archer agreed to delay the start of the markup by one hour to 11 a.m., but said Tuesday he would delay no further.

"We have to get through this week and my budget instruction mandates that we push ahead with it," Archer said. ■

42. Education Daily

June 11, 1997

NEWS BRIEF: KENTUCKY SIGNS UP FOR NATIONAL TESTS

Kentucky yesterday became the sixth state to sign up for voluntary national tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth- grade math.

President Clinton announced Kentucky's participation during a news conference praising the performance of U.S. fourth- graders on the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS). The proposed national test will be linked to TIMSS.

Officials in Kentucky hinted two months ago they would participate in the tests, scheduled for spring 1999 (ED, April 9). —Laureen Lazarovici ■

Jackson called for a higher federal investment in education.

"First-class schools are a matter of national security. This is where strong (national) leadership comes in," he said.

Suburban schools, he said, have substantially more money and offer more opportunities than urban or mostly white rural schools. The same observation applies to health care, nutrition and other necessities, Jackson said.

Much of what the civil rights leader said, with crowds still cheering the Red Wings parade outside Opera House windows, was vintage Jackson.

On graduating seniors: "Each of them should come down the aisle with a diploma in one hand, symbolizing knowledge and learning, and a voter registration card in the other, symbolizing wisdom and power."

On education: "We simply must become hopeful about schools and cynical about jails, not cynical about schools and hopeful about jails."

He said he is working with Detroit Public Schools Supt. David Snead to get local parents and students to make the following five-point school improvement pledge: * To take their kids to high school. * To meet their children's teachers. * To exchange phone numbers and keep in touch. * To turn off their TV sets for three hours each night. * To bring home a report card every nine weeks.

"Urban schools need equal funding," Jackson added. "Property tax (for school funding) creates a tremendous gap between haves and have-nots." ■

67. Associated Press

06-11 2:32a

Putting scores on transcripts would attempt to hold students accountable

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) - Proposals under consideration by a task force would simplify the scoring classifications for state assessment tests and attempt to hold students more accountable for their own performance on the tests.

Scores from the statewide tests would be included on high school transcripts, to give students more incentive to perform well on the tests. The proposal comes in response to concerns that the test puts too much emphasis on school and teacher accountability. Schools and teachers can be rewarded or punished, based on test results, but not individual students.

The state Department of Education also is proposing reducing the number of scoring classifications from six to four - reward, improvement, decline and crisis.

The proposals have been offered to a task force appointed by the General Assembly to study possible changes in KERA. The task force also is considering a competing set of proposals by the legislature's Office of Education Accountability, which would involve more dramatic changes.

Under the Department of Education's proposal to simplify the testing system, each school would be given a "growth chart" that would show the school's current score and a goal to reach by 2012; a straight line would be drawn between those two points. Schools whose scores are above that line would qualify for rewards.

Currently the goals are recalculated every two years, based on the latest test results. The proposal would establish a single, long-term goal.

Ed Reidy, the deputy education commissioner who oversees testing, said there has been a growing concern over the complexity of the school-accountability system. He said the proposal should make the testing goals for schools more predictable.

The testing system has been among the more controversial parts of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990.

The state proposal also calls for reports about the activities of the school's management council, parental involvement and details of spending for tutoring. The plan also calls for taking part in a national test for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math that is backed by President Clinton. It would not start until 1999.

The department's proposals were discussed briefly before the state Board of Education on Tuesday but have not been discussed by the task force.

The Office of Education Accountability's competing proposal has the backing of the Kentucky School Boards Association, the Kentucky Association of School Administrators and the Family Foundation of Kentucky.

Under that plan, the current test, known as the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System, would be replaced by a national test that would include multiple-choice and essay questions. Using such an exam, purchased from a testing company, would make it possible to compare Kentucky students' performance with national results.

The proposal by the Office of Education Accountability would continue to include student portfolios, but would add a student project at three grade levels and the results of other tests for high school students. All of these would be part of a school's accountability

score.

Sen. David Karem, chairman of the task force examining the testing situation, said he thinks there is some confusion over how drastic the changes should be. He said an earlier survey of the task force showed that most wanted to "fine tune" KIRIS and not abandon it.

Karem, D-Louisville, characterized the accountability office's plan as "an extensive rewrite of the whole system." He had not read the details of the Education Department's proposal. Another task force meeting is scheduled for June 20.

Martin Cothran, a task force member who works for the Family Foundation, criticized the department's plans for not advocating enough changes. Cothran has criticized KIRIS as unreliable. He also said he doesn't think Kentuckians want to develop their own test and would prefer to use one developed by a testing company.

A third testing proposal has been made by the Kentucky Education Association. It is closer to the Education Department's plan, but there are these differences: Schools would be given until 2020, or eight more years than the current state plan, to reach their testing goals; financial rewards would go for teacher training or educational needs instead of to individual teachers; and some sanctions, such as placing the entire staff of a school on probation, would be eliminated.■

68. Associated Press

06-11 3:48a

Report: Big state universities give VIP applicants special consideration

DALLAS (AP) - Some applicants trying to get into the state's biggest universities are getting second looks from the institutions if they have VIP connections, even if they fall short of academic requirements. The Dallas Morning News reported today.

Officials at Texas A&M University, the University of Texas and Texas Tech University said they often give applicants a second look if a "very important person" requests it.

In one case, Texas A&M gave preference in 1996 to two students who did not meet admissions standards but had ties to state House Speaker Pete Laney and former A&M regent Mary Nan West, the newspaper reported, citing documents and interviews with officials.

Laney, D-Hale Center, wrote a January 1996 letter to A&M in support of a "neighbor and a close friend" for the engineering school. The student had been on a waiting list because he did not meet all qualifications for regular admission, but was accepted after Laney's intercession.

Laney spokeswoman Janet Warren said the student, who was not identified, was a "young man the speaker has known all of his life" and the son of a family friend.

Texas A&M President Ray Bowen said Tuesday that the applicant "probably would have gotten in anyway."

"Besides, we like Mr. Laney," Bowen said. "He's not the sort of person who would make a frivolous recommendation, and you want a kid at the university who has the respect (of the House speaker)."

Bowen also intervened in 1996, at Ms. West's request, for a student from Mexico who did not meet admission standards.

"I felt like we needed more students from Mexico, and it was a very personal decision," he said. Ms. West could not be reached for comment, the newspaper reported.

Federal privacy law prevents schools from releasing student identities or other information about them.

A bill died in committee during the recent Legislature that would have barred public universities from considering some recommendations from public officials or donors. It also would have prohibited state colleges and universities from considering an applicant's ties to alumni.

Rep. Glen Maxey, D-Austin, who sponsored the bill, said he would reintroduce it next session.

"We should all be able to write letters of recommendation if we know the person and can vouch for their aptitude, their study habits," Maxey said. "But if you tell people they can't get in because of their race or gender ... then how can we even begin to say you can get in because of who you know?"

A decision last year by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals abolished race-based admissions preferences at the UT law school. State Attorney General Dan Morales later interpreted the ruling to apply to admissions, financial aid, scholarships and fellowships targeting specific minority groups at all universities.

Bowen said he has limited preferential admissions since arriving at A&M three years ago.

In 1994, A&M reversed denials for 67 applicants at the request of regents, legislators and other state officials. The Chronicle of Higher Education reported. Bowen told The Morning

95. The Associated Press Political Service

06/10/97

Gov. Paul Patton has asked to have Kentucky ...

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) — Gov. Paul Patton has asked to have Kentucky included in national tests of fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math when the voluntary tests are given in 1999. Patton's staff said Tuesday.

Patton made the request to **Education Secretary Richard Riley** in a letter May 7. It said national tests would "strengthen our assessment of individual students and our ability to report to parents how their child performs relative to national standards."

Kentucky for years has taken part in the National Assessment of Education Progress, which conducts periodic assessments in reading, math, science, writing, history and geography in fourth, eighth and 12th grades.

However, it is not given every year or in every grade and subject. The 1996 NAEP test was given in eighth-grade science.

Kentucky is one of 43 states in the NAEP program, along with the District of Columbia, Guam and Department of Defense schools.

In his State of the Union address on Feb. 4, President Clinton proposed a voluntary, annual reading test in English for fourth- graders and a math test eighth-graders. ■

96. The Columbus Dispatch

06/10/97; Edition: Home Final; Section: NEWS LOCAL & NATIONAL; Page 03F

SUPERINTENDENT NAMED TO SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

By Catherine Candisky Dispatch Statehouse Reporter

Louis A. Mazzoli, a longtime Columbus schools administrator, says he hopes to have more contact with students in his new post as superintendent of the Ohio State School for the Blind.

Mazzoli was appointed yesterday by the State Board of Education to fill the position July 1. He replaces Dennis Holmes who retired nearly a year ago after 20 years as superintendent.

"I'll be working a lot closer to the youngsters. It will be good to be back in the school," said Mazzoli, executive director of Special Education and Special Community Projects for Columbus Public Schools.

The blind school at 5220 N. High St. was founded in 1837 and has about 130 visually impaired students in grades kindergarten through 12. More than half the students stay only long enough to learn Braille and other basic skills before returning to their home school, while some students with developmental or multiple disabilities stay longer.

"I was attracted to the job because I want to bring the school in the 21st century, focusing on technology, and thought that was something I could sink my teeth into," Mazzoli said.

He also hopes to get school alumni involved in mentoring and other student programs to provide students with role models and to develop the school into more of a resource center for other Ohio public schools.

Mazzoli will be paid \$77,251 a year and live with his wife in a three-bedroom apartment on the school grounds. They have three grown children.

In the Columbus district, Mazzoli had headed the department of Community Resources and Supportive School Services and the departments of Pupil Services and Special Education. He also was principal of Clearbrook Special School for 100 students with emotional or behavioral disorders.

Also, Toledo-area Republican Sue Westendorf was sworn by Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer of the Ohio Supreme court to a vacancy on the 19-member board.

Westendorf is executive director of the Napoleon/Henry County Chamber of Commerce and is active in school and community groups, including the Northwest Ohio Private Industry Council, the Region 2 School to Work Alliance and the Henry County Business and Education Advisory Council.

The board includes 11 elected from districts and eight at-large members appointed by the governor. Of the latter, four must reside in rural areas.

In other action, the board honored the 11 Ohio schools named this year as **Blue Ribbon Schools** by the U.S. Department of Education under a program honoring public and private elementary schools. Among the schools was St. Peter's Elementary School in Mansfield.

The board also unanimously voted to revoke the teaching license of former Columbus music teacher Otis Z. Jones for his criminal conviction of drug abuse in 1995 and

109. The Wall Street Journal

06/11/97

President Clinton's Mandate for Fuzzy Math

By Lynne V. Cheney

Marianne Jennings, an Arizona State business professor, has brought enlightenment to multitudes. With her commentaries on her daughter Sarah's eighth-grade math book ("MTV Math," she calls it, for its colorful pictures, disconnected ideas and generally casual attitude), she has helped parents across the country realize they are not the only ones dismayed by current mathematics education. Kids are writing about "What We Can Do to Save the Earth," and inventing their own strategies for multiplying. They're learning that getting the right answer to a math problem can be much less important than having a good rationale for a wrong one.

Sometimes called "whole math" or "fuzzy math," this latest project of the nation's colleges of education has some formidable opponents. In California, where the school system embraced whole math in 1992, parents and dissident teachers have set up a World Wide Web site called Mathematically Correct to point out the follies of whole-math instruction. The credentials of the organizers are impressive — a molecular biologist, a geophysicist, a statistician. And their left-of-center politics give them an advantage in battling an education establishment that typically dismisses all critics as far-right reactionaries. "Usually, the first words out of my mouth are 'I'm a liberal Democrat,'" says Mike McKeown, a faculty member at the Salk Institute and a member of Mathematically Correct. As a result of their efforts, several members have been appointed to panels that will influence future math curricula in California.

But such victories will be moot if President Clinton gets his way. The president wants a national test for eighth-grade mathematics. Judging from the committee the administration recently picked to oversee the exam, fuzzy thinkers will soon rule the land. The chairman is John A. Dossey, one of the brains behind ("conceptualizers" of) the Addison-Wesley textbook Sarah Jennings uses. Mr. Dossey and the committee's vice chairman, Gail Burrill, are both past presidents of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the group largely responsible for bringing whole math to the schools.

In 1989, Mr. Dossey served on an NCTM commission that issued standards for mathematics that denounced the schools' "longstanding preoccupation with computation and other traditional skills." It was no longer crucial, the commission suggested, for students to be able to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Giving such "computational algorithms" over to calculators, the standards declare, would free students to develop a conceptual understanding of mathematics and to become "active participants in creating knowledge."

The NCTM commission envisioned classrooms in which teachers operate on the sidelines. Instead of instructing, they encourage "cooperative learning." Such classrooms have become a reality in many U.S. schools. MathLand, a curriculum widely used in California, advises teachers not to "indicate in any way the rightness or wrongness of different answers," but to let students "convince" one another and reach a conclusion on their own.

Whole-math advocates say their methods will bring American math achievement up to world-class levels. But in fact kids in Japan, usually among the top performers on international assessments, do plenty of memorization and drill. Only after they have mastered basic skills are they allowed to use calculators. Moreover, during problem-solving discussions in Japanese classrooms, the teacher leads, making sure that students arrive at the solutions in the optimal way.

Whole-math advocates also argue their methods will eliminate the advantage that white males have in mathematics. In the NCTM's view, "the social injustices of past schooling practices" are responsible for minorities and women being underrepresented in advanced math study, and the reinvented math curriculum will help them succeed.

The NCTM claims that removing the "computational gate" to high school math will provide "equal access and opportunity." In other words, minorities and women would benefit if no one were required to master basic skills before moving on to high school. Other whole-math proselytizers speak of minorities' and women's special need for cooperative rather than competitive learning (thus the emphasis on working in groups) and for connecting what they study to social concerns (thus the emphasis on saving the planet).

These "theories" are nothing more than stereotypes, backed — like much of whole math — by research so anecdotal it barely deserves the name. But that has not kept whole-math ideas from being influential, and they will become more powerful still if they are embedded in a national test. Odds are, this will happen. Like Mr. Dossey and Ms. Burrill, the overwhelming majority of the math committee members are whole-math advocates.

What would a national exam based on whole math look like? Here's a hint: A few years ago Mr. Dossey proposed a change to the National Assessment of Educational Progress

math test, the exam the math committee is using as its starting point. He wanted a scoring system under which students would get only half credit for right answers if they didn't make clear how they arrived at them. Wrong answers would get full credit if accompanied by "appropriate strategies."

Those who are worried about a future in which everyone from doctors to actuaries to aircraft designers holds mathematical accuracy in low regard will be able to express their concerns at two public hearings the math committee is holding: one June 17 in Denver and another Aug. 5 in San Francisco. Governors are also targets for protest. They can decide whether their states will adopt the national math exam, and they should hear from citizens who do not want to participate in the further ruination of America's schools.

—
Mrs. Cheney is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. ■

110. Richmond Times-Dispatch

June 11, 1997

Identifying More 'Intelligences' to Make Us All Smarter

By Robert Holland

Maybe it's best to treat the latest pronouncements from Thoughtworld gurus as fodder for stand-up comedy. Humor is good for stress management, you know. Keeps a soul from overtaxing the emotional intelligence.

Taken in that spirit, Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner, father of the "multiple intelligences," ought to replace Leno and Letterman. His stuff is funnier than the sexual innuendo regularly dished out on the late-night gigs.

Did you know that Gardner has revisited the seven human "intelligences" he conjured a decade ago? Now he says there are eight and one-half.

The original seven were (1) linguistic and (2) logical/mathematical — the qualities normally associated with general intelligence ("g"), or IQ, and (3) spatial (being able to move and maneuver), (4) musical, (5) bodily kinesthetic (yes, athletic; smart feet — and don't you know coaches recruiting 350-pound Bubbas are happy to have this one when presenting a 700 combined SAT to Admissions?), (6) intrapersonal (contemplating one's navel), and (7) interpersonal (contemplating someone else's navel — well, okay, his or her id).

No one doubts the self-obvious proposition that people have differing talents. But educators have taken to heart Gardner's insistence that all seven of his intelligences merit "equal priority," because that encourages the egalitarian delusion that we all are utterly brilliant in equally important ways. It also provides an escape route from accountability. If Johnny can't read and write, not to worry: His intelligence may lie in self-esteem or understanding the feelings of others — or grace on the monkey bars. Some schools have gone so far as to divide the day into seven parts cultivating each intelligence equally.

NOW, ACCORDING to Education Update, a newsletter of the Alexandria-based Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Gardner has tabbed No. 8 the "naturalist intelligence."

Explained Gardner: "That's an intelligence (that) allows human beings to recognize and discriminate among flora and fauna, and other things in the world like clouds and rocks. It's built into our nervous system. We all can do it."

So tree-hugging is an intelligence. How exciting. Gore's no longer a bore; he's a genius. And how neatly this fits with the preachy, pro-environmentalism approach to environmental education now taken in many schools.

If being able to discriminate among objects in the heavens and on terra firma is an intelligence, perhaps there is one for detecting pie in the sky and plain old bull stuff on the ground. Yes, a skepticism intelligence would be useful in examining the b.s. in, say, a theory about multiple intelligences that has not been confirmed through controlled experiments — a theory that is more speculation than science.

What of the one-half? (Something for halfwits, perhaps?) That would be an "existential intelligence," which Gardner defines as "the human proclivity to ask very fundamental questions: Who are we? Why are we here? Why do we die? Every five-year-old asks these questions in every society." (Addendum: "What is common sense? Why do intellectuals so often lack it?")

Why not a whole existential intelligence? Because Gardner says he doesn't yet have "convincing brain evidence" that "parts of the nervous system are dedicated to existential issues." He'll get back to us on that.

ANY MYSTERY as to why the ASCD reported Gardner's musings so uncritically soon

Panel Faces Challenges In Drafting Blueprint For 1st National Tests

By Debra Viadero
Washington

Like infantry soldiers moving through a minefield, a national panel has cautiously begun unearthing the challenges that lie before President Clinton's proposal for voluntary new national student tests in reading and math.

The group, which met here for the first time on May 23, was pulled together by the Council of Chief State School Officers and

ciates to launch the process of designing the new assessments.

The difference in the two test formats means, for example, that the new tests might not cover as much subject-matter content in one year as NAEP tests do now. One job of the panel is to decide how to parcel out the topic coverage in each subject.

Balancing Acts

The time limits also raise questions about the mix of quick-answer, multiple-choice questions and time-consuming, open-ended questions. The Education Department has proposed making 80 percent of the test multiple-choice and 20 percent open-ended—including one extended-response item.

Gary W. Phillips, the executive director of the voluntary national testing program for the department, said teachers will receive a second booklet of extended-response items to use as they see fit.

The panelists will also have to decide how much weight to give individual test items when calculating students' scores. "Just think how you would feel if there were 10 items and most were multiple-choice and one was longer. Why waste a lot of time and effort if it counts the same?" Barbara Kapinus, the director of the curriculum and instructional-improvement program for the CCSO, told the group.

Gordon M.
Ambach



MPR Associates, a California-based consulting firm. Its task is to draw up a blueprint for the assessments, which are expected to cost around \$22 million over the next two years.

The job is a big one because the United States has never before had a national assessment that yielded results for individual students. Some in Congress, in fact, have questioned the Department of Education's authority to launch such a program. (See *Education Week*, May 21, 1997.)

The exams, designed for 4th graders in reading and for 8th graders in mathematics, are to be given for the first time in 1999.

The Education Department, which is overseeing development of the tests, wants to model them on the subject-area tests of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a congressionally mandated testing program that has been in place since 1969. The results of the new math tests will also be statistically linked to the



Gary W.
Phillips

Other issues before the panel include whether students should be allowed to use calculators on the

1. Miami Herald

June 10, 1997

FL

Chiles: Tougher tests demand better teaching

By JACK WHEAT Herald Staff Writer

Florida's new education standards — some of the nation's toughest — are at risk unless the state hustles to make sure its schools prepare students to pass the exams, Gov. Lawton Chiles said Monday.

The Sunshine State Standards, due to take effect next year, are a "gun we've put to our heads," Chiles said at the Governor's Commission on Education meeting at Florida International University in West Dade.

If large numbers of parents decide the standards are too difficult for their children, political reaction will force retreat, Chiles said.

"It's a lot easier to pass students than to hold ourselves accountable for passing those standards," the governor said. "We're going to be in a race to see if we can do some of these things fast enough for the Sunshine Standards to stay. It makes our task that much more urgent."

The Governor's Commission was formed in September to conduct the first comprehensive statewide review of education in a generation. On Monday, it metamorphosed.

Heavy-hitters from the state Capitol sailed in, overshadowing — at least for the time being — the corporate leaders who had been in the prominent roles.

Chiles stepped in as co-chairman, replacing Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay and eliminating concern that the commission would be seen as a MacKay-for-Governor political vehicle.

Key Republican legislators, including Rep. Dan Webster of Orlando, speaker of the House, and Sen. Toni Jennings of Orlando, president of the Senate, joined as the group swelled from 52 to 69.

The Republican-led Legislature and the Democratic governor had battled over education issues this spring.

"We've changed the dynamics of this study commission," Chiles said Monday. "I think it will be positive."

The legislative leadership's presence means the proposals will have champions in the next session.

The centerpiece of the Sunshine State Standards will be the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. Focusing on math and reading for students in grades four, five, eight, nine and 10, it should reveal any gaps between their performance and where they should be.

A Florida writing exam administered in fourth, eighth and 10th grades since 1992 will continue.

Warnings about the new standards jolted commission members out of the political rhetoric that characterized most of the session.

Leaders of the Republican majority defended their move to alter the reporting of school crowding by counting each portable classroom as three-quarters of a permanent classroom and said they're far from convinced a tax increase is needed for school construction.

But consultant Michael Kirst, a Stanford University professor, warned that how classroom space is counted is not the key issue confronting Florida schools.

If the new Sunshine State Standards don't get the attention they need — with massive training for teachers, principals and other administrators — the reform will fall flat, Kirst said.

Teachers are aware of the new standards, he said. But they have not been trained in teaching methods that encourage development of the general knowledge, reasoning skills and writing required to do well on the tests.

Nationwide, when new standards have been adopted, Kirst said, training for administrators has focused on management, not the core issues of teacher training, curriculum and assessment.

The issue of "merit pay" for teachers is an example of how one reform can cancel out another, Kirst said.

Merit pay sounds great, but systems similar to those being proposed in Florida have undermined statewide achievement tests, Kirst said.

School districts commonly are allowed to set their own definition of meritorious teaching, Kirst said. That means some stress teaching that helps students with the statewide tests while others don't.

Yet it's difficult to devise a statewide system that fairly determines merit, Kirst said. Since the point of most school reform is to raise substandard achievement, a merit system must give credit for the improvement made by students coming from behind, he said.

Finding an equation to do that without penalizing schools where scores are already high is elusive.

Chiles appointed the commission to look at education issues from birth to graduate school and continuing education for adults.

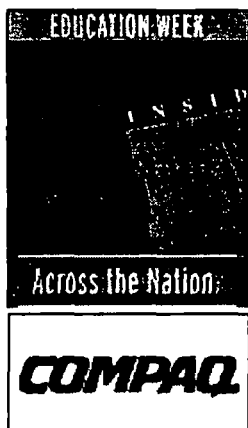
One committee has found the state needs to beef up its work with the infant-to-5 age group.

Even Head Start does not start early enough to bring kids from disadvantaged homes up to par with those from more affluent homes, said David Lawrence, chairman of the Commission's Readiness Committee and publisher of The Herald.

The state spends tens of millions of dollars a year on early childhood intervention programs, with little coordination to make sure health and welfare efforts also prepare children for school, Lawrence said ■

JUNE 4, 1997

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Increase in Test Scores Leaves Chicago Officials Jubilant

By Caroline Hendrie

Test scores are up in Chicago, and Principal John P. Gelsomino of Thomas Kelly High School thinks he knows why.

As the head of one of 109 schools put on probation by district leaders last fall, Mr. Gelsomino and his staff had a strong incentive to launch an all-out offensive against the school's dismal scores. So they attacked the problem head-on: scrutinizing prior scores, crafting tutoring programs for individual students, and creating tangible incentives to induce students to take the tests seriously.

The results are in, and educators at Kelly High are smiling. In math, the combined proportion of 9th and 11th graders who scored at or above national norms on the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency climbed from 15.3 percent in 1996 to 28.3 percent this year. Improvement in English was less dramatic, but 17.3 percent--compared with 13.1 percent last year--met or exceeded the national norms.

"I was elated," Mr. Gelsomino said last week. "The kids now know that all of the tests are linked and they're all important for their future."

In many school districts, scores like those would scarcely warrant celebration. But in Chicago, they are being trumpeted by officials from Mayor Richard M. Daley on down as evidence that the nation's third-largest school system is finally turning the corner.

In the past month, officials have released preliminary results showing that this year's average scores are up throughout the district. The gains came both on the TAP, administered in the 9th and 11th grades, and the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, taken by Chicago youngsters in grades 3 through 8.

Officials Take Credit

The emergency management team Mr. Daley appointed in 1995 attributed the gains to a range of initiatives: mandatory summer school for low-scoring students, new curriculum standards, the elimination of social promotion, the creation of 9th grade orientation academies, and the probationary process for poorly performing schools.

Probation carries the threat of staff firings but it also provides schools extra help, including outside training and guidance.

"We've become serious about educating our students," said Paul G. Vallas, the chief executive officer of the 424,000-student system.

Critics, meanwhile, say the increases stem from school-based efforts that have been under way since the passage of a decentralization law in 1988.

Read our story, "Chicago Board To Consider Plan To Overhaul High Schools," March 5, 1997.

"In Chicago, It's Full Speed Ahead As a New Reform Team Starts Year Two," Aug. 7, 1996.

"Chicago Plan Seeks To Improve Achievement, Bolster Accountability," Feb. 21, 1996.

See the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in our Glossary.

"Can the Chicago Reforms Work?" May 22, 1996, commentary by a Chicago teacher and a professor of education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Read, "Chicago Hope," Oct. 23, 1996, about a former investigative reporter who now works within the Chicago school system.



And some suggest that the administration's emphasis on scores is misplaced.

"There's nothing wrong with test scores going up; it's good," said Sheila R. Castillo, the director of the Chicago Association of Local School Councils, the governance boards set up under the decentralization law. "But it's a snapshot, and it doesn't say that kids are getting better educated."

At the elementary level, the district's combined reading scores for grades 3 through 8 inched upward to 30.1 percent at or above national norms, compared with 29.1 percent last year and 23.5 percent in 1990.

In math, the average rose to 35.6 percent, up from 31 percent in 1996 and 27.1 percent at the start of the decade.

In the high schools, composite 9th and 11th grade reading scores increased to 24.6 percent at or above national norms, rebounding from their historically poor showing of 20.5 percent in 1996. But it was still below the 30.6 percent posted seven years ago.

Students fared better in math, with 30.4 percent at or above the norm, up sharply from 21.7 percent last year. The results are considered preliminary because they do not include several thousand makeup tests.

Schools on Probation Gain

Administration officials saw the scores as validation of their decision to place a fifth of the system's 557 schools on probation this fall. ("109 Chicago Schools Put on Academic Probation," Oct. 9, 1996.) District leaders will use the scores to help select schools to be the first targets for the next stage of intervention, the whole-school shake-up known as reconstitution.

Mr. Vallas said last week that he plans to identify an estimated half-dozen schools this month for reconstitution, a process yet to be used in Chicago that involves replacing all or nearly all of a school's staff. He said he also expects to free an undetermined number of schools from probation.

Of the 71 elementary schools on probation, all but two improved in math, and 54 boosted their reading scores. Among high schools, 37 of the 38 on probation improved their math scores, while 30 posted higher reading scores.

At the pre-K-6 Samuel F.B. Morse School, officials credited the support available because of probation with helping raise reading and math scores substantially. Sylvester A. Martin, an assistant principal, said tutoring classes before and after school were crucial factors in improving the scores.

At another school on probation, John Farren Elementary, Principal William V. Auksi said multiple factors held down this year's gains to less than 1 percentage point in both reading and math. Just 7.9 percent of students were at or above national norms in reading, and only 14 percent in math. The school draws students exclusively from the troubled Robert

Taylor public-housing complex.

But Mr. Auksi said parents and students as well as staff members have begun attaching greater importance to standardized tests, largely because of the district's new policy of refusing to promote students who score poorly.

"For the first time in my career here, and I have 33 years in the system, they're really pushing student achievement," he said.

On the Web

See the [Chicago Public Schools Web page](#), which includes [updates](#) and the latest news from the [Chicago Educator](#), the schools' newsletter.

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