

News...News...



News...News...

Council of the Great City Schools

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. ♦ Suite 702 ♦ Washington, D.C. ♦ 20004

FOR RELEASE

July 25, 1997 (Embargoed)

CONTACT: Henry Duvall

(202) 393-2427

Major Urban School Systems Step Up to Clinton's Voluntary National Tests

WASHINGTON, July 25—Many of the nation's largest urban public school systems indicated their intent today to participate in President Clinton's voluntary national tests for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, setting the pace to raise standards and performance in schools everywhere.

President Clinton—before superintendents, school board members and teacher organization heads from 15 major urban school districts across the country—announced the likely participation of the districts in his testing initiative unveiled during his State of the Union address in February.

The willingness of these districts to participate in the Spring 1999 national testing signaled an important commitment by the nation's major urban public schools to the highest academic standards and to assessing their progress on them. "Urban public schools are driving their own improvement and reform at a pace that should encourage the American public," said Michael Casserly, Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools, a coalition of the nation's largest urban school systems, which assisted in organizing today's event for participating districts.

"Let our presence here today dispel any notion that urban educators are committed to anything but high performance and quality schooling for children in our inner cities," stressed Casserly.

City school systems everywhere are making major efforts to raise standards and improve performance. This year many urban school districts saw test scores increase; for example, in New York City, Houston, Chicago, and San Francisco—all the result of higher standards and greater focus on student achievement. In addition, the public is beginning to show greater confidence in these school systems by passing a large number of construction bonds and increased operating levies (e.g., Cleveland, Minneapolis, Oakland, Las Vegas, Los Angeles).

(more)

Many Great City Schools across the nation are becoming centers of innovation, collaboration and effort—despite the many challenges they face and the distance they still need to travel. Atlanta's *Teaching All Children to Read* program is a unique partnership of the Atlanta Public Schools and Georgia State University to boost reading achievement. Houston's *MOVE IT MATH* program is an innovative effort in grades K-6 to introduce algebra in the early grades. Chicago has moved aggressively on a number of fronts, including a collaboration—*Teacher for Chicago*—of nine colleges and universities in the metropolitan area to recruit, train and retain high quality teachers.

The New York City Schools are pursuing a relentless campaign to reduce school size and boost academic standards of students. The Philadelphia School District is pursuing one of the most ambitious systemic reform programs in the nation, *Children Achieving*. And El Paso's *Focus on First Graders* program works to build academic success for early grade students coming from low-income families.

The urban school districts assembled here today with the President collectively enroll some half-million 4th and 8th grade students, 20% of whom are limited English proficient and 66% free and reduced price lunch eligible—rates over twice the national averages.

"Attaining the standards measured by the yet-to-be developed tests, however, will require a substantial commitment by the American public to urban children," added Casserly. "Our urban children deserve the same opportunities for a bright future as any other child, no matter where they live in this nation."

"America needs to invest in urban public education—the federal government, states, parents, and business," noted Casserly.

Following the announcement with President Clinton, the urban school leaders met with senior Administration officials to review draft features of the tests and to discuss issues about test implementation and use.

Participating in today's event were school leaders from New York City, El Paso, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Antonio, Philadelphia, Fresno, Omaha, Atlanta, Cincinnati, Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale), Houston, Long Beach, Seattle and Detroit.

The Council of the Great City Schools is a coalition of some 50 of the nation's largest urban public school systems working to improve the quality of public education in the nation's major cities.

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URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEMS ACROSS AMERICA JOIN MOVEMENT FOR NATIONAL STANDARDS AND TESTS IN THE BASIC SKILLS

In a speech to the National Association of Elementary School Principals, President Clinton announced today that 15 urban school districts -- including the three largest in the country -- will participate in voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math that reflect high national standards.

GROWING NATIONWIDE SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL STANDARDS AND TESTS:

Fifteen urban school systems, including the three largest (New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago) and six of the seven largest, have pledged to participate in the President's voluntary national testing initiative. Located in eleven states, together they represent approximately 7% of the nation's 4th and 8th graders. The commitment of these large school systems -- through partnerships of local school boards, superintendents and teachers unions -- demonstrates that support for the President's call for national standards and tests is truly nationwide. Students from Ft. Lauderdale to Seattle, from New York to Los Angeles, from San Antonio to Chicago, will be prepared to meet the same basic skills in reading and math. For the first time, parents, teachers and the public in these communities will know how well students perform compared to national standards in reading and math, international benchmarks in math, and to students in other cities and states throughout the nation.

HIGH STANDARDS FOR ALL STUDENTS: With this announcement, urban educators and communities send a clear signal that students in inner city schools can and should be held to the same challenging standards that are being set for all students throughout the nation. These communities recognize that setting high standards in the basic skills for all students is a prerequisite for improved teaching and learning. Research and experience shows that students can meet high standards, and that low expectations lead to low achievement. While this step alone will not improve teaching and learning for students in urban schools, it will guide and catalyze efforts to strengthen curriculum, provide training to teachers, increase parental and community involvement, and support the necessary investments at the local, state, and national levels to improve our schools.

A CHALLENGE TO EDUCATORS: USE TESTS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND

ACCOUNTABILITY: President Clinton challenged local educators to use the test information to improve teaching and learning and to strengthen accountability. The U.S. Department of Education will make available information that describes the knowledge and skills students must master in order to meet the national standards. Each year, once the tests are given, the test items will be released to the public to further clarify what students must know and be able to do to meet the standards. Educators should use this information to upgrade the curriculum, strengthen teacher preparation and professional development, and promote parental and community involvement in learning. They also should use the results of the tests to provide needed help to low performing students. Finally, they should incorporate the test results into school and school district report cards, that will hold administrators and teachers accountable for poor aggregate performance.

A CHALLENGE TO THE NATION: PROVIDE STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS WITH THE HELP THEY NEED: President Clinton challenged the nation to support students in urban areas and throughout the nation so they can reach high standards in the basics, and continue to learn for a lifetime. He called on the Congress to enact his America Reads initiative to promote early literacy and prepare students to reach national standards in reading, and to pass his new initiative to recruit and prepare teachers for urban and poor rural areas. Further, President Clinton pledged to continue to explore additional steps that can be taken to help prepare students in our cities for the 21st century.

NATIONAL TESTS BASED ON WIDELY ACCEPTED NATIONAL STANDARDS: The national tests in the basic skills areas of 4th grade reading and 8th grade math will be modeled on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP tests are based on widely accepted standards developed by parents, teachers, reading and mathematics specialists, curriculum specialists and researchers. The NAEP standards reflect a national consensus of what students should know and be able to do when they reach these critical stages of learning. In addition, the 8th grade math tests will also be linked to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), so that student scores can be compared to international benchmarks as well as national standards.

Cities Announcing Participation in President Clinton's National Standards and Testing Initiative

July 25, 1997





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Date: _____

To:

Name: Bill Kincaid

Organization: White House

Fax: 456-7028

From:

Name: Sharon Lewis

Notes:

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BEEN INCLUDED

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Characteristics of Selected Great City Schools (1996-97)

District	Superintendent	Total Enrollment	4th Grade Enrollment	8th Grade Enrollment	% Free and Reduced Lunch Eligible*	% Limited English Proficiency Eligible*
Atlanta	Benjamin Canada	57,545	4,829	4,002	79.7%	1.7%
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Cincinnati	J. Michael Brandt	48,482	3,762	3,929	63.0%	0.4%
Detroit	David Sneed	178,132	15,095	12,357	68.0%	3.3%
El Paso	Stan Paz	64,605	4,640	4,533	67.0%	32.0%
Fresno	Carlos Garcia	77,777	6,425	5,598	71.1%	33.4%
Houston	Rod Paige	209,375	16,959	13,609	65.0%	28.2%
Long Beach	Carl Cohn	83,408	6,646	5,714	64.0%	36.6%
Los Angeles	Ruben Zacharias	667,624	52,825	43,039	72.3%	46.0%
New York City	Rudolph Crew	1,075,752	74,129	67,729	61.8%	15.5%
Omaha	John Mackiel	44,761	3,245	3,308	52.0%	3.5%
Philadelphia	David Hombeck	217,383	16,031	14,066	78.6%	4.4%
San Antonio	Diana Lam	60,679	4,848	4,259	92.0%	16.0%
Seattle	John Stanford	47,075	3,807	3,223	42.7%	20.4%
Totals		3,454,678	261,476	228,881	66.7%	17.6%

Analysis

The selected districts serve 2,325,664 students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch, as well as 722,384 students who are eligible for LEP services.

CGCS Avg. LEP for Targeted Districts: 17.6%

National LEP Avg. : 7.3%¹

CGCS Avg. F&R Lunch for Targeted Districts: 66.7%

National Child Poverty Rate : 20.0%²

End Notes :

*The LEP and Free/Reduced Lunch (F&R) Data are all based on percentage of total enrollment.

Bold data are from the 1995-96 school year.

¹ National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1996

² Children's Defense Fund, 1997

Find

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Final

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July 24, 1997
URBAN SCHOOLS AND THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS
Internal Qs & As

What is the President announcing?

Fifteen urban school districts will participate in the voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. These 15 urban school systems -- including the 3 largest and 7 of the 10 largest in the country -- are located in 11 states and represent approximately 7% percent of the nation's 4th and 8th graders.

Why these particular cities?

We contacted a group of urban school districts known as leaders in the effort to raise standards. This is just a first step. There are other school districts throughout the country that we anticipate will decide to participate in the future.

How can a single district sign up?

Both entire states and individual school districts will be able to contract with test publishers to administer the national tests. The publishers will provide both state and district level results. Thus, it will be possible for a district to give the test and compare the performance of its students with other districts, states, or (in the case of math) other nations. We are actively encouraging every district in every state to test their students in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math.

Why are these sign-ups taking place now?

Many of these districts have been engaged in long-term reform efforts and are anxious to demonstrate that inner-city students can reach the same challenging standards being set for students throughout the nation. Simply put, these urban districts have decided that now is the right time to make a commitment to high standards, accountability, and higher achievement in the basics. The President wants to recognize their commitment and work with these districts to help them succeed.

Are teacher unions in favor of these sign-ups?

Yes, teacher unions and organizations from each of these 15 districts signed on to administer the national tests in their districts. Teachers play a crucial role in getting students ready for high standards. These urban teachers recognize that setting high standards in the basic skills is essential for high achievement -- and that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, can and will meet our high expectations.

Which states and districts are currently signed up to take the tests?

Governors and state education officials in six states -- Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina and West Virginia, along with the Department of Defense schools all over the world, have committed to participate in this testing program as soon as it becomes available in 1999. In addition, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin has pledged to work to secure California's participation.

The fifteen new districts signing on today are: Atlanta, Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale),

Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, El Paso, Fresno, Houston, Long Beach, Los Angeles, New York City, Omaha, Philadelphia, San Antonio, and Seattle.

Why is Detroit also participating in the sign-up, if the state of Michigan has already signed on to give the tests?

Michigan, under the leadership of Governor Engler, has agreed to administer the national tests in reading and math to its 4th and 8th graders. Detroit's school leaders chose to participate in today's event to underscore their commitment to work with other urban districts to help their students reach high national standards in reading and math. We are pleased with the commitment demonstrated by local education leaders in Detroit.

Are we giving up on states?

Absolutely not. We are continuing to actively encourage every state to sign-up so that all districts and States will have the same opportunity as these 15 districts to compare the performance of their students to national and international benchmarks, and to use that information in order to lift student reading and math achievement.

What is the situation in California?

We are pleased that Delaine Eastin, the Superintendent of Public Schools in California, has announced her support for the national tests and her commitment to working to give students throughout the State an opportunity to participate. Her leadership has helped pave the way for three major school districts in California -- Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Fresno -- to join this important effort today. The Governor's Office and State Board of Education have indicated their desire to review the issue of statewide participation. We hope that all relevant policymakers there can reach agreement so that all parents and teachers will have access to this important tool for raising student achievement.

Do we really have these cities lined up? Or is this another situation like California, where top officials are not in agreement to sign-up for the test?

In each of these urban districts, the local school board, superintendent, and local teacher organizations have agreed to administer the voluntary national tests and to work together to help students meet these high standards.

What percentage of students are being reached through these 15 districts that are signing up today?

The students in these districts represent approximately 7% or about 490,000 of the more than 6.7 million 4th and 8th graders in the nation.

Why aren't we making more rapid progress on National Test sign-ups?

Today's event demonstrates that there is nationwide support for participating in the tests, and that we are making steady progress. The Department of Education has been moving forward with the process of developing the test and a contract will be awarded soon. State interest will grow as development work proceeds. Each state or district needs to determine how the national tests can fit into a larger strategy for helping all students reach high standards. We are gratified that today 15 major school districts nationwide have determined that the voluntary tests can help them

improve the skills of their students.

**Dr. Stan Paz
Superintendent
El Paso Independent School District**

As Superintendent of the fifth largest school district in Texas, Dr. Stan Paz oversees a \$380.5 million budget, 65,000 students and 8,000 employees. Since Dr. Paz was named superintendent of the El Paso Independent School District in January 1991, he has been recognized for his outstanding leadership by several groups. He was recently named the "Amigo de Tejan" by the Texas Association of Hispanic School Administrators and was Texas' nominee in the National Superintendent of the Year program sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators in 1993-94. In addition, he was named the best educator in El Paso in the 1993 El Paso Times "Best of the Border" contest, and has been honored with a life membership in National PTA.

Dr. Paz's participated on the National Education Goals Panel Resource Group for Teacher Education and Professional Development, and he currently serves on the Executive Board of the Council of the Great City Schools and the Advisory Committee to the Harvard University Urban Superintendents Program.

Under Dr. Paz' leadership, the El Paso school district has increased TAAS test scores at all grade levels; increased SAT scores; decreased the dropout rate to 1 percent and expulsions to 24 for the year; and opened its first Family Resource Center, alternative school, and health magnet school. In the Fall of 1992, under his leadership, voters approved a \$150 million bond package allowing the district to move forward on construction projects.

Dr. Paz has been in education for 25 years. All three of his degrees were earned at the University of Arizona. He started his career in the Tucson Unified School District as an elementary teacher in 1971. By the time he left Tucson he was deputy superintendent. He then served three years as associate superintendent of the school support division in the Dallas Independent School District before joining the EPISD.

His involvement at the state level and in the community is extensive. He is President of the Texas Association of School Administrators and is past president of the Texas School Alliance. He is a member of the Rotary Club of El Paso and the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Paz serves on the boards of United Way and the Leadership Roundtable of El Paso.

7/24/97

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SUPERINTENDENT

Carlos Arturo Garcia

July 24, 1997

*The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500*

Mr. President:

The Fresno Unified School District is eager to participate in the field testing of the national tests in reading and mathematics proposed by your administration.

We support high standards for all students and recognize the importance of assuring student mastery of the skills inherent to those standards. We have drafted content standards that are consistent with the national standards proposed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, The National Research Council (science) and the other professional organizations' standards. We have raised our graduation requirements to four years of English and three years of mathematics and science. All non-rigorous courses have been eliminated in each of our high schools. We have implemented special literacy, mathematics and science initiatives, K-12, in support of higher achievement for all students.

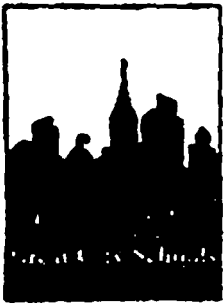
It is vitally important that a new generation of tests which reflect student performance aligned with national standards be developed. Each member of our Board of Education and the leadership of the Fresno Teachers Association support our participation in this exciting field test opportunity.

Sincerely,

Carlos A. Garcia
Superintendent

CAG:lsk

(//bndtst.hrt)



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Date: 7/24/97

To:

Name: Bill Kincaid

Organization: _____

Fax: 456-7028

From:

Name: Henry Duvall

Notes: *Here's our draft
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Pages: 4 (including this one)

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In a speech to the National Association of Elementary School Principals, President Clinton announced today that 13 urban school districts -- with the support of local school boards, superintendents, and teachers organizations -- will participate in voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math that reflect high national standards. These tests will be administered for the first time in the Spring of 1999.

GROWING NATIONWIDE SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL STANDARDS AND TESTS:

Thirteen urban school systems, including the three largest (New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago) and six of the seven largest, have pledged to participate in the President's voluntary national testing initiative. Located in ten states, together, they represent ~~XXX~~ ^{over 25} percentage of the nation's 4th and 8th graders. The commitment of these large school systems demonstrates that support for the President's call for national standards and tests is truly nationwide. Students from Ft. Lauderdale to Seattle, from New York to Los Angeles, from El Paso to Chicago, will be prepared to meet the same basic skills in reading and math, and students, schools and school systems can and will be judged against common standards, and on the same measures. For the first time, parents, teachers and the public in these communities will know how well students perform compared to national standards in reading and math, international benchmarks in math, and to students in other cities and states throughout the nation.

HIGH STANDARDS FOR ALL STUDENTS: With this announcement, urban educators and communities send a clear signal that students in inner city schools can and should be held to, and measured against, the same challenging standards that are being set for all students throughout the nation. Rejecting the notion that students from disadvantaged backgrounds cannot learn to the same standards as more advantaged students, these communities recognize that setting high standards in the basic skills for all students is a prerequisite for improved teaching and learning. Research and experience shows that students can meet high standards, and that low expectations lead to low achievement. While this step alone will not improve teaching and learning for students in urban schools, it will guide and catalyze efforts to strengthen curriculum, provide training to teachers, increase parental and community involvement, and support the necessary investments at the local, state and national level to improve our schools.

A CHALLENGE TO EDUCATORS: USE TESTS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND

ACCOUNTABILITY: President Clinton challenged local educators to use the test information to improve teaching and learning and to strengthen accountability. The U.S. Department of Education will make available information that describes the knowledge and skills students must master in order to meet the national standards. Each year once the tests are given, the test items will be released to the public to further clarify what students must know and be able to do to meet the standards. Educators should use this information as well as the state or local standards set for their students to take steps such as upgrading the curriculum, strengthening teacher preparation

and professional development, and promoting parental and community involvement and learning.

The President also challenged educators to use these test to strengthen accountability, by incorporating the results into school and school district report cards, by reporting the performance of subgroups of students (such as by race, gender and other background characteristics), and by providing needed help to low performing students and schools.

A CHALLENGE TO THE NATION: PROVIDE STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS WITH THE HELP THEY NEED President Clinton challenged the nation to support students in urban areas and throughout the nation so they can reach high standards in the basics, and continue to learn for a lifetime. He called on the Congress to [whatever we need to say about taxes, and to enact his proposal to promote early literacy and to recruit and prepare teachers for urban and poor rural areas.

A map highlighting the cities that are signing up will be attached

*Mike
Green
Bin Karcid*

DRAFT July 23, 1997

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON ACHIEVING HIGH STANDARDS AND THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

*make it
clear* Parents want the best for their children no matter where they live ~~in this great country~~. They want their children to learn the basics. They want safe, disciplined, drug-free schools. They want quality teachers and the opportunity to be involved in their schools. They want their children prepared to be able to go on to college. To these goals, President Clinton, in his State of the Union address ~~made clear~~ ^{sketch} that his number one priority for the next four years is to make sure that Americans have the best education in the world. He ~~also~~ issued a 10 point call to action for American education ~~in the 21st century~~ to enlist parents, teachers, students, business leaders, local and state officials in this effort. Setting rigorous national standards with voluntary national tests in 4th grade in reading and 8th grade in mathematics is the first point of his plan. *justify* *help achieve*

What are the voluntary national tests?

sketch The voluntary national tests are two tests - one for 4th grade reading in English and the other for 8th grade mathematics -- which are currently being developed. These new tests will be based on the widely respected National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) ⁱⁿ which ~~reflects most states' content standards~~ ^{is used by more than 40 states currently participate} *u3*

What is the purpose of the voluntary national tests?

sketch The voluntary national tests are tools to ~~help~~ give parents, teachers, and policy makers new information on how students are performing academically. ~~Research shows that education is Americans' number one priority/concern, and these tests will build on that momentum.~~ ^{also help} The ^{is} information ~~these tests will provide~~ will mobilize the country around the importance of making sure all children master the basics of reading and math. The tests will provide parents and teachers individual scores for their students and children as they relate to challenging national and, in the case of mathematics, international standards. ~~How a child performs relative to national and international standards is important information that parents and teachers don't have now.~~ Parents and teachers can use information from the tests to make adjustments and improvements in their child's academic path. *Key* *information that parents and teachers don't have now*

When will the tests be given?

The tests will be administered annually by states and local school districts beginning in the spring of 1999. Field tests will be given in the spring of 1998 and sample tests will be available to students, parents, teachers and the general public in the fall of 1998.

How are the voluntary national tests different from other tests?

sketch Although the new tests will be based on NAEP, NAEP ^{scores are aggregate} ~~is an assessment of a random sampling of student achievement~~ ^{derived from} whereas the voluntary national tests will produce individual student scores ^{available} ~~critical information parents and teachers do not currently have through the NAEP program.~~ The voluntary national tests will provide new information to parents and teachers about individual student achievement ^{as measured against} ~~linked to~~ national and international standards.

How long will the tests be and what will they look like?

The tests will be approximately 90 minutes each, but extended time will be allowed. The tests will be approximately 80% multiple choice and 20% extended response. Approximately half of the test time will be designated for the multiple choice; the other half for extended response.

Why 4th grade reading?

Children spend the first three years of grade school learning how to read, so they can spend the rest of their years reading to learn. And children will have difficulty moving ahead in school in any subject if they can't read English well by the 4th grade.

Why 8th grade math?

8th grade math is also a critical turning point for students. At that point, students need to have mastered the basics of math -- including the foundations of algebra and geometry -- so they are prepared to go on and take the harder math and science courses they need for college preparation or jobs right out of high school. International research shows that many industrialized nations introduce their students to the foundations of algebra and geometry at a much earlier grade than the United States.

What about 4th grade math?

We do not plan to administer a 4th grade math test. However, students must develop math skills before they reach the eighth grade in order to meet high academic standards. Preparing our children for the global economy means we must strengthen their education at all levels or grades, in and out of the classroom.

What about 8th grade reading?

We do not anticipate administering an 8th grade reading test. Students should have mastered the basics of reading well before 8th grade. For those students who have been promoted without fully developing their reading ability, teachers and parents can use the voluntary national test as a teaching tool as well as other resources from the Department of Education (such as...).

Will children with disabilities and limited English proficiency be able to participate?

This is draft language -- Will get language from DELIA.

Yes. We want to make sure that students with disabilities and students with limited English will be able to take the test whenever possible. This means that we will provide a bilingual version of the math test. It also means that when the tests are administered, accommodations such as Braille and large print editions, extended response time for students with disabilities, or access to an English dictionary for the math test for students with limited English proficiency will be available.

Why is the math test being given as a bilingual exam, but the reading test is only being given in English?

The math test is to assess student's math skills, not their English skills. Developing the ability to read in English is a basic skill that every child has to have to succeed in American schools

and society. On the other hand, competency in math cuts across languages. There are many children at the 8th grade level who have limited English proficiency but who can learn advanced math and should be asked to show what math they know. We are providing a bilingual math test in Spanish and English because Spanish is the most common language other than English among students.

Will children in non-public schools be able to participate?

Yes, non-public schools will be able to get these tests from the test publishers just as states and districts will. In order for the publishers to get reimbursed, the schools will have to show that they comply with non-discrimination statutes in enrollment and comprehensive distribution of the tests. Home schooled children will be able to take the exam when the tests are released on the Internet (along with answers, scoring guides and other materials).

How can parents and teachers help children achieve high standards?

Every parent can help, from the first days of a child's life -- singing and reading and talking to them about everyday events. Parents can assist in their children's academic progress by being active in school activities, staying in regular contact with their teachers, giving them a place to do homework and making sure that they do it. Over thirty years of research shows that family involvement in children's learning is critical to their child's success.

To help parents and teachers assist their children in meeting high academic standards, materials including a sample test and supplementary booklet of example questions will be available to schools, libraries, and other educational institutions as well as on the Internet. The U.S. Department of Education is also working with business and local leaders to build and strengthen ways the whole community can assist students in this challenge.

What if a child doesn't do well on these tests?

The voluntary national tests are being developed so that parents and teachers get accurate information about how students are doing in relation to challenging national and international standards. These tests, along with state and local tests, will help parents and teachers know which children and schools need help and what help they need. If a student or school is found to have shortcomings in reading or math achievement, then actions can be taken such as tutoring, parent involvement, or extra help to move ahead. Because education is primarily a state and local responsibility, the states, community leaders, teachers and parents will determine how to respond to student and school needs in their community. Some things parents and teachers might include...?????

replace w/ insert
are in the best position

Will the federal government ^{collect} have individual test scores?

No. The federal government will not collect individual student scores. States and communities may collect such information and will have limited guidance as to how the scores will be reported. However, individual student scores must remain confidential.

determine how

local districts
scores
will be used, subject to the usual privacy requirements that specify that

Education is a local issue. Why is the federal government providing these tests? (DO WE WANT TO INCLUDE THIS QUESTION AT ALL???)

One of the clear and established roles of the federal government when it comes to education

NO

Inset

(per Mike C.)

If a student is found to have shortcomings on the test, teachers and parents must work together to provide the student with the help that is needed. This could include steps such as a careful diagnosis of the areas of difficulty the student is encountering, and providing the student with extra help or tutoring tailored to meet those needs. It might include summer school or extra help after school or on weekends.

is to provide information to the states that they can't get by themselves. The federal government will fund the development of the tests and provide comparisons to national and international standards, but state and local school districts will be in charge of administering the tests and determining how information is used in schools and communities around the country. These tests will empower states, school districts, teachers and parents with information they can use to ensure their children are on the road to high standards.

What about improving teaching quality? (DO WE WANT TO INCLUDE THIS QUESTION?)

Ne. The U.S. Department of Education supports improving teaching quality through initiatives including Eisenhower professional development grants, Title I assistance for disadvantaged students, and Goals 2000 funding, as well as by disseminating ideas and best teaching practices within the professional field. These tests can be used as tools for teachers and parents so that they know what we mean by challenging math and reading well and independently. *also*

and recruit a diverse group of teachers to teach in urban and poor rural schools.

Who is developing these tests?

of Education
Expert teachers, administrators, parents, policy makers, and business and community leaders are currently serving on committees that are developing the blueprint for the voluntary national tests. The U.S. Department will contract with a test publisher to develop the tests based on the guidelines created by the committees. Additionally, a series of public meetings is being held with to discuss the importance of improving reading and math education for all children and how the tests will assist students in meeting this challenge.

How will the tests be reported?

The test publishers ~~which contract with the schools~~ will provide state and district level results to the states and districts. States and local districts will "own" the results of the tests and will determine how to use the individual results. Guidelines will be provided so that parents and teachers get accurate information that is helpful in understanding their child's performance.

Will the mathematics test cover the basic skills of math or will they reflect the so-called "whole math" in which the basics are ignored and it does not matter if students get the right answers but only if they can justify their answers?

key
The voluntary national math test will expect students to master the basic skills in math. ~~Students must still know how to multiply and divide.~~ However, it will also expect that students master much more challenging material.

key
In fact, the recently released TIMSS results for our fourth graders demonstrates that our students measure up to international standards quite well in areas of basic computation. The area in which we do less well is in grades 5-8, when students should be moving beyond arithmetic and into geometry, algebra, and measurement. This is what high-performing nations do, and what the standards encourage. The voluntary National Test will be based on these tough, demanding standards.

In addition

~~On the voluntary National Test~~ students will be asked to find the correct answer to each problem. However, on some questions students will be asked to show their work and justify their answers. This is because in many situations, both in math and in life, there is more than one way of arriving at the right answer. Good math teaching encourages students to look at ~~math problems from multiple perspectives, and understand the different methods that can be used to arrive at a correct conclusion.~~

Sket

Can the Voluntary National Tests be used to satisfy Title 1 requirements?

Waiting for an answer...

For more information, please visit our web site at <http://www.ed.gov/nationaltests>.

Resources for Urban School Districts to Reach High Standards in Reading and Mathematics

Introduction

President Clinton's ^{in January} fifth State of the Union address, and subsequent "Call-to-Action for American Education" outlined several national priorities. Two of ^{key} these priorities are that all students be able to read independently and well by the end of third grade and master challenging mathematics (including the foundations of algebra and geometry) by the end of eighth grade. The Department of Education is supporting voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics as part of a comprehensive strategy to help students master the basics and reach high standards in these two subjects.



The Department of Education can assist urban districts in a number of ways as they work to raise the academic achievement of their students. For example, the Department provides urban districts with formula grant funding to support improved achievement in the core academic subjects, including reading and mathematics. The newly enacted technology E-rate (information in packet) will enable many more urban schools to connect to the Information Superhighway. In addition, the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation provide targeted support to help urban districts meet the challenging content embodied in the voluntary national tests. Below are some of the key supports available from the two agencies:

This it seems off somehow

Explain ED connection - help to take advantage of - ED do not have provide the E-rate

Technical Assistance

What is currently available:

Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers. The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, which amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, created comprehensive, regional technical assistance centers to support coordinated and improved implementation of elementary and secondary programs.

Mathematics: Eisenhower Regional Consortia. The 10 Regional Consortia can provide assistance to urban districts including: 1) developing packages of high-quality materials ~~that~~ ^{on?} ~~would be helpful to districts~~; 2) providing assistance to district needs assessment groups; 3) brokering assistance with other sources of technical assistance, training and curriculum; and 4) assisting a district team in analyzing results of the test.

Reduced funded on? instructional materials? but practices?

What is being developed:

Reading Center. The Department of Education has dedicated \$2.5 million to launch a new reading center to research and disseminate best practices. This center will focus its research on the intersection of schooling and family and ways to promote literacy.

Overall
Such as Title I
Eisenhower

Supporting?

High-Quality Materials and Professional Development

What is currently available:

Reading:

READ*WRITE*NOW! Information Packet. This manual, entitled *Just Add Kids: A Resource Directory of Learning Partners, Reading Sites, and Other Literacy Organizations that Serve Children and Their Families*, provides information on sources of reading help for children including literacy organizations, volunteer tutor programs, and federal programs.

Lexile Framework^{can hold} and Checkpoints for Progress In Reading and Writing For Families and Communities and Teachers and Learning Partners. These documents provide guidelines on the skills a child should be expected to demonstrate at each developmental stage and provides tips on how to help children attain these skills.

Simple Things You Can Do To Help America's Children Read Well and Independently By the End of Third Grade. This guide provides helpful suggestions for parents, schools, librarians, grandparents, seniors, concerned citizens, community-based organizations, universities, employers and the media on how each group can work to improve literacy in their community.

READY*SET*READ Activity Guides for Families and Caregivers. These activity guides provide ideas families and caregivers can use to help young children learn about language with age-appropriate activities.

READ*WRITE*NOW! Basic Kit. Drawing on the best research, as well as successful experiences of teachers, librarians, and families, reading experts developed this kit to increase and maintain reading achievement and reading skills of all children - including those with disabilities - during the summer. It offers ideas on how a learning partner can engage all children in educational activities and it encourages all children to pledge to read and write 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

How to Set Up a Reading Consortium. This booklet, developed by the International Reading Association, provides suggestions to communities on how to set up a collaborative reading program.

Mathematics:

Mathematics: Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (ENC). The National Clearinghouse provides high quality K-12 mathematics education materials (including print, audio, video, multimedia, kits, and Internet sites) to schools and districts.

TIMSS Resource Kit. This resource kit gives district and school administrators and teachers information from TIMSS that can help with practical decisions about setting high standards, selecting challenging curricula and instructional materials, and can encourage effective teaching practices.

The Eddie Files. The series of videotapes uses real-world mathematics and science to help 3rd through 6th grade students develop the ability to think mathematically and to see the connections

Is there a logic to the order of these? might subdivide reading product should "go" under mobilization?

between mathematics and the world outside the classroom.

What is being developed:

Reading: National Academy of Science (NAS). NAS will publish a study this fall which provides examples and information about successful model reading programs.

Mathematics: Guide to promising and exemplary curricula. An expert panel is identifying promising and exemplary mathematics programs and instructional materials.

Supporting effective teacher preparation and professional development. Two guides will highlight promising practices and provide strategies and tools for improving existing mathematics teacher preparation and professional development programs.

Support for Mobilization *Activity Involving Parents & the Community*

What is currently available:

Reading: READ*WRITE*NOW! pilot sites. This summer America Reads: READ*WRITE*NOW! reached 1.5 million children in 14 pilot sites. These programs extend learning time for students who receive one-on-one reading assistance. The President's Coalition for America Reads will meet next week to discuss ways to expand this program through developing literacy coalitions in cities and urban centers across the Nation. The Department of Education has materials on how to start-up a READ*WRITE*NOW site.

America Reads Federal College Work Study program. To date, 579 colleges and universities have signed on to participate in the America Reads Federal College Work Study program. The Department of Education waives the matching requirements for FWCS students of colleges and universities that sign on to the program. Students at these schools will be able participate in the Federal College Work Study program by tutoring in local literacy programs which will increase the capacity of these programs to serve children's reading needs during after-school hours.

What is being developed:

21st Century Community Learning Centers. The focus of this program will be to provide after-school, weekend, and summer learning opportunities for participating children. By uniting parents, caregivers, principals, teachers, and community groups in partnership, centers can help students excel in mathematics and reading, maximize resources by coordinating efforts, and gain the advantages of shared expertise and experience.

Reading: The America Reads Challenge Summer 1998 program. In the summer of 1998, the America Reads Challenge will expand its summer reading programs with the hopes of having at least one site in each state.

The America Reads Legislation. Currently, legislation is pending that would allocate \$260 million in year 1 (the President's proposed legislation requests \$2.75 billion over 5 years) to support tutoring efforts in communities across the county. ~~The~~ grants would be awarded to cover expenses for reading specialists and tutor coordinators who would help train and mobilize tutors at each site. Additionally, communities would be eligible to apply for funds that supported programs that assisted parents in literacy training during early childhood.

* **Mathematics: Problems-of-the-week.** Fun, high quality, highly public mathematics problems-of-the-week that students will enjoy doing with adult coaches and that will engage families, businesses and volunteers in helping students meet high standards will be developed.

Do we want to be this specific? or save?

Technology

What is currently available:

Technology Innovation Challenge Grants. This program supports collaboration between educators, local businesses, and community organizations to develop innovative, high-quality applications of technology, with an emphasis on improving access for disadvantaged students.

Star Schools. These grants support partnerships among educational and telecommunications agencies, and demonstrate the use of distance learning technologies to improve instruction, create learning opportunities, and serve disadvantaged students.

Regional Technology Education Consortia (RTEC). These six regional consortia provide technical advice and training to educators about the use of advanced technologies to improve teaching and student achievement.

Mathematics: Telecommunications Demonstration Project (PBS Mathline). A series of video lessons for elementary and secondary school teachers based on the NCTM professional teaching standards is the basis for a year-long Internet-based professional development program.

What is being developed:

On-line instructional materials. Federal Internet-based education resources (instructional materials, primary documents and more) are being linked to one Web page, along with search tools, that will make the various learning resources from dozens of federal agencies easy to find. *a single*

* **Gateway to Educational Materials (GEM).** GEM will make it possible for teachers and others to type a subject and grade level into a search screen and receive links to teaching ideas, lesson plans, and other instructional materials from a broad range of participating Web sites, including non-federal organizations.

Some question

Understanding the High Standards Embodied in the National Tests

What is being developed:

Materials for parents and community members. Materials explaining the goals and content of the voluntary national tests and how the tests can be an important element of an effort to improve the odds for student achievement are being developed for community members.

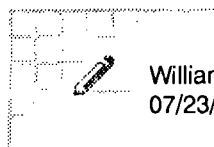
Newsletters and other publications for teachers and administrators. Information explaining the test content frameworks and performance standards, providing sample items with examples of student work and scoring rubrics expectations, strategies for professional development based on assessment items and information about promising programs and additional resources will be widely disseminated.

Materials to interpret test results. These materials will help teachers and administrators interpret test results and use them for instructional purposes to improve teaching and learning in math and reading.

For Further Information

Reading: Carol Rasco, Director, America Reads Challenge, (202) 401-8888
Ann O’Leary, (202) 401-2993 or ann_o’leary@ed.gov

Mathematics: Judy Wurtzel, Director, Mathematics Initiative, (202) 401-3389
John Luczak, (202) 205-7848 or john_luczak@ed.gov



William R. Kincaid
07/23/97 10:57:13 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Jordan Tamagni/WHO/EOP
cc: Michael Cohen/OPD/EOP, Robert M. Shireman/OPD/EOP
bcc:
Subject: Re: Revised

Here are my thoughts for now. I'll also discuss with Mike in the a.m.

General Comments:

1. I do still think he should specifically thank the NAESP for its early support of the President's broad education agenda/Call to Action; not sure what's the best place as currently structured.
2. I like the paragraphs that you have extolling principals, but two graphs seems a bit short given that this is their event. I might brag on them a little more, explicitly focusing on the key role of principals in effective schools. Mike may have some suggestions on that based on Clinton history.
3. I would reference the new recruitment and preparation initiative that was rolled out last week in the NAACP speech.
4. I would make a bigger deal of commending these cities for stepping forward and accepting the President's challenge, and holding themselves accountable to parents and the public.

Specific comments:

See below, bold and brackets:

Draft 7/23/97 5:00pm

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS FOR NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
WASHINGTON, DC
JULY 25, 1997**

Acknowledgments: Sec. Riley; Sam Sava, Executive Director; Yvonne Allen, President; Carole Kennedy, Past President; Jill Eaton, President-elect; the entire Board of Directors.

Good morning. I want to start by thanking you for all that you do for America's children. Every year, hundreds of thousands of children arrive on the doorsteps of your schools for the first time, to begin a journey of learning that will hopefully last for a lifetime. Every year, millions of parents place their children in your hands -- and their trust in your ability. And every year, you prove that their trust is well placed.

You prove it by ensuring that every child who sits in one of your classrooms has an equal chance to make the most of his or her God-given ability. You prove it by having high expectations for every student, and by demanding accountability from your teachers and from yourselves. And you prove it by coming together here to share your best practices, to talk about the problems still ahead, and to recommit yourselves to the goal we share: making sure that every child in America gets the best education in the world

Education has always been the heart of opportunity in this country. And it is the embodiment of everything we must do to prepare America for the 21st century. To meet that challenge, we must begin where our children's formal education begins: in our nation's elementary schools. We must demand excellence from every school and every teacher. We must repair and rebuild our schools, and make sure that they have the advantage of new technology. And we must make sure that our schools are safe and drug-free so that no child ever has to pay more attention to the threat of violence than to the teacher. All of these things will be more important than ever as school enrollments reach new highs in the coming years -- an estimated xxx by xxxx.

But the single most important thing we can do to give our children the world class education they deserve is to insist on high national standards, so that every child in America learns what he or she needs to know to succeed in the new world of the 21st Century.

In my State of the Union address, I challenged every state and every school to adopt high national standards, and by 1999, to test every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math to make sure those standards are met. These are not federal standards -- they are national standards that every child can meet, in every state and every city in America. After all, reading is reading, and math is math, whether you live in Anchorage or Appalachia. And excellence does not depend on geography.

Since I issued that call [governors and] education leaders in seven states -- California, North Carolina, Maryland, **Massachusetts**, Michigan, Kentucky and West Virginia, along with the Department of Defense schools all over the world, have [agreed to adopt] **announced their support for** national standards and **their desire to** participate in this testing program as soon as it becomes available **in 1999**.

Today, I am pleased to announce that **leaders of** thirteen of our biggest [cities] **school districts coast to coast are joining** [will join] them. From now on, students in New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Broward **County**, Cincinnati, Chicago, Houston, San Antonio, El Paso,

Omaha, Los Angeles, Long Beach, **and** Seattle -- that's xx million children -- will have a greater chance to reach their highest potential. And I urge every one of you to encourage your states and school districts to **join this nationwide effort and** give your students the same chance.

You know as well as I do that raising standards will not be easy for all of our children at first. But when we fail to encourage our children to learn to high standards, we aren't doing them a favor -- we are encouraging them to fail. And when we set high expectations and insist on high standards, there is no end to what our children can achieve. We proved that last month, when America's fourth graders led the world -- second only to Korea -- in science, and scored well above average in math on the TIMMS test. Only 6 years earlier, fourth graders taking a similar test scored well below the average.

[I think Bob's language on this graph looks ok] We know that our children can meet the highest standards, but it is up to every one of us to help them do it. We in the national government will continue do our part. The balanced budget agreement that we reached with the Congress in May will expand Head Start so one million more of our children will come to school ready to learn. It will fund the Technology Literacy Challenge to help meet our goal of connecting every classroom in America to the Internet. Most important, it will fund the America Reads program and help put one million reading tutors in your classrooms. And I urge the Congress to act without delay to fund this program, and to maintain the full commitment to our children's education that we agreed to in May.

But as much as the national government can do to raise our children up, our success depends on state and local school systems, teachers, and parents. You must have the conviction that every child in America can learn to high standards. You must demand those standards, and insist on tests to make sure they are being met. I want each of you to ask yourselves: have we done enough to help our children reach these standards? Have we done enough to give our children the tools they need to make the most of their lives? Have we done enough to help prepare America for the 21st Century?

Pearl Buck once said, ■if our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all.■ Today, we are one step closer to making sure that our way of life serves all of our children, and gives them the education they deserve. I thank you for doing your part.
Jordan Tamagni



Jordan Tamagni

07/23/97 06:52:39 PM

.....

Record Type: Record

To: William R. Kincaid/OPD/EOP, Robert M. Shireman/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Revised



NAESP.WPD



072312DF.TXT

Draft 7/23/97 5:00pm

Principal leadership;
NAESP very support;

New Teacher initiative
announced last week.
Common criteria for tag
challenge

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS FOR NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
WASHINGTON, DC
JULY 25, 1997**

Acknowledgments: Sec. Riley; Sam Sava, Executive Director; Yvonne Allen, President; Carole Kennedy, Past President; Jill Eaton, President-elect; the entire Board of Directors.

Good morning. I want to start by thanking you for all that you do for America's children. Every year, hundreds of thousands of children arrive on the doorsteps of your schools for the first time, to begin a journey of learning that will hopefully last for a lifetime. Every year, millions of parents place their children in your hands -- and their trust in your ability. And every year, you prove that their trust is well placed.

You prove it by ensuring that every child who sits in one of your classrooms has an equal chance to make the most of his or her God-given ability. You prove it by having high expectations for every student, and by demanding accountability from your teachers and from yourselves. And you prove it by coming together here to share your best practices, to talk about the problems still ahead, and to recommit yourselves to the goal we share: making sure that every child in America gets the best education in the world

Education has always been the heart of opportunity in this country. And it is the embodiment of everything we must do to prepare America for the 21st century. To meet that challenge, we must begin where our children's formal education begins: in our nation's elementary schools. We must demand excellence from every school and every teacher. We must repair and rebuild our schools, and make sure that they have the advantage of new technology. And we must make sure that our schools are safe and drug-free so that no child ever has to pay more attention to the threat of violence than to the teacher. All of these things will be more important than ever as school enrollments reach new highs in the coming years -- an estimated xxx by xxxx.

But the single most important thing we can do to give our children the world class education they deserve is to insist on high national standards, so that every child in America learns what he or she needs to know to succeed in the new world of the 21st Century.

In my State of the Union address, I challenged every state and every school to adopt high national standards, and by 1999, to test every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math to make sure those standards are met. These are not federal standards -- they are national standards that every child can meet, in every state and every city in America. After all, reading is reading, and math is math, whether you live in Anchorage or Appalachia. And excellence does not depend on geography.

Since I issued that call ~~governors and~~ education leaders in [seven] states -- California, North

Massachusetts

among the super

Carolina, Maryland, Michigan, Kentucky and West Virginia, along with the Department of Defense schools all over the world, have agreed to adopt national standards and participate in this testing program as soon as it becomes available. *their desire*

Today, I am pleased to announce that thirteen of our biggest *leaders from* ~~cities~~ *school districts* will join them. From now on, students in New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Broward/Ft. Lauderdale, Cincinnati, Chicago, Houston, San Antonio, El Paso, Omaha, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Seattle, and ~~Broward~~ *from coast to coast* that's xx million children -- will have a greater chance to reach their highest potential. And I urge every one of you to encourage your states and school districts to give your students the same chance. *we join the County*

You know as well as I do that raising standards will not be easy for all of our children at first. But when we fail to encourage our children to learn to high standards, we aren't doing them a favor -- we are encouraging them to fail. And when we set high expectations and insist on high standards, there is no end to what our children can achieve. We proved that last month, when America's fourth graders led the world -- second only to Korea -- in science, and scored well above average in math on the TIMMS test. Only 6 years earlier, fourth graders taking a similar test scored well below the average. *I commend their action for today's challenge.*

We know that our children can meet the highest standards, but it is up to every one of us to help them do it. We in the national government will continue do our part. The balanced budget agreement that we reached with the Congress in May will expand Head Start so one million more of our children will come to school ready to learn. It will fund the Technology Literacy Challenge to help meet our goal of connecting every classroom in America to the Internet. Most important, it will fund the America Reads program and help put one million reading tutors in your classrooms. And I urge the Congress to act without delay to fund this program, and to maintain the full commitment to our children's education that we agreed to in May. *so each of your schools can help with the challenge*

But as much as the national government can do to raise our children up, our success depends on state and local school systems, teachers, and parents. You must have the conviction that every child in America can learn to high standards. You must demand those standards, and insist on tests to make sure they are being met. I want each of you to ask yourselves: have we done enough to help our children reach these standards? Have we done enough to give our children the tools they need to make the most of their lives? Have we done enough to help prepare America for the 21st Century?

Pearl Buck once said, "if our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all." Today, we are one step closer to making sure that our way of life serves all of our children, and gives them the education they deserve. I thank you for doing your part.

Mike
Green
Bin Kincaid

DRAFT July 23, 1997

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON ACHIEVING HIGH STANDARDS AND THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

Parents want the best for their children no matter where they live in this great country. They want their children to learn the basics. They want safe, disciplined drug-free schools. They want quality teachers and the opportunity to be involved in their schools. They want their children prepared to be able to go on to college. To these goals, President Clinton in his State of the Union address made clear that his number one priority for the next four years is to make sure that Americans have the best education in the world. He also issued a 10 point call to action for American education in the 21st century to enlist parents, teachers, students, business leaders, local and state officials in this effort. Setting rigorous national standards with voluntary national tests in 4th grade in reading and 8th grade in mathematics is the first point of his plan. Justify

What are the voluntary national tests?

The voluntary national tests are two tests - one for 4th grade reading in English and the other for 8th grade mathematics -- which are currently being developed. These new tests will be based on the widely respected National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which reflects most states' content standards.

What is the purpose of the voluntary national tests?

The voluntary national tests are tools to help give parents, teachers, and policy makers new information on how students are performing academically. Research shows that education is Americans' number one priority/concern, and these tests will build on that momentum. The information these tests will provide will mobilize the country around the importance of making sure all children master the basics of reading and math. The tests will provide parents and teachers individual scores for their students and children as they relate to challenging national and, in the case of mathematics, international standards. How a child performs relative to national and international standards is important information that parents and teachers don't have now. Parents and teachers can use information from the tests to make adjustments and improvements in their child's academic path.

When will the tests be given?

The tests will be administered annually by states and local school districts beginning in the spring of 1999. Field tests will be given in the spring of 1998 and sample tests will be available to students, parents, teachers and the general public in the fall of 1998.

How are the voluntary national tests different from other tests?

Although the new tests will be based on NAEP, NAEP is an assessment of a random sampling of student achievement whereas the voluntary national tests will produce individual student scores -- critical information parents and teachers do not currently have through the NAEP program. The voluntary national tests will provide new information to parents and teachers about individual student achievement linked to national and international standards.

How long will the tests be and what will they look like?

The tests will be approximately 90 minutes each, but extended time will be allowed.

The tests will be approximately 80% multiple choice and 20% extended response.

Approximately half of the test time will be designated for the multiple choice; the other half for extended response.

Why 4th grade reading?

Children spend the first three years of grade school learning how to read, so they can spend the rest of their years reading to learn. And children will have difficulty moving ahead in school in any subject if they can't read English well by the 4th grade.

Why 8th grade math?

8th grade math is also a critical turning point for students. At that point, students need to have mastered the basics of math -- including the foundations of algebra and geometry -- so they are prepared to go on and take the harder math and science courses they need for college preparation or jobs right out of high school. International research shows that many industrialized nations introduce their students to the foundations of algebra and geometry at a much earlier grade than the United States.

What about 4th grade math?

We do not plan to administer a 4th grade math test. However, students must develop math skills before they reach the eighth grade in order to meet high academic standards. Preparing our children for the global economy means we must strengthen their education at all levels or grades, in and out of the classroom.

What about 8th grade reading?

We do not anticipate administering an 8th grade reading test. Students should have mastered the basics of reading well before 8th grade. For those students who have been promoted without fully developing their reading ability, teachers and parents can use the voluntary national test as a teaching tool as well as other resources from the Department of Education (such as...).

Will children with disabilities and limited English proficiency be able to participate?

This is draft language — Will get language from DELIA

Yes. We want to make sure that students with disabilities and students with limited English will be able to take the test whenever possible. This means that we will provide a bilingual version of the math test. It also means that when the tests are administered, accommodations such as Braille and large print editions, extended response time for students with disabilities, or access to an English dictionary for the math test for students with limited English proficiency will be available.

Why is the math test being given as a bilingual exam, but the reading test is only being given in English?

The math test is to assess student's math skills, not their English skills. Developing the ability to read in English is a basic skill that every child has to have to succeed in American schools

and society. On the other hand, competency in math cuts across languages. There are many children at the 8th grade level who have limited English proficiency but who can learn advanced math and should be asked to show what math they know. We are providing a bilingual math test in Spanish and English because Spanish is the most common language other than English among students.

Will children in non-public schools be able to participate?

Yes, non-public schools will be able to get these tests from the test publishers just as states and districts will. In order for the publishers to get reimbursed, the schools will have to show that they comply with non-discrimination statutes in enrollment and comprehensive distribution of the tests. Home schooled children will be able to take the exam when the tests are released on the Internet (along with answers, scoring guides and other materials).

How can parents and teachers help children achieve high standards?

Every parent can help, from the first days of a child's life — singing and reading and talking to them about everyday events. Parents can assist in their children's academic progress by being active in school activities, staying in regular contact with their teachers, giving them a place to do homework and making sure that they do it. Over thirty years of research shows that family involvement in children's learning is critical to their child's success.

To help parents and teachers assist their children in meeting high academic standards, materials including a sample test and supplementary booklet of example questions will be available to schools, libraries, and other educational institutions as well as on the Internet. The U.S. Department of Education is also working with business and local leaders to build and strengthen ways the whole community can assist students in this challenge.

What if a child doesn't do well on these tests?

The voluntary national tests are being developed so that parents and teachers get accurate information about how students are doing in relation to challenging national and international standards. These tests, along with state and local tests, will help parents and teachers know which children and schools need help and what help they need. If a student or school is found to have shortcomings in reading or math achievement, then actions can be taken such as tutoring, parent involvement, or extra help to move *ahead*. *Because education is primarily a state and local responsibility, the states, community leaders, teachers and parents will determine how to respond to student and school needs in their community. Some things parents and teachers might include ...????*

Will the federal government have individual test scores?

No. The federal government will not collect individual student scores. States and communities may collect such information and will have limited guidance as to how the scores will be reported. However, individual student scores must remain confidential.

Education is a local issue. Why is the federal government providing these tests? (DO WE WANT TO INCLUDE THIS QUESTION AT ALL???)

One of the clear and established roles of the federal government when it comes to education

is to provide information to the states that they can't get by themselves. The federal government will fund the development of the tests and provide comparisons to national and international standards, but state and local school districts will be in charge of administering the tests and determining how information is used in schools and communities around the country. These tests will empower states, school districts, teachers and parents with information they can use to ensure their children are on the road to high standards.

What about improving teaching quality? (DO WE WANT TO INCLUDE THIS QUESTION?)

The U.S. Department of Education supports improving teaching quality through initiatives including Eisenhower professional development grants, Title I assistance for disadvantaged students, and Goals 2000 funding, as well as by disseminating ideas and best teaching practices within the professional field. These tests can be used as tools for teachers and parents so that they know what we mean by challenging math and reading well and independently.

Who is developing these tests?

Expert teachers, administrators, parents, policy makers, and business and community leaders are currently serving on committees that are developing the blueprint for the voluntary national tests. The U.S. Department will contract with a test publisher to develop the tests based on the guidelines created by the committees. Additionally, a series of public meetings is being held with to discuss the importance of improving reading and math education for all children and how the tests will assist students in meeting this challenge.

How will the tests be reported?

The test publishers which contract with the schools will provide state and district level results to the states and districts. States and local districts will "own" the results of the tests and will determine how to use the individual results. Guidelines will be provided so that parents and teachers get accurate information that is helpful in understanding their child's performance.

Will the mathematics test cover the basic skills of math or will they reflect the so-called "whole math" in which the basics are ignored and it does not matter if students get the right answers but only if they can justify their answers?

Too Long
The voluntary national math test will expect students to master the basic skills in math. Students must still know how to multiply and divide. However, it will also expect that students master much more challenging material.

In fact, the recently released TIMSS results for our fourth graders demonstrates that our students measure up to international standards quite well in areas of basic computation. The area in which we do less well is in grades 5-8, when students should be moving beyond arithmetic and into geometry, algebra, and measurement. This is what high performing nations do, and what the standards encourage. The voluntary National Test will be based on these tough, demanding standards.

On the voluntary National Test students will be asked to find the correct answer to each problem. However, on some questions students will be asked to show their work and justify their answers. This is because in many situations, both in math and in life, there is more than one way of arriving at the right answer. Good math teaching encourages students to look at math problems from multiple perspectives, and understand the different methods that can be used to arrive at a correct conclusion.

Can the Voluntary National Tests be used to satisfy Title 1 requirements?

Waiting for an answer...

For more information, please visit our web site at <http://www.ed.gov/nationaltests>.