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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
4-7-97

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 5, 1997

*Look good
summary
PK*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRUCE REED
MIKE COHEN

SUBJECT: National Standards and Testing: Progress Report and Strategy

With much of our education agenda tied up in the budget debate, we continue to look for opportunities to promote initiatives that don't hinge entirely on Congressional action. This memo provides you with a progress report and strategy for the two major challenges to states -- national standards and testing, and charter schools. In the near future we will provide you with updates on other legislative and budget-related initiatives.

I. NATIONAL STANDARDS AND TESTS

Our objective is to have 30-40+ states participate in the initial 1999 administration of the national tests. To reach this objective, we are working on several interrelated fronts:

A. Developing the Tests: By the end of April, the Education Department will release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of the 4th grade reading and 8th grade math tests. A draft is already circulating for public comment. Contracts will be awarded by September 1. We do not yet know whether each test will be developed by a separate contractor, or whether one test developer will successfully bid to develop both. In addition, the Education Department and the test developers will establish a number of technical advisory groups and evaluation studies to assure the technical quality of the tests.

As part of the process of developing the RFP, the Education Department has held a number of public meetings with testing experts, state testing officials, test publishers, and others in the education and civil rights communities. (The Education Department has made the transcripts of these meetings, and other related documents, widely available on the Internet.)

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These sessions have raised a number of important issues which will be addressed as the work proceeds.

First, virtually all groups have stressed the importance of ensuring the technical quality of the tests, and of helping parents and the public understand the nature and purposes of the tests. This is particularly important in light of experiences in a number of states in which technical problems or public misunderstandings have led to heated debate about the testing program. Some urged that the time line be slowed down to accommodate these concerns, but the Education Department continues to believe that the time line is realistic and appropriate. We agree, and see no reason to delay the Spring 1999 date for the initial test administration.

*in 1999
Must do
Spring 1999*

Second, a number of states anticipate a challenge in integrating these new tests into their ongoing testing programs, especially states that are now well along in developing new tests aligned with recently developed state standards. Some states would find it easier to "embed" a small number of additional test items into their existing tests, rather than administer a separate and additional test. But this approach does not appear to be technically feasible if we are to have a valid test. Other states have suggested that a 4th grade reading test would be more valuable to them if it were administered in the Fall rather than the Spring, since their goal -- like yours -- is for students to read independently by the end of the 3rd grade. The Education Department is studying this possibility.

Third, many testing experts suggested that the 8th grade math test be based on the NAEP framework rather than on the TIMSS framework. They argued that the NAEP framework is more explicit and more widely accepted among the states, and that student scores could then be reported according to the NAEP achievement levels (basic, proficient and advanced) as will be the case with the reading test. The Education Department has determined that this would be a preferable approach, and that it will still be possible to provide individual student scores in terms of the TIMSS as well, because of the very high overlap in the content of NAEP and TIMSS. Therefore, the final test will still meet your initial commitment of providing students with internationally benchmarked scores.

OK

B. A Governing Body to Ensure the Tests Are National, Not Federal: We are working to determine how best to establish an advisory or governing body that can provide bipartisan support for this effort, and assurance that the tests measure what they are supposed to based on the widely accepted NAEP frameworks. Mike Cohen, Mike Smith and other Education Department officials have been consulting with governors of both parties, Congressional staff and others, with the aim of establishing an advisory mechanism that will garner strong bipartisan support among governors and in the Congress. Secretary Riley met last week with Gov. Thompson, and is working to set up a meeting in mid-May with a bipartisan group of 8-10 governors, hopefully including Romer, Hunt, Zell Miller, Bob Miller, Thompson, Engler, and Voinovich. Secretary Riley, Mike Smith and Mike Cohen will also continue meeting with members of Congress over the next several weeks. While the additional consultations may change our thinking significantly, our current plan is as follows:

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- Create an interim, bipartisan advisory council, in consultation with governors and members of Congress in both parties. We would probably appoint governors, business leaders, and educators currently serving on related groups such as the National Education Goals Panel, ACHIEVE (the group established to follow-up last year's education summit in Palisades), and the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), as well as teachers, testing experts and others. The announcement of this council would be an opportunity to demonstrate bipartisan Congressional and gubernatorial support for the testing initiative. Staff-level conversations suggest that key House Republicans, including Reps. Frank Riggs, John Porter, and perhaps Bill Goodling might be willing to participate in a White House announcement of an advisory council if our consultations continue to go well.
 - Once this council is established, we think it may be possible to gain NGA's endorsement for the testing initiative at the Summer meeting in Nevada. Both the ACHIEVE Board of Directors and the National Education Goals Panel will be meeting in conjunction with the NGA meeting. If your schedule permits, it would be possible for you to meet with both groups, to demonstrate broad support for your standards initiative and to help energize governors and business leaders behind common educational goals.
 - These two steps would create a favorable climate for Congressional consideration of legislation to reauthorize the National Assessment of Education Progress and the National Assessment Governing Board, which are scheduled for consideration sometime in this Congress. At that time, we can determine if NAGB should assume policy responsibility for the national tests, with Congressional support. (At present, NAGB is prohibited by law from overseeing the development of individual-level tests.) These steps would also improve our ability to win any legislative battles we may face on this issue, such as any attempt to prohibit the Education Department from using funds for the continued development of the tests.
- Please note that we are optimistic but not yet confident that we can secure this level of bipartisan cooperation. Much will depend upon how effectively we can enlist the help of a core group of Republican governors.

C. Building Momentum through State and Local Endorsements: As you know, we now have commitments from leaders in Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina and California, as well as the Department of Defense Schools. A number of other states look promising, including Missouri and Vermont. However, we believe that the prospects for signing up large numbers of states will depend largely upon getting a bipartisan group of governors bought in to the right advisory body. This step will take some time to work out, but is essential to sustain this effort. In the meantime, we are pursuing three major strategies to sign up states:

1. Visits to State Legislatures: We would like to schedule trips to three more state legislatures over the next three months -- two to states that agree to sign up for the tests, and at least one to a state like Washington that is considering charter school legislation (see below). Your travel plans and upcoming adjournments in some states will make that more complicated, but we are working with the Communications and Scheduling departments to get it done. One possibility worth pursuing would be to travel to Washington State to join Gary Locke at the signing of a charter schools law. We are tracking that legislation: depending on when (and whether) it passes, a signing could take place as early as April 17 or as late as mid-May.

2. State School Officers: Last month the Council of Chief State School Officers presented the Vice President with an endorsement of your testing initiative. We are working with chief state school officers to enlist additional states. However, in many cases, even our biggest supporters (such as Rick Mills from New York) will want to secure the support of the state board of education and the governor where possible before making public commitments. Even in California, where we have broad support, Delaine Eastin and Wilson appointees on the Board of Education are already feuding over whether the state legislature needs to act before the tests can go forward.

3. Major Cities: We are also working to sign up big cities, such as Los Angeles and Boston, regardless of the respective state participation. The intent here is to further demonstrate momentum, underscore that these standards are especially important for the students and schools for which society typically has low expectations, and show that these tests can in fact be tools to lift people up, by helping to stimulate new efforts and focus existing ones to improve teaching and learning.

We believe it will be possible, over the next several months, to work with mayors, school superintendents and school boards, teachers unions, institutions of higher education, as well as parent, community and business groups in 5-10 cities. We will seek broad partnerships in each city that pledges to use the national tests, and commit to specific, locally designed efforts in each community to help prepare students to meet these standards. We will ask the Education Department to work with these cities, provide them with information on best practices, and help the cities learn from one another. Once we have a few cities in hand, a White House event announcing this partnership should generate considerable excitement and attention. It will also strengthen support for the testing initiative among core constituencies.

You can take a number of steps to add momentum to these efforts, including:

Hold a town meeting or other forum on reading and math standards. We would like to create a setting in which you interact with teachers, parents and students, and use examples of student work, sample test questions and answers, or videos of teaching to high standards, as a way of helping the public come to some concrete understanding of what the reading and math standards are really all about.

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Good but need to make sure we've got the substance right

- **Meet with textbook publishers and software developers.** Such a meeting would provide you with an opportunity to urge (or enlist commitments from) publishers to upgrade the quality of textbooks by aligning them with higher standards and expectations. You could also highlight the efforts of software developers to produce materials for home and classroom use that are aligned with the standards.
- **Meet with groups involved in promoting literacy and math achievement.** Through the America Reads initiative and the Education Department's previous early reading initiative, there are several national and grassroots coalitions of groups that are supporting early reading initiatives. You can meet with these groups, at the White House or elsewhere, and emphasize the connections between their efforts to promote learning and your call for national standards and tests. In addition, as a result of a directive you issued to the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation last month, there is an interagency effort underway to organize federal agency resources, and to identify nonfederal resources (e.g., Nobel Laureates, math and science resources in the business community) that can be enlisted to support teaching and learning aimed at preparing students to meet 8th grade math standards. We will propose one or more events as part of this effort. Together, these will enable you to underscore that your testing initiative is not just about testing, but about mobilizing the nation to support learning to high standards.

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II. CHARTER SCHOOLS

Another important goal is to foster the creation of 3,000 charter schools within 5 years, up from the current level of 500. One challenge is expanding the number of states with charter schools legislation. Currently 25 states and D.C. authorize the creation of charter schools; we would like to raise the number of states to 30 by the end of 1997. Over the past couple of months, progress in state legislatures has been slow, due in part to an absence of strong centrist leadership at the state level, partisan differences, and occasional opposition by state and local union affiliates. In addition, in at least one state (Virginia) the potential racial impact of charter schools emerged as an issue.

However, there are some bright spots. In Washington State this week, the governor, schools superintendent, and legislators tentatively reached agreement on a charter schools bill. Mississippi passed a final bill this week, although it authorizes only 6 schools. Charter legislation is also alive in Missouri (as part of a big post-desegregation package), Indiana, Maine, Oregon, and Nevada.

To move things forward in these states, we recommend an event in the next several weeks -- ideally the Washington State trip if it works out, but at least a radio address. The Education Department is ready to release two important reports on charter schools. One is the first-year report of a major national charter school study. A key finding is that the number one obstacle for new charter schools to overcome is lack of access to start-up funding. The second report is a

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guidebook for school boards and other chartering authorities, which emphasizes the importance of effective accountability for charter schools -- an important issue, given problems that have emerged with loosely run schools in D.C. and elsewhere.

✓ In addition, the Education Department will soon announce a new competition for charter schools funds. It is also planning a national charter schools conference in late Summer or early Fall. These activities will provide support both to state efforts and to your FY98 request for \$100 million for charter schools.

UPDATE DRAFT -- May 2, 1997

IDEA, Vocational and Adult Education, and the Higher Education Act Reauthorizations: Progress and Strategy

Much of our education agenda (America Reads, Hope Scholarships, school construction) revolves around legislation being pursued as a part of the budget process. [We will update you on those initiatives in a separate memo]. In this memo we will provide a progress report and strategy on three significant pieces of legislation left over from the last Congress: the reauthorizations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, and the Adult Education Act. We will also report on the Higher Education Act, a reauthorization proposal for which will be introduced later this year. Finally, we will close with a note about the Goals 2000 Act, which is due to expire in 1999.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

Wait a week
After a long and difficult process, legislation to reauthorize IDEA died at the end of the last Congress. This time, Senator Lott's chief of staff, Dennis Hoppe, *check* has convened a bipartisan process involving key House and Senate staff and Administration officials, as well as advocacy groups, to work through a set of outstanding issues. *her* ~~The process is proceeding extremely well.~~ Department of Education negotiators feel there is a strong likelihood that the end result will closely reflect our reauthorization proposal, which featured six principles:

- Align the IDEA with State and local education reform efforts so students with disabilities can benefit from them.
- Improve results for students with disabilities through higher expectations and meaningful access to the general curriculum, to the maximum extent possible.
- Address individual needs in the least restrictive environment for the student.
- Provide families and teachers with the knowledge and training to effectively support students' learning.
- Focus on teaching and learning.
- Strengthen early intervention to ensure that every child starts school ready to learn.

~~The Republicans appear very eager to reach an agreement, and last week made a proposal on approximately eight outstanding issues that Administration participants characterize as a good faith effort. Among other issues, the GOP proposal on discipline would not allow for a cessation of services--therefore addressing a key issue for Secretary Riley and one of the major sticking points last session. On another important issue, the funding formula, House and Senate Republicans are split, but Education negotiators feel that the eventual position will closely mirror~~

love take our

ours, which is that funding should be based on census data, rather than child counts, to diminish any incentives for over-identifying students. This week Democrats were scheduled to present a counter-offer, and then members (including Senators Lott, Jeffords, Coats, Kennedy and Harkin, and Congressmen Goodling, Riggs, Miller, Scott, and Martinez) and Judy Heumann will meet next Wednesday. If all goes well, leaders will agree to vote down all amendments, and the bill will be moved by the end of Spring.

If there is one sour point, it is that some of the education groups think that the new requirements for student Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are too burdensome. The Department negotiators agree that the statutory requirements will become more prescriptive than in the previous version of the law, but not more so than in the existing regulations. There does not seem to be any sense that these concerns are serious enough to endanger the legislation.

ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education Act grants go to States to fund programs that assist disadvantaged adults in developing basic skills, achieving high school equivalency certification, and learning English. An Administration reauthorization proposal was submitted in May of 1995, but adult education became folded into the Careers bill and died at the end of the 104th Congress. This time there is strong bipartisan support for reauthorizing adult education, and the Department is close to submitting a revised proposal.

The Department's proposal seeks to improve the Act in several ways. First, the bill would essentially streamline twelve separate programs into two: a) a single adult ed State grant, eliminating many set asides for specific target populations and programs (such as literacy for prisoners), and authorizing waivers; and b) a small (3%) national activities authorization. Second, the bill would place a priority on programs based on research and practice evidence of effectiveness, including programs that utilize technology well, provide learning in real-life contexts, use well-trained instructors and staff, and are of sufficient duration and intensity. Third, the bill would include strengthened performance and accountability provisions, building on existing Department-state level efforts to develop a strong performance management system. Finally, the funding formula would gradually change to better focus resources on target populations.

This legislation is expected to progress without controversy over its substance, and to follow fairly closely the Administration's proposal. However, hanging over from the 104th Congress there is an issue over how it will be packaged with related legislation. Sen. Jeffords' key staffer--formerly with Sen. Kassebaum--is likely to favor an approach that combines multiple programs (such as vocational education and training programs) into a single bill, while others would prefer to consider these issues separately this time. [Verify; get more on timing] [Our Strategy?]

[Probably delete the following: Nationally, 25% of adult education funds are federal. Under current law, fifteen percent of each state's grant is set aside for experimental demos and teacher training, with states distributing the balance to a variety of local educational and community agencies. There are caps or set-asides for GED programs, services to criminal offenders, and

public housing authorities].

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vocational education turned into one of the most contentious issues of the 104th Congress. In 1995 the Administration submitted a reauthorization proposal to Congress that would have strengthened support for school-to-work systems, consolidated numerous voc-ed programs, and given states greater flexibility. Vocational education subsequently became a part of the Careers legislation that would have replaced existing authorizations for voc ed, job training, School-to-Work and adult ed. After an arduous, bitter negotiating process, a conference report was approved but never voted on in either house.

The Department is preparing a new reauthorization proposal which should be ready for OMB review shortly. Along the same lines as the Adult Education Act proposal, the Department's legislation would streamline 23 existing Perkins programs into 5, including a flexible state grant, a national program authority, and Tech-Prep education. For the State grant authorization, activities that were formerly set-asides or categorical (such as programs for displaced homemakers and criminal offenders) would still be allowable but not required; waivers would also be allowed. The bill would link within-state funding decisions to program priorities, such as:

- ensuring that all students can achieve to challenging state academic standards and industry-recognized skill standards;
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The bill would encourage the use of career education programs as a vehicle for broad-based high school reform. Moreover, the proposal would include strong accountability provisions and a system of performance goals and indicators, and would better target funds to states and local areas with the greatest need.

While perhaps not as politically charged as in 1996, this piece of legislation could encounter some rough going over the topic of school-to-work opportunities, the authorization of which is scheduled to sunset in 2001. Phyllis Schlafly and other conservatives have been beating the drums against school-to-work, replacing Goals 2000 in terms of its popularity as a target, charging, for

updates / clarifications on
IDEA
Voc Ed
Adult Ed

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example, that STW would put the federal government in charge of selecting individual student's occupations. Congressman Riggs would like to address the issue by tying voc ed to school reform, rather than explicitly stressing school-to-work. The Department is cautiously open to that approach, but it isn't clear how much this will help in dealing with the strongest opponents of STWO.

As with adult ed, this bill could run into problems over packaging, with the House reluctant to get into another Careers bill quagmire, but the Senate more interested in a combined approach. One bright spot here is reports that Senator Lott has made supportive comments of voc ed.

HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

[Maureen McLaughlin drafting this section]

GOALS 2000: EDUCATE AMERICA ACT

Decision will need to be made during the current Congress....



Maureen_McLaughlin @ ed.gov
04/21/97 03:19:00 PM

Record Type: Record

To: William R. Kincaid

cc:

Subject: Draft HEA reauthorization paper

Bill,

Per your request, Terry Dozier will provide us with the percentage of teachers needed in urban areas. We will forward that number to you tomorrow.

Francine

Here is a draft of a status report on HEA reauthorization, requested by DPC staff:

HIGHER EDUCATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION

The Higher Education Act (HEA), which authorizes all student aid programs, support services for students, teacher preparation programs, graduate and international education programs, institutional aid, and more, will expire at the end of fiscal year 1998. The Administration and the Congress are in the process of developing proposals.

OUTREACH AND LIKELY TIMETABLE: The Department held a series of public meetings in six cities across the country in December 1996 to hear the concerns of the higher education community—including students, parents, financial aid administrators, college presidents, and representatives of the loan industry—on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. The Department is now putting together its proposals based on public input and intensive work by staff task forces. The Department hopes to have a proposal by late spring. At the same time, ED will provide a full package of legislative specs to OMB.

The Senate and House Committees have been holding hearings for the past few months and are planning to hold more (probably four more in the Senate; unknown number in the House) over the next few months. They have requested—and in the House received—written comments from the higher education community on specific recommendations. The Senate's deadline for these comments is the end of April. At the present time, the Senate hopes to markup a bill in the late fall and the House by the end of the year, with conference occurring next year.

ADMINISTRATION'S COMPLEMENTARY THREE PART AGENDA FOR HIGHER EDUCATION:

The Administration's HEA reauthorization proposal is one part of an integrated agenda on higher education. The other two pieces are the President's tax proposals for higher education and the President's FY 1998 budget proposals to significantly increase Pell Grants for needy students and reduce student loan costs. These pieces make up the HOPE Act, which the President sent to Congress and has just been introduced in the Senate and House. The third component of this agenda is the HEA reauthorization, which complements and supports the HOPE Act.

Some in Congress and the higher education community are concerned that there will be limited funds for the reauthorization if the tax and budget proposals are enacted this year. Some do not want to see the tax system used to provide aid for higher education; rather they would like to switch the funds to the spending side, particularly Pell Grants. Senator Jeffords and Congressmen Goodling and McKeon have indicated to the Secretary that they do not want to make changes in the student loan program or the Pell Grant program through the budget process this year but want to wait and consider all changes as part of the regular reauthorization process. Others see the tax side as the main opportunity to help middle income families struggling to pay for college and believe that the student loan and Pell Grant changes--which will benefit students--should be made as soon as possible.

ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIES: Against this backdrop the Department is developing its proposal for HEA reauthorization. As the Secretary indicated in his testimony to the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources (February 27th), the HEA provides a strong foundation for higher education that we must improve to ensure that it can address the challenges of the twenty-first century. He affirmed that, while we are still developing our ideas and do not have complete proposals, we will make decisions that benefit students. In contrast to most previous reauthorizations that have included a long wish list of programs, the Secretary indicated that we will propose an aggressive but realistic set of programs, fully paid for within a balanced budget.

He also laid out four principles guiding the reauthorization, which are quite similar to the themes of the House and Senate Committees.

The first principle is access--opportunity with responsibility. The Administration must ensure a strong vibrant Pell Grant program and must make changes to ensure that students and families are not penalized for saving.

The second principle is support of effective education: high standards and high achievement. Teacher preparation is vital in achieving this goal. While Title V of the HEA authorizes a myriad of disconnected programs, we plan to propose targeted programs that can make a difference in a few priority areas concentrating on recruitment, preparation and support for new teachers in the first few years of teaching. Just last week, the Department hosted a national forum on attracting and preparing

teachers for the 21st century. The forum brought together over 60 of the best teachers, for an indepth conversation with forty higher education and policy leaders who are charting the future of teacher preparation programs across America to obtain input and ideas for our proposal.

The third guiding principle is to simplify program delivery and improve management. For example, the Department's proposal will improve its system of oversight of institutions that participate in these programs and strive toward a proper balance between reducing burdens on schools and protecting students and Federal funds. To strike this balance, the Department will propose a performance-based tailored approach to statute and regulation instead of the current "one size fits all" approach.

The fourth goal is to improve outreach to potential students and ensure strong links among elementary and secondary education, postsecondary education and employment. The Department's early intervention proposal will reach out early to potential students so that everyone places a high priority on continuing their education. The Department's proposal will also strengthen TRIO programs by adding flexibility so that they can respond quickly to students' changing needs. The TRIO programs should reward the high performance of schools and provide essential support and information to disadvantaged students.

Legislation

School-to-Work Opportunities Act

The "School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1993," another major Administration initiative, was submitted by Education Secretary Riley and Labor Secretary Reich to Congress on August 4, 1993. The final legislation (H.R. 2884/S. 1361) was signed into law by President Clinton on May 4, 1994 (P.L. 103-239). This initiative, jointly administered by the Departments of Education and Labor, provides support to States and communities to build high school learning systems that prepare students for further education and careers.

Career Preparation Education Reform Act

On April 6, 1995, Secretary Riley submitted to Congress the "Career Preparation Education Reform Act of 1995." The legislation amends the existing Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act to strengthen support for school-to-work opportunities systems consolidate numerous vocational education programs, and give States greater flexibility. The legislation was subsequently introduced in the Senate as S. 696 and in the House as H.R. 1426. The Senate and House have considered this proposal in their work on related pieces of legislation, S. 143 and H.R. 1617.

Workforce and Career Development Act of 1996 (The Careers Bill)

H.R. 1617, passed in the House, and S. 143, passed by the Senate, were bills that would have replaced current authorizing legislation for vocational education, job training, School-to-Work, and adult education. Committee members from the House and Senate met in Conference to resolve differences between the two bills and, on July 17, 1996, completed work on a bill, the Workforce and Career Development Act of 1996. The bill was filed on July 25, 1996 but never came up for a vote during the 104th Congress. The 105th Congress will convene on January 7, 1997 at which time the process begins anew. The Administration, in consultation with the field, is working on an alternative proposal, to be considered in 1997.

More detailed information on this and other legislation is available at [the Library of Congress's Thomas](#) web site, where you may select from several databases that Provide full bill text, bill summaries, and bill status by sponsor, keyword, and bill number. Selecting "hot legislation" provides a list of important legislation in such categories as "educational policy" and "elementary and secondary education."

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Legislation

Adult Education and Family Literacy Reform Act

On May 8, 1995, Secretary Riley submitted to Congress the "Adult Education and Family Literacy Reform Act of 1995," the administration's plan to create a comprehensive strategy for meeting our Nation's adult education and family literacy needs. The bill amends the existing Adult Education Act and consolidates numerous programs into a simplified, flexible funding stream. The legislation was subsequently introduced in the Senate as S. 797 and in the House as H.R. 1605. The Senate and House have considered this proposal in their work on related pieces of legislation, S. 143 and H.R. 1617.

Workforce and Career Development Act of 1996 (The Careers Bill)

H.R. 1617, passed in the House, and S. 143, passed by the Senate, were bills that would have replaced current authorizing legislation for vocational education, job training, School-to-Work, and adult education. Committee members from the House and Senate met in Conference to resolve differences between the two bills and, on July 17, 1996, completed work on a bill, the Workforce and Career Development Act of 1996. The bill was filed on July 25, 1996 but never came up for a vote during the 104th Congress. The 105th Congress will convene on January 7, 1997 at which time the process begins anew. The Administration, in consultation with the field, is working on an alternative proposal, to be considered in 1997.

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A rectangular button with a black background and white text that reads "OVAE Home". The button has a slight 3D effect with a lighter border.

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Notes: 14 pages, incl. cover

This is in response to your 4/8 request to Trish.

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Department of Education

**Statement by
Patricia W. McNeil
Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education
On Adult Education and Literacy**

February 25, 1997

House Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education, Training, and Life-Long Learning

Chairman McKeon, Congressman Kildee, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Administration's proposal for adult education and literacy. Our bill, which will soon be transmitted to the Congress, is our plan for adult education and literacy in the twenty-first century. We know that the twenty-first century will place increasing skill demands on Americans -- demands that the Nation must equip its citizens to meet if they are to succeed as workers, as parents, and as citizens in our increasingly complex society.

The Development of Federal Support for Adult Basic Education

Today, as we start the bipartisan process of reshaping the Adult Education Act, we should look back to more than 30 years ago to the passage of Title II-B of The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which led all States to establish adult education delivery systems. Just two years later, the Adult Education Act was enacted and authorized programs of instruction for persons 18 years and older whose inability to read or write English was a substantial impairment to their ability to obtain employment. This Act has been amended and its purpose broadened five times since 1966.

We should credit the leaders in the House and Senate for their commitment to these efforts:

Chairman Goodling, Representatives Kildee and Sawyer, Chairman Jeffords and former Senators Simon and Pell.

Today, the Adult Education Act provides grants to the States to support programs that assist educationally disadvantaged adults in developing basic skills, achieving certification of high school equivalency, and learning English. Fifteen percent of each State's grant is set aside for experimental demonstrations and teacher training projects. States distribute the balance to a variety of local educational and community agencies that provide adult education. Current law limits the funds that States may use for high school equivalency programs to 20 percent, sets aside a minimum of 10 percent for services to criminal offenders and other institutionalized individuals, and requires that States use some funds for "Gateway Grants" to public housing authorities.

The Importance of the Adult Education and Literacy Programs

The adult education and literacy programs of the Department of Education are integral to President Clinton's "Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century." As you know, the President has challenged the Nation to ensure that every 18-year old can go to college and that all adults are able to keep on learning.

Current adult literacy statistics reveal what a challenge this is. The 1993 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) found that between 26 and 30 million adults aged 16 to 64 years were at

the lowest level of basic skills -- roughly at or below a fifth grade level. Of those at the lowest literacy levels, 25 percent were immigrants and 67 percent were not high school graduates. More than 40 percent of the group with the lowest literacy skills lived in poverty, in contrast to between 4 and 8 percent of individuals scoring in the two highest levels of the literacy assessment. Seven out of ten of our Nation's prisoners in Federal and State facilities tested at the lower levels on the assessment.

Adult education programs support State and community efforts to increase access to college. In 1995, 37 percent of adult education students were youth ages 16 to 24. In 1995, 75,000 adults received their high school credentials through adult education high school equivalency programs and 270,000 were awarded the GED. These credentials open the door to postsecondary education. Annually, 150,000 to 200,000 adult education program completers go on to postsecondary education. Once they have their high school credentials, adult education students can join the ranks of Americans whom the Administration seeks to help complete at least two years of postsecondary education through HOPE Scholarships, tuition tax deductions, and student financial aid.

At a recent ceremony recognizing the recipients of the 1996 Secretary's Awards for Outstanding Adult Education Programs, I had an opportunity to hear ten adult students eloquently describe how adult education had affected their lives. A recent graduate of the Mott Adult High School in Flint, Michigan, described how, since earning her high school diploma, she had obtained a good job for the first time in her life, enrolled in college, and was considering running for the

Flint City Council. I heard from a 20-year-old single mother of two on public assistance, who had enrolled in the Young Adult Learning Academy in New York City. She earned her high school equivalency diploma, has a full-time job in a child care center, and is enrolled in the Leadership Program at Marymount Manhattan College. She is no longer on public assistance. Another young single mother, age 22, had dropped out of high school at age 16. To become a good role model for her two children and to get a better job, she enrolled in a basic skills program at Wilkes Community College in North Carolina. She wants to become a math teacher and is well on her way. She completed her adult high school diploma requirements and is attending classes at the community college.

Adult education and literacy is also an important component of life-long learning. Adults of all ages and at all skill levels encounter changes in their lives that make it necessary to improve their basic skills, and the adult education system is there to help when that happens. Sometimes an individual is confronted at work with new technology that requires improved reading or math skills. As the Nation moves from an industrial-based, to a service-based, and then to a knowledge-based economy, many workers become dislocated from middle-class jobs. Although they may have learned to function well in their prior occupations with limited literacy skills, these workers are now faced with the challenge of starting new careers or entering job training.

The Consortium for Worker Education (CWE) is an example of the many work-based programs sponsored by Federal adult education funds. The CWE is a not-for-profit organization

comprised of 34 participating labor unions in New York City. CWE's mission is to provide education and training that offers workers opportunities for life-long learning and training in skills required to build careers in the rapidly changing world of work. Each year, more than 24,000 adults participate in English-as-a-second language (ESL) , basic literacy, high school equivalency, workplace literacy, and computer literacy programs. CWE has an impressive track record, including an 80 percent retention and completion rate for its adult students.

Welfare reform's emphasis on moving individuals into work will create further demands on individuals to improve their basic skills. More than one out of three AFDC, public assistance, and food stamp recipients tested scored in the lowest NALS proficiency level, compared with 22 percent of the total population. The 1996 welfare reform act requires youth that are receiving welfare payments to be in school or work toward high school completion if they do not have a high school credential. It envisions that clients making the transition to work will continue their life-long learning through part-time education enabling them to advance in their careers. The adult education system is the foundation on which life-long learning is achieved by the most educationally disadvantaged adults.

Adult education also helps America's immigrants to become citizens. Their economic independence and their ability to execute their rights and responsibilities as citizens require mastery of the English language. The ESL programs offered by the adult education system enroll about 1.4 million individuals annually. In 1995, 400,000 basic ESL students completed the basic ESL level and advanced to the intermediate level, indicating an initial mastery of basic English

proficiency. The ESL target population varies across States; for example, 56 percent of the population resides in California and less than 2 percent in Tennessee. Six states (California, Florida, Texas, New York, Illinois, Arizona) enroll 80 percent of all ESL adult learners nationally. In States with large numbers of immigrants, the demand for ESL classes outstrips the capacity of programs to deliver services.

Perhaps the most critical role of adult education and literacy programs is fulfilled when a parent enrolls in order to learn to read to a child. The impact of parental literacy is so profound because of the inter-generational benefits. We must equip parents to become more involved in their children's learning and challenge them to meet the President's goal of ensuring that every student can read independently and well by the end of the third grade. Family literacy programs and parents reading to their young children on a regular basis have a demonstrated impact on the literacy and school performance of children.

The Administration's Legislation Proposal

Let me briefly describe for you how the Administration's proposal will help the adult education system meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

First, the bill would promote program quality by establishing priorities that are based on a strong foundation of research and effective education practices. In making grants to local service providers, States would give priority to programs that effectively employ advances in technology,

provide learning in real life contexts (such as work, family, and citizenship), use well-trained instructors and staff, and are of sufficient intensity and duration for participants to achieve substantial learning gains. Priority would also go to programs that have strong links with other education, career development and training, and social service programs. We will promote quality education by working with States to ensure teaching to high standards. For example, the development of basic skills certificates that are widely recognized credentials of achievement may promote high standards for learning at levels prior to high school completion.

Second, the bill would empower States and communities to meet their unique needs through streamlining and increased flexibility. The bill would consolidate multiple program authorizations into a single State grant. Many set asides for specific target populations and types of programs would be eliminated. Waivers of statutory and regulatory provisions would be made available in order to carry out adult education and literacy programs more effectively.

Third, the bill would include strong performance and accountability provisions to promote program improvement. Working together, the State Directors of Adult Education and the Office of Vocational and Adult Education have begun building a national system of performance indicators to gauge the progress of adult education. The bill would authorize the Secretary to continue to work collaboratively with the States to identify and compile information on the participation in, and the impact of, adult education. Building on this system, performance goals will be established that define the level of student achievement to be attained, and States will regularly measure and evaluate the progress made toward these goals. The Secretary would be

authorized to assist States in meeting the goals, take corrective action with States that fail to make progress, and award supplementary grants in recognition of exemplary performance. Similarly, States would be able to work with local grantees to ensure that they make progress toward their performance goals.

Fourth, the bill would include a targeted formula and financing system aimed at strengthening the Federal-State partnership that supports adult education. The Federal investment in adult education and literacy makes up about 25 percent of the national expenditures on these programs. In 25 States, the Federal investment constitutes at least 50 percent of expenditures. In addition, the adult education grant pays for about 90 percent of the training of adult education instructors. Our bill would continue to provide grants directly to the State educational agency or other State-designated agency responsible for administering adult education. The Federal-to-State allocation formula in current law will be maintained, except for the elimination of the count of in-school youth, who are not part of the target population. A "hold harmless" provision would ensure that each State's share of the appropriation does not decline more than 10 percent per year. A "maintenance-of-effort" provision would encourage States to continue their investment in adult education.

Finally, it is important to note the role the Federal Act plays in building the capacity and quality of the adult education system through flexible State and national leadership activities. State leadership activities would include professional training and development, monitoring and evaluating the quality of services, establishing State content standards for adult education and

literacy, developing program performance measures, and promoting the use of technology for teaching, learning, and managing programs.

Our national leadership strategy is carefully focused on activities that will benefit the field and is accomplished through partnerships with the States, the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), and the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. We have worked closely with NIFL and the States over the past several months to clarify each of our appropriate roles in technical assistance, research, and development. Our joint strategy is reflected in our legislative proposal. National leadership funds would continue to support such activities as research on the condition and progress of literacy in the United States, the development of effective practices and model programs, such as distance learning, and the evaluation of services and instructional strategies. The Department plans to focus on developing certificates of basic skills and new uses for technology. NIFL, as well as national leadership activities, is funded through adult education national programs.

I believe our bill successfully addresses the need for quality, innovation, flexibility, and accountability in adult education and literacy. I look forward to working closely with this Subcommittee to develop bipartisan legislation. I am happy to answer any questions that you have at this time.

Carl D. Perkins Career Preparation Education Act

The Administration's proposal for the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act will continue, expand, and improve the federal investment in career preparation education. The bill would:

- *Streamline* numerous existing authorizations into a single state grant.
- Provide states with more *flexibility* by eliminating set asides and providing for federal waivers.
- Promote *high standards for learner achievement and quality standards for programs*.
- Include strong *accountability* provisions and a system of performance goals and indicators.
- *Target* funds to states and local areas with the greatest need.

Streamlining and flexibility

- The bill would streamline 23 existing Perkins programs into 5, including a flexible state grant, a national program authority, Tech-Prep education, Indians (Tribes/Bureau-Funded Schools and Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Vocational Institutions Indians), and Native Hawaiians. Activities that were once categorical programs or set asides, such as programs for displaced homemakers and criminal offenders, would continue to be allowable activities.

Priorities for program quality

- The bill would establish program priorities to focus on program quality and link within-state funding decisions to the priorities. The bill would require states and local recipients to give priority to programs that:
 - Ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve to challenging state academic standards and industry-recognized skill standards;
 - Promote the integration of academic and vocational education;
 - Support the use of career majors in broad occupational clusters or industry sectors;
 - Effectively link secondary and postsecondary education;
 - Provide students with experience in and understanding of all aspects of the industry;
 - Combine school-based and work-based instruction;
 - Provide schoolsite and worksite mentoring; and

- Provide career guidance and counseling for students.
- The bill would also encourage the use of career education program funds to achieve broad-based high school reform.

Accountability

- Building on their current goals and indicators, states would be required to identify performance goals for student achievement.
- Building on the current collaboration among states and the Department to establish core indicators of performance, states would submit uniform data to the Secretary, which could be used to comply with Government Performance and Results Act requirements.
- The bill would authorize states to work with or sanction grantees that do not meet their performance objectives, as well as to use state leadership funds for performance incentive grants to local programs that provide exemplary services. The bill also would authorize the Secretary to work with or sanction poor-performing states and to make awards for national excellence to states that provide exemplary services.

Tech-Prep education

- The bill has a separate stream of funding for Tech-Prep and requires states to compete funds within each state.
- Tech-Prep could include 4-year bachelor's degree programs in addition to the existing 2+2 sequence of study.
- State plans would have to include a description of how Tech-Prep would be integrated with basic state grant priorities.
- The bill would authorize states to work with or sanction grantees that do not meet their performance objectives. The bill also would authorize the Secretary to work with or sanction poor-performing states.

The formula and financing

- The state educational agency (SEA) would continue to administer the program, based on a state plan developed and submitted to the Secretary by the SEA after review and comment by the Governor.
- The bill would maintain current-law state formula's targeting on the basis of population

and per capita income, but it drops the population aged twenty-five to sixty-five from the formula.

- A "hold harmless" provision in the formula would ensure no state's share of the appropriation is rateably reduced by more than 10 percent per year during the period of the Act.
- A state's failure to meet the maintenance of effort requirement would result in a reduction of its grant that is proportional to the state's reduction in spending.
- States would distribute eighty (FY 1998 and 99) to eighty-five (FY 2000 through 2005) percent of their allocation to locals by formula based on Title I of the ESEA for secondary and Pell grant and BIA recipients for postsecondary. The distribution formula for secondary would no longer take into account the number of IDEA students and the total number of students and adults served by the LEA. States could distribute funds using an alternative formula if they meet certain conditions to the Secretary's satisfaction.

State leadership

- The bill would provide up to 20 percent of state funds for state leadership activities in FY 1998 and 1999 and up to 15 percent in FY 2000 through 2005, of which the state could use up to 5 percent of funds for state administration activities. State leadership activities would include professional development, curricula development and dissemination, career guidance and counseling for students, educational technology, and supporting vocational student organizations, among others.

National activities

- The bill would allow the Secretary to reserve up to 7 percent of the basic grant for national activities, a national assessment, a national research center, and the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC). National activities would include research, development, demonstrations, dissemination, and evaluation. No more than 2 percent of the amount appropriated for the basic state grant would be available for Awards for Excellence after FY 2000.
- The bill would authorize the following percentages of funds for Indians and Native Hawaiians:
 - 1.5 percent of the basic grant for Tribes/Bureau-Funded Schools and Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Vocational Institutions
 - 0.25 percent of the basic grant for Native Hawaiians

National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee

- The bill would significantly streamline the required activities of NOICC.
- The bill updates the membership of the Coordinating Committee.

Authorization of Appropriations

- The bill would authorize the following amounts for FY 1998:
 - Basic State Grant - \$1,064,047,000
 - Tech-Prep - \$105,000,000
- The authorization for FY 1999 to 2005 would be such sums.

DRAFT

IDEA, Vocational and Adult Education, and the Higher Education Act Reauthorizations: Progress and Strategy

Much of our education agenda (reading, hope scholarships, school construction) revolves around legislation that we have proposed and are pursuing as a part of the budget process. We will update you on those initiatives in a separate memo. In this memo we will provide a progress report and strategy on three significant pieces of legislation left over from the last Congress: the reauthorizations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Vocational Education, and Adult Education. We will also report on the Higher Education Act, a reauthorization proposal for which will be introduced later this year. We will close with a note about the Goals 2000 Act, which is due to expire in 1999.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

After a long and difficult process, legislation to reauthorize IDEA died at the end of the last Congress. This time, Senator Lott's chief of staff has convened a bipartisan process involving key House and Senate staff and Administration officials, as well as advocacy groups, to work through a set of outstanding issues. The process is proceeding extremely well. Department of Education negotiators feel there is a strong likelihood that the end result will closely reflect our reauthorization proposal, which featured six principles:

- Align the IDEA with State and local education reform efforts so students with disabilities can benefit from them.
- Improve results for students with disabilities through higher expectations and meaningful access to the general curriculum, to the maximum extent possible.
- Address individual needs in the least restrictive environment for the student.
- Provide families and teachers with the knowledge and training to effectively support students' learning.
- Focus on teaching and learning.
- Strengthen early intervention to ensure that every child starts school ready to learn.

The Republicans appear very eager to reach an agreement, and last week made a proposal on approximately eight outstanding issues that Administration participants characterize as a good faith effort. Among other issues, the GOP proposal on discipline would not allow for a cessation of services--therefore addressing a key issue for Secretary Riley and one of the major sticking points last session. On another important issue, the funding formula, House and Senate Republicans are split, but Education negotiators feel that the eventual position will closely mirror

ours, which is that funding should be based on census data, rather than child counts, to diminish any incentives for over-identifying students. This week Democrats were scheduled to present a counter-offer, and then members (including Senators Lott, Jeffords, Coats, Kennedy and Harkin, and Congressmen Goodling, Riggs, Miller, Scott, and Martinez) and Judy Heumann will meet next Wednesday. If all goes well, leaders will agree to vote down all amendments, and the bill will be moved by the end of Spring.

If there is one sour point, it is that some of the education groups think that the new requirements for student Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are too burdensome. The Department negotiators agree that the statutory requirements will become more prescriptive than in the previous version of the law, but not more so than in the existing regulations. There does not seem to be any sense that these concerns are serious enough to endanger the legislation.

IMPROVING THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT: A SUMMARY OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL

The administration's proposal for improving education for children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is designed to ensure that the fundamental objective of the law is achieved: that all children with disabilities are provided the equal educational opportunity that the Constitution guarantees. Our proposal is based on six principles that support our mission to improve educational results for children with disabilities.

1. Align the IDEA with State and local education reform efforts so students with disabilities can benefit from them.

- ☐ Ensure that the IDEA supports State and local efforts to meet the individual needs of each child with a disability as part of overall efforts to help all children meet challenging standards and make a successful transition to further education and employment.

2. Improve results for students with disabilities through higher expectations and meaningful access to the general curriculum, to the maximum extent possible.

- ☐ Enhance participation of children with disabilities in the general curriculum through improvements to the individualized education program (IEP).
- ☐ Increase parental involvement by requiring regular reporting to parents on their children's progress, by means such as report cards, and by including parents in decisions about their children's placement.
- ☐ Increase involvement of regular education teachers in developing the IEP.
- ☐ Focus on improving educational results by providing for the inclusion of children with disabilities in State and district assessments, the development of State performance goals for children with disabilities, and regular reports to the public on progress toward meeting the goals.

3. Address individual needs in the least restrictive environment for the student.

- ☐ Make student evaluation and re-evaluation procedures more instructionally relevant and eliminate unnecessary testing.
- ☐ Encourage eligibility determinations that focus on each child's educational needs by de-emphasizing the 13 disability categories and eliminating reporting by disability category, while ensuring that all children who are currently eligible are served.
- ☐ Discourage over-identification of children and facilitate State early intervention and pre-referral activities by changing the formula for grants to States to distribute new dollars on the basis of population, not the number of children with disabilities served under the

program.

- ☐ Eliminate disincentives for appropriate placements by requiring States that distribute State funds based on the type of setting in which the child is served to show that their formulas do not result in inappropriate placements.
- ☐ Promote appropriate services for minority children who currently encounter over-identification, inappropriate placement in separate classrooms, and low expectations.

4. Provide families and teachers--those closest to students-- with the knowledge and training to effectively support students' learning.

- ☐ Increase effectiveness and efficiency of federal categorical resources by replacing the 14 categorical competitive grant programs with five comprehensive, coordinated authorities, with special attention to ensuring that current knowledge reaches teachers, administrators, and families.
- ☐ Provide flexible resources to States to carry out their own State Improvement Plans designed to improve the performance of students with disabilities through better teacher preparation and other improvement strategies.
- ☐ Streamline notice requirements so families receive appropriate information on their rights when they need it.
- ☐ Facilitate the resolution of disputes between parents and schools by requiring States to offer mediation to parents.
- ☐ Promote coordination of services to meet children's education, health, and social service needs by allowing States and school districts to use a fixed percentage of IDEA funds to develop coordinated services systems.

5. Focus on teaching and learning.

- ☐ Eliminate unnecessary paperwork requirements that discourage the use of IDEA resources for services in the regular classroom.
- ☐ Reduce paperwork and improve State administration by streamlining requirements for how States and districts apply for funds, and by allowing for more flexible use of administrative funds.
- ☐ Enhance the ability of schools to maintain safe and disciplined classrooms by allowing schools to move a student who has brought a firearm or other dangerous weapon to school to an alternative educational setting for up to 45 days and by permitting hearing officers to authorize the temporary removal to an alternative setting of a student who is substantially likely to injure himself or others.

6. Strengthen early intervention to ensure that every child starts school ready to learn.

- ☐ **Promote the inclusion of children who are at risk of developmental delay in the comprehensive system of early intervention services under Part H by providing States flexibility regarding the services to provide if they choose to serve at-risk children.**
-

IMPROVING THE IDEA: IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL RESULTS

Not all schools have high expectations for children with disabilities and not all schools take responsibility for their academic progress. The individualized education program (IEP) document that is developed for each child often reflects low expectations and fragmented goals. About half of all children with disabilities are excluded from general State and local assessments of student performance.

To improve the IEP process, our proposal would:

- ☐ **Focus the IEP on enabling the child to participate and achieve in the general curriculum** in order to ensure that students with disabilities are not shortchanged academically. The IEP would describe services and program modifications needed to provide for participation in the general curriculum.
- ☐ **Require at least one regular education teacher to participate in the IEP meeting**, in addition to the special education teacher, when a child is or may be participating in the regular education environment.
- ☐ **Require schools to regularly apprise parents of their child's progress toward meaningful, measurable annual objectives**, by means such as report cards, as least as often as parents of nondisabled children are informed of their progress.

To ensure accountability for educational results, our proposal would:

- ☐ **Require States to include students with disabilities in general State and district-wide assessments, with appropriate accommodations**, where necessary, to ensure access. For the small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities who could not appropriately be included in such assessments, States would conduct alternate assessments.
 - ☐ **Require each State to report on the performance of students with disabilities on both general and alternate assessments** with the same frequency and in the same level of detail that it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children.
 - ☐ **Require each State to establish goals for the performance of children with disabilities** and develop indicators for assessing their progress toward meeting their goals. Indicators would include assessment results, drop-out rates, and graduation rates. States would report to the secretary and the public on their progress every two years.
-

IMPROVING THE IDEA: FOCUSING RESOURCES ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

To improve educational results for children with disabilities, States, districts, and educators must be able to focus on teaching and learning rather than on paperwork requirements that are not necessary for educational improvement. Our proposal would:

- **Streamline student evaluation and re-evaluation procedures and eliminate unnecessary testing.** Districts would no longer be required to do a full battery of tests every three years to determine whether the child is eligible for special education when the parents and school agree that this determination is unnecessary. These changes would free up significant resources to better help students and their families.
- **Focus the individual education program on access to the general curriculum, whenever appropriate, and on goals designed to improve educational results.** New requirements would ensure regular reporting to parents on their children's progress toward measurable annual objectives, while the development of detailed, short-term objectives for each student would no longer be mandated.
- **Promote less categorical approaches to eligibility determinations** by eliminating the requirement that States classify children by particular disability category, so long as all children who are currently eligible are served. This would permit States to move toward less categorical eligibility criteria and promote a focus on what children know and what services they need rather than on what disability label they should be given.
- **Reduce burdensome tracking of federal funds** by allowing schools to use IDEA funds to pay for special education services provided in regular classrooms that primarily benefit students with disabilities, without having to track the costs of benefits to nondisabled children in the classroom.
- **Improve parent notice requirements** so that parents will receive a useful explanation of important information when they need it and additional information when it is relevant or requested by parents.
- **Ensure that mediation is made available to all parents**, by requiring all States to offer mediation as an option to parents to resolve disputes. Mediation will provide a less adversarial and less costly method of resolving disputes for both parents and school districts.
- **Promote coordination of education with health and social services** by allowing States and school districts to use a fixed percentage of IDEA funds to develop coordinated services systems and by requiring the State to have an effective method of ensuring that responsible agencies provide related services to students that are mandated under the IDEA. This will help to connect schools and families with other public and private agencies that can assist them in meeting the needs of students with disabilities so that teachers can focus on teaching and learning.
- **Streamline requirements for State plans and school district applications for funds**, by requiring only that States and school districts update information rather than submit a new plan or application every three years.

- ☐ **Reduce data collection requirements substantially** by eliminating the requirement that States collect data by disability category.
 - ☐ **Permit consolidation of federal funds for administering the Grants to States and Preschool Grants programs** to reduce paperwork and give States greater flexibility in administering these programs.
-

IMPROVING THE IDEA: HELPING FAMILIES HELP THEIR CHILDREN

Families are children's first and best teachers and their most important advocates. While the IDEA creates a strong framework for family-school collaboration, more can be done to assist families to help their children and to strengthen working relations between families and schools. Our proposal would:

- ☐ **Provide parents with regular reports on their children's progress**, by means such as report cards, at least as often as such information is reported to the parents of non-disabled students. This would give parents of children with disabilities, who now often receive no meaningful information about their information they need to help their children succeed.
 - ☐ **Include parents in the team that decides their children's placement**. This would ensure that families are not excluded from fundamental decisions regarding the education of their children.
 - ☐ **Ensure that mediation is made available to all parents**, by requiring all States to offer mediation as an option to parents to resolve disputes. Mediation will provide a less adversarial and less costly method of resolving disputes for both parents and school districts.
 - ☐ **Promote coordination of education with health and social services** by allowing States and school districts to use a fixed percentage of IDEA funds to develop coordinated services systems. This will help to connect schools and families with other public and private agencies that can assist them in meeting the needs of students with disabilities so that teachers can focus on teaching and learning. Each State would also be required to establish an effective mechanism for interagency coordination, including defining each agency's financial responsibility, if any public agency, other than the educational agency, is responsible for providing any necessary services such as health or transition services.
 - ☐ **Support Parent Training and Information Centers** in every State to assist parents to better understand the nature of their child's disability and their educational needs and to participate effectively in the development of their child's individualized education program. A number of Community Parent Resource Centers would also be supported to assist underserved parents, including low-income parents, parents of children with limited English proficiency, and parents with disabilities.
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IMPROVING THE IDEA: ENSURING SAFE AND DISCIPLINED SCHOOLS

Maintaining safe and disciplined schools is essential for learning for all students, both disabled and non-disabled. Our proposals would help prevent discipline problems while providing schools with additional options for disciplining students who bring a weapon to school or who engage in other dangerous behavior. These proposals would help to ensure the safety of all students while protecting the established rights of children with disabilities.

Support prevention of discipline problems through:

- ☐ **Requiring the IEP team to consider the need for strategies like behavior management plans** whenever a student's behavior is impeding the learning of himself or others.
- ☐ **Helping to ensure that the classroom teacher receives supports needed** in the classroom, by requiring school districts to consider annually each teacher's needs for supports in the classroom.
- ☐ **Addressing training needs** under the proposed Professional Development authority, which would help to train teachers, administrators, and families in behavioral management techniques. Under the proposed State Improvement Grants program, States would have flexible funding that could also be used to help teachers learn to address behavior problems. Under Research to Practice, funds would be targeted to research on strategies to address behavioral issues and to technical assistance to State agencies and others to promote safe and disciplined schools.

Promote mediation to resolve disputes about the child's placement:

- ☐ **Requiring States to offer mediation to parents** would help resolve disputes that may arise when a school proposes to move a student to a different placement in order to address the student's behavior.

Provide Additional Options to Schools for Responding to Dangerous Students:

- ☐ **Permit school districts to move a student who has brought a firearm or other dangerous weapon to school to an alternative educational setting** for up to 45 days and until the completion of any due process proceedings.
 - ☐ **Permit hearing officers to authorize the temporary immediate removal of a student who is substantially likely to injure himself or others** for up to 45 days. Currently, except in the case of a firearm, a school district may not suspend or remove any student with a disability for more than 10 days unless a determination has been made that the conduct was not related to the disability. In the infrequent case that the parents challenge the removal and request a due process hearing, the child must "stay put" in the current placement until the legal proceedings are completed. At any time during the process, the school may seek an emergency court order to remove a dangerous child. Our proposal would give schools the option of obtaining such an order from a hearing officer rather than a court.
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