

Claremont Institute Report

Setting the Record Straight ~~Again~~: Responding to the ~~Izumi and Williams Paper on~~ Goals 2000 and Education in California

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This document responds to the erroneous assertions made by Izumi and Williams about Goals 2000 and its potential to assist California's educational improvement efforts in *Goals 2000 and California Education: Devolution in Retreat?* The paper attempts to cast Goals 2000 (along with related federal programs) as a mechanism for substantially increasing federal control over education, at the expense of local and state control. Indeed, as a review of the legislation and the U.S. Department of Education's track record will show, the paper displays a shocking ignorance of both new and longstanding federal education programs, and a complete misunderstanding of key provisions of the law.

More specifically, the paper makes the following assertions:

Assertion: *"The original six goals were expanded to eight by Clinton and his new Secretary of Education" (p. 3). Title I of Goals 2000, which contains the National Education Goals, "indicates a greater willingness by the federal government to impose its will than it would have the public believe. . . . [T]he Act uses the command word 'will' at least forty-five times. . . such as: All children will have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs" (p. 5).*

Response: The authors are confused. They can't tell the difference between Congressional endorsement of a vision for the future of American education and federal mandates. The rest of the analysis in the paper reflects equally glaring misunderstandings of the Act and of what its provisions actually mean.

- Through Goals 2000, Congress endorsed—on a bipartisan basis—the goals initially developed by the nation's governors and President Bush. While Congress added two goals (parental involvement and teacher professional development) to the original six, the wording of the goals and objectives is virtually the same as when the goals were initially developed by the governors and President Bush. The goals use the word "will" precisely because they are goals—descriptions of what the governors and President hoped would occur in the future.
- The authors may have beancounted the verbs, but they missed the main point. The goals have always enjoyed broad, bipartisan support, both before and after they were incorporated into the Goals 2000 Act. The wording the authors dissect and criticize has already been widely accepted by governors and legislators of both parties, parents, employers, state and local education officials, and civic groups of all

The goals are not requirements, and there are no federal funds tied to adopting or meeting them.

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Institute

The Goals 2000 Act provides resources to states and local communities to improve academic achievement. States and school districts set standards for basic and advanced skills in academic subject areas. They undertake education reforms to improve teaching and learning, provide training to teachers, expand the use of computers in the classroom, increase parental and community involvement, and other locally designed approaches to improving education. The federal government supports these efforts by providing funding, and by providing expanded flexibility in how these funds as well as all federal education funds, can be used to support locally designed reforms.

In addition, states and communities all across the country have adopted, or adapted ~~these goals~~ them to ~~meet~~ fit their own particular circumstances stripes. ^{these goals}

Assertion: *"The minute any state decides to accept any part of the Goals 2000 largesse, the supposedly 'voluntary' goals become mandatory" (p. 9). In order to receive funds under Title III of Goals 2000, states have to meet federal requirements, including developing a state education improvement plan and submitting it to the Secretary for approval. "[T]he federal Secretary has significant discretionary power to accept or reject a state's application based on the state's adherence to Washington's policies . . . [T]here will be powerful and irresistible pressure on states to conform to federal education policies" (p. 12).*

Response: These criticisms reflect another fundamental misunderstanding of the Act. They are strongly contradicted by the experience of states participating in Goals 2000.

- These criticisms are based on misinformed interpretations of specific provisions of the Act, taken completely out of context, and conveniently overlook the track record established over the past 15 months. Forty-eight states and hundreds of local school districts have received Goals 2000 funds. No state or school district has been told what policies, practices, or education improvement strategies to adopt as a result of participating in Goals 2000. Not one local school district has even submitted an education improvement plan to the federal government, nor will they. Fourteen states have submitted completed Goals 2000 plans. All have been approved, and not one state has been asked to change even a single word in its education reform plan.
- Neither Title III of the Goals 2000 Act nor any other federal legislation requires states to adopt or implement the National Education Goals as a condition of receiving federal funding. The provisions describing what state Goals 2000 plans must address do not require any particular strategies for achieving the goals, and the reviews of state plans have not looked at this at all. The paper's warnings of federal intrusion and increased federal control are myths, designed to play on the fears of parents and, in this case, to pressure Governor Wilson into turning down funds that can help California schools.
- The federal government was a partner in establishing the goals, and the agreement between the governors and President Bush at Charlottesville, as well as the goals themselves, explicitly acknowledge that the federal government must support state and local efforts to achieve these goals. It would make no sense to establish widely endorsed national goals and then make the federal government irrelevant to achieving them, yet to have no relationship between federal education programs and the goals would do just that. Designing federal education programs to assist states in their own efforts to achieve the National Education Goals should be

the 1989

Education Summit

applauded, not criticized. Failure to do this would mean that the federal government was failing to do its ~~(carefully-limited)~~ ^{and carefully defined} share in helping to achieve the goals.

- The requirement that states develop education improvement plans is based on (1) the lessons state leaders themselves learned about how to improve education; and (2) the fact that every governor in the country committed to develop education improvement plans when they participated in the Charlottesville education summit that first established the goals.
- The requirement for Secretarial approval of state plans is for the purpose of responsible federal use of taxpayer funds, not for federal intrusion into state and local education matters. The review of state plans is simply to determine if they are promising enough to invest in. The Secretary does not approve academic standards, tests, or any specific part of a state plan. The law doesn't allow for an intrusive approach, the Secretary doesn't want an intrusive approach and we haven't used an intrusive approach—^{the} track record leaves no room for doubt. *conducted by educators, employers and parents not federal officials the purpose is*
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Assertion: The paper claims (supposedly quoting Gov. Roy Romer) that "parents and voters oppose" Goals 2000 (p. 7).

Response: In fact, parent organizations, business groups, and educational organizations representing states and local communities have endorsed and continue to support Goals 2000. It supports their efforts to set challenging standards that will strengthen education in their states—teaching, curriculum, and testing aligned with the higher standards. The Goals 2000 Act provides support for effective change. It creates a partnership with states and local school systems to help our students achieve the high standards they will need if they are to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Assertion: : Goals 2000 "lists the strategies that they [states] must follow in order to meet the

goals," including 'one-stop shopping' and other ways of providing social services, health care, and other nonacademic activities in schools (p. 11).

Response:: The Goals 2000 Act provides a broad and very flexible ~~framework~~ ^{framework} for state education improvement plans. It does not, however, in any way determine the specific content of the plans. Nor does it require any specific practices, such as provision of social services or the use of particular types of textbooks or instructional materials. The authors are simply wrong about this. ~~There are local or state decisions~~

Goals 2000 does not require any particular strategies; this is up to state and local discretion. Children who are hungry, need eye glasses or are encountering other problems do not learn well; ignoring these problems only leads to more problems in educating children. Fragmenting and duplicating bureaucracies is not a very effective way to solve such problems; many states and localities have found that coordination of services is a key to solving complex problems and using tax dollars more effectively. This legislation simply encourages states to build on what they have already decided works for them.

Assertion: Goals 2000 creates "new bureaucracies" to advance federal control over education; "resisting federal 'advice' will not be as easy as it may seem" (p. 6). They include:

- the National Education Goals Panel ["charged with an advocacy mission" (p. 6) to ensure that local leaders are "educated and propagandized until they come around. The federal goals will drive local reforms, not the other way around" (p. 7)],
- the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) ["the NESIC's possible demise does not eliminate the national standards themselves, or the fact that states receiving federal funds will have to meet those standards" (p. 7)],
- the Regional Laboratories ["another group of bureaucracies created by the Act, which have so far received little attention"; they "have the potential to impose their will on local schools" (p. 8)], and
- the federal research institutes ["the mission outlined for them . . . contains provisions that would turn them into advocacy organizations" and prevent efforts to develop single-sex schools for African American males from receiving "a fair hearing and analysis" (p. 8)].

Response: Once again, the authors demonstrate a fundamental misunderstanding of various provisions of the Act and the extent to which they interrelate. They also demonstrate ignorance of ongoing national activities in support of educational improvement by states and localities—some dating back three decades or more.

- None of these entities have authority over state and local matters; they are a set of resources that can be used at the discretion of states, local communities or individual schools.
- The National Education Goals Panel was established by President Bush as a result of the President's education summit with the ^{in 1990}

David Beasley of
South Carolina,
John Rowland of
Connecticut

nation's governors. This independent, bipartisan panel has 18 members, nine Democrats and nine Republicans. Of the eight governors who are members, five of them (Arne Carlson of Minnesota, Jim Edgar of Illinois, John Engler of Michigan, Daniel Kirk Fordice of Mississippi, and Christine Whitman of New Jersey) are Republicans. The Panel's primary purpose is to measure the nation's and states' progress toward the National Education Goals and to highlight successful community and state efforts to improve student performance.

- Concerning national standards, the authors have done what they accuse others of doing: confusing a national effort to improve education with a federal mandate. The U.S. Department of Education is encouraging states to set their own standards for what students should know and be able to do in core academic areas. While there are national efforts under way by various organizations to establish model standards, in many cases supported by funds provided by the Bush Administration, these are nationally-developed models, not federal standards. The Department will not promulgate or endorse them, and states and localities are not under any obligation to adopt them, regardless of whether or not they participate in Goals 2000.
- The regional labs and research institutes are part of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement—which has been in existence for over 30 years, and which is independent of Goals 2000 or any other federal education program. Their role in schools is determined by local and state needs, not federal dictates. They provide assistance only upon request.

Assertion: *The National Skills Standards Board creates "federal entanglement in local education and the private sector job market" (p. 14). Furthermore, "the education standards created by the National Education Goals Panel will be incorporated into the national skills standards. . . . [T]he Clinton administration wants the business community to pressure local schools to use the education standards contained in the Act" (p. 14).*

Response: Once again, the authors are confused. The National Education Goals Panel is not creating standards and imposing them on states, and the business community is not being deputized to enforce federal changes to local school curricula. Educational improvement is an issue of national importance and interest, and there is need for national leadership—from governors, legislators, educators, employers, and the public—on various aspects of education reform. The Goals Panel and the National Skills Standards Board provide the structure for this leadership, using modest amounts of federal funds to provide tools for supporting local and state education reform, with limited involvement of federal officials.

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Assertion: *"Even though compliance with Goals 2000 is 'voluntary' for states, the law holds*

Federal funds are not contingent upon the use of skill standards in any way.

What about Smith or who oversees the STW system in the state —

e.g. Governor & business people?!

Assertion: School-to-work exists in large part simply to further the reach of Goals 2000.

Response: The ~~School-to-Work Act~~ exists to provide states and communities resources to help their youth develop the skills they need for citizenship, career opportunities, and higher education. It is part of the Act's purpose to support academic achievement and, to that end, it simply says that state school-to-work activities should not operate at cross purposes with state academic requirements: if there are state academic standards, school-based school-to-work activities should be consistent with them. None of these provisions specify what those standards must be.

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Assertion: The National Skill Standards Board creates "federal entanglement in local education and the private sector job market" ... The Clinton administration wants the business community to pressure local schools to use the education standards contained in the Act.

Response: The National Skill Standards Board (NSSB) and the business community's support for education standards are not about pressuring local schools to use a specific set of standards. NSSB is a group of private citizens -- business, education, and labor leaders -- that will facilitate a process whereby employers can articulate the skills they need from workers. Local schools can use that information to choose the curriculum and programs they think will prepare their students to meet the demands of employers. There is no federal entanglement. Local schools want the best futures for their children, and skill standards will provide them more information they can use to better prepare their students for their futures.

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Assertion: If the government is handing out skill certificates to select students, then these students will have an advantage [over students who attend private schools, home schools, and schools not participating in Goals 2000] in getting a job or perhaps getting into college.

Response: Skill certificates give industry an opportunity to let students, parents, and teachers know what skills are required for employment. Skill certificates give students an opportunity to let potential employers know what skills they have. The government does not hand out skill certificates. A skill certificate is a credential issued by the local school-to-work program. What kinds of credentials to issue are decided on by the state through its planning process. Skill certificates only matter if employers look for them in hiring and employers will only look for them if they certify the skills employers are looking for anyway. Therefore, students benefit from the opportunity to acquire the skills that industries are demanding. Individuals will also have the

opportunity to acquire skill certificates through postsecondary education, union and apprenticeship programs, professional associations, and from employers -- not just from public schools.

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disadvantaged children hostage to its dictates" (p. 2) because states that receive funds under the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) must align their curriculum, assessments, and teacher professional development with Goals 2000 standards.

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Response: The standards referred to here are not federal standards encoded in the Goals 2000 Act; they are standards that would be set by the states themselves, based on what they think it important for their own students to learn. What the authors are criticizing are provisions in IASA that encourage any states that set their own standards to apply those standards to all their students, not just a favored few—in other words, to expect disadvantaged students in programs such as Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to meet the same high standards as other students. Rather than encouraging all students to meet high standards, the authors would call for a double standard in educating children, with disadvantaged students being relegated to second-class status.

~~Furthermore,~~ The federal government exercises no control over the resources that states and communities spend on education or over school and classroom practices. Therefore, if federal programs are to be effective, they must work in tandem with state and local reform efforts. The new legislation recognizes this and responds to concern that in the past compliance with rules and regulations surrounding federal education programs has often constrained the flexibility necessary to achieve improvement. For example, reliance on nationally-normed testing in the Title I program was often redundant with state testing and consequently cut into instructional time for students who needed extra help the most. The new Title I allows states to use their own state assessments that measure performance in attaining the skills and standards they deem to be important.

Assertion: *"The objectives of Goals 2000 are already mirrored in California's subject frameworks and its statewide assessment" (p. 2). California's math and English frameworks "have resulted in the de-emphasis of basic math skills and phonics" (p. 21). The "connection between these state Math and English frameworks and the Goals 2000 debate over measuring standards . . . lies with the California Learning Assessment System (CLAS). . . . The link is that the CLAS test was designed to measure the effectiveness of education reforms envisioned under Goals 2000 programs" (p. 22). This type of "performance-based" test "bases its scoring on non-academic benchmarks" not "right and wrong answers" (p. 22).*

Response: Standards and testing procedures are determined by the state and by local school districts and schools, not by the federal government. This has been true in the past and will continue to be true under Goals 2000.

- Any flaws in previous curriculum frameworks and assessments in California were the complete responsibility of the state, not of the federal government, and correcting any problems is also California's

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Response: Neither disadvantaged students nor states are "held hostage" by either Goals 2000 or the Improving America's Schools Act, which provides assistance to disadvantaged students under the Title 1 program. Quite to the contrary, the provisions in both Goals 2000 and Title 1 clearly place the states and local school districts in charge of determining academic standards and educational policy. They also both serve to encourage states and local communities to set more rigorous academic standards for all students, including economically disadvantaged students.

- o Goals 2000 requires that participating states establish their own academic standards in basic and advanced skills for students, and develop tests to measure student progress toward achieving these standards. The Title 1 program also requires that states set their own academic standards in basic and advanced skills for participating students, and test to determine progress toward achieving those standards. When the two programs operate together, the result will be that disadvantaged students served by the Title 1 program will be expected to reach for the same academic standards as are other students in the state. Rather than being "held hostage", disadvantaged students are freed from a tyranny of low expectations, and will be challenged to work harder and learn more.
- o There are no "Goals 2000" standards, only state or local standards, determined by state or local authorities. The same is true of curriculum, assessments, and ways of preparing and upgrading the skills of teachers. These are all determined at the state and local level, without federal direction or control.
- o According to a recent report by the American Federation of Teachers, 49 states are setting their own academic standards for its students. The U.S. Department of Education independently counts all 50 states engaged in this process. For states participating in Goals 2000 and Title 1, states will use the standards they are setting themselves. For states that are participating only in Title 1, they too will use the standards they are setting themselves. In either case, the academic standards that students will be held to are determined by the state, not by the federal government. And standards used for Goals 2000 and Title 1 are those same standards.
- o No state is required to participate in Goals 2000 in order to continue to receive Title 1 funds or funds

under other IASA or any other federal education programs. This is stated explicitly in Section 213 of the Goals 2000 Act.

- o This situation represents an increase in state and local control and a decrease in federal requirements. (continue with text from hard copy..."The federal government exercises not control...)

responsibility, without regard to whether or not California participates in Goals 2000. California is in the midst of revising its curriculum frameworks, and Governor Wilson has just signed legislation calling for the development of a new testing program. The state can use Goals 2000 funds to support its own activities in these areas, if it chooses to. Because education is so important, some aspects of reform are bound to generate controversy, but how these issues are addressed in California will be determined by the citizens of California, not by federal requirements—whether or not the state participates in Goals 2000.

- Goals 2000 promotes assessments that are aligned with each state's content standards in academic subjects. These use valid and reliable academic performance measures to provide coherent information about student attainments relative to the state content standards.

Assertion: *Goals 2000 promotes outcomes-based education: (1) The Regional Laboratories have "a primary duty" to promote school restructuring, which is "a buzz word in many education circles . . . for promoting the controversial principles of outcomes-based education" (pp. 8-9); (2) One purpose of the Act is to provide "a national framework for education reform" and "the term 'frameworks' . . . is the buzzword for California's troubled experiment with outcome-based education" (p. 20).*

Response: These are transparent and illogical attempts to generate objections to Goals 2000 by purporting to find a link to the outcomes-based education controversy. To set the record straight: (1) The provision that allows the labs to respond to a school's request for help with its restructuring efforts is not intended to promote outcomes-based education; (2) A national "framework" for education reform means a structure of support and is not a secret code for OBE.

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Assertion: *One California school district plans to use its Goals 2000 funds to hire school counselors to address "the supposed emotional and social needs of district children" and focus on "'soft' areas of school management and school environment" rather than academics (p. 23). Therefore, Goals 2000 "will mean a significant expansion" in these areas, "with no assurance as to improved student performance or a higher quality classroom instruction" (p. 23).*

Response: Whatever the strengths or weaknesses of the program in this one district, it effectively illustrates the ability of local schools and communities to use Goals 2000 resources in ways not required by the statute or imposed by the federal government. By providing flexibility for states and localities to decide how best to use their Goals 2000 funds, the Act supports local control and decision making, rather than federal mandates. When control is decentralized, funds will be used to support a variety of initiatives, ~~not all of which may prove successful~~. The point of establishing state standards and carrying out a state and local planning process, as Goals 2000 calls for, is

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Concern: Our schools will henceforth be pushed toward a philosophy known as Outcome-Based Education (OBE).

Reality: ^{Goals 2000} ~~The legislation~~ doesn't promote any particular education philosophy or approach; that is a local decision. GOALS 2000 focuses on upgrading academic achievement and preparing students for the world of work. Each state, school district, and school determines what content it wants students to learn, and whether that content should focus strictly on core academic and basic skills or should also include other areas. The federal government will not be involved in those kinds of local decisions.

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to allow individuals and groups who are concerned about education reform to help decide how best to improve instruction and student performance.

It is ironic that ~~on the one hand~~ the authors call for local control of education, and at the same time they criticize a local district's use of the authority and resources at its disposal. Supporters of local control in theory should also support it in practice.

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Assertion: Rigorous academic standards will only be established by involving the public in a broad-based deliberation on the subject, thereby building a genuine and informed consensus. Goals 2000 obfuscates and delays that public debate by purveying the myth that new federal goals, standards, and strategies are meeting these needs.

Response: We agree completely that academic standards must be established through a broad-based process, and rest on an informed consensus. That is precisely what Goals 2000 supports—broad-based, grass roots involvement in the development of academic standards and the necessary education reforms so that students can reach those standards. It is the authors of this report who have been purveying myths and obfuscating the public debate. While their attacks are aimed at a federal law, if successful they will deny resources and opportunities to students, teachers and parents in California.

Setting the Record Straight: Responding to the Claremont Institute Report on Goals 2000 and Education in California

The Goals 2000 Act provides resources to states and local communities to improve academic achievement. States and school districts set standards for basic and advanced skills in academic subject areas. They undertake education reforms to improve teaching and learning, provide training to teachers, expand the use of computers in the classroom, increase parental and community involvement, and other locally designed approaches to improving education. The federal government supports these efforts by providing funding, and by providing expanded flexibility in how these funds as well as all federal education funds, can be used to support locally designed reforms.

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- The Goals 2000 legislation incorporates the best features of an accountable block grant—providing unprecedented flexibility in how funds are spent in exchange for states and districts setting higher standards for results.
- Goals 2000 Act requirements are minimal and focus on achieving better results for students. In addition, the legislation authorizes states, local

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- Concerning national standards, the authors have done what they accuse others of doing: confusing a national effort to improve education with a federal mandate. The U.S. Department of Education is encouraging states to set their own standards for what students should know and be able to do in core academic areas. While there are national efforts under way by various organizations to establish model standards, in many cases supported by funds provided by the Bush Administration, these are nationally-developed models, not federal standards. The Department will not promulgate or endorse them, and states and localities are not under any obligation to adopt them, regardless of whether or not they participate in Goals 2000.
- The regional labs and research institutes are part of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement—which has been in existence for

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Response: The National Skill Standards Board (NSSB) and the business community's support for education standards are not about pressuring local schools to use a specific set of standards. NSSB is a group of private citizens -- business, education, and labor leaders -- that will facilitate a process whereby employers can articulate the skills they need from workers. Local schools can use that information to chose the curriculum and programs they think will prepare their students to meet the demands of employers. There is no federal entanglement. Local schools want the best futures for their children, and skill standards will provide them more information they can use to better prepare their students for their futures.

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Response: Neither disadvantaged students nor states are "held hostage" by either Goals 2000 or the Improving America's Schools Act, which provides assistance to disadvantaged students under the Title 1 program. Quite to the contrary, the provisions in both Goals 2000 and Title 1 clearly place the states and local school districts in charge of determining academic standards and educational policy. They also both serve to encourage states and local communities to set more rigorous academic standards for all students, including economically disadvantaged students.

- Goals 2000 requires that participating states establish their own academic standards in basic and advanced skills for students, and develop tests to measure student progress toward achieving these standards. The Title 1 program also requires that states set their own academic standards in basic and advanced skills for participating students, and test to determine progress toward achieving those standards. When the two programs operate together, the result will be that disadvantaged students served by the Title 1 program will be expected to reach for the same academic standards as are other students in the state. Rather than being "held hostage", disadvantaged students are freed from a tyranny of low expectations, and will be challenged to work harder and learn more.

- There are no "goals 2000" standards, only state or local standards, determined by state or local authorities. The same is true of curriculum, assessments, and ways of preparing and upgrading the skills of teachers. These are all determined at the state and local level, without federal direction or control.
- According to a recent report by the American Federation of Teachers, 49 states are setting their own academic standards for its students. The U.S. Department of Education independently counts all 50 states engaged in this process. For states participating in Goals 2000 and Title 1, they too will use the standards they are setting themselves. In either case, the academic standards that student will be held to are determined by the state, not by the federal government. And standards used for Goals 2000 and Title 1 are those same standards.
- No state is required to participate in Goals 2000 in order to continue to receive Title 1 funds or funds under IASA or any other federal education programs. This is stated explicitly in Section 213 of the Goals 2000 Act.
- This situation represents an increase in state and local control and a decrease in federal requirements. The federal government exercises no control over the resources that states and communities spend on education or over school and classroom practices. Therefore, if federal programs are to be effective, they must work in tandem with state and local reform efforts. The new legislation recognizes this and responds to concern that in the past compliance with rules and regulations surrounding federal education programs has often constrained the flexibility necessary to achieve improvement. For example, reliance on nationally-normed testing in the Title I program was often redundant with state testing and consequently cut into instructional time for students who needed extra help the most. The new Title I allows states to use their own state assessments that measure performance in attaining the skills and standards they deem to be important.

Assertion: *"The objectives of Goals 2000 are already mirrored in California's subject frameworks and its statewide assessment" (p. 2). California's math and English frameworks "have resulted in the de-emphasis of basic math skills and phonics" (p. 21). The "connection between these state Math and English frameworks and the Goals 2000 debate over measuring standards . . . lies with the California Learning Assessment*

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Response: Standards and testing procedures are determined by the state and by local school districts and schools, not by the federal government. This has been true in the past and will continue to be true under Goals 2000.

- Any flaws in previous curriculum frameworks and assessments in California were the complete responsibility of the state, not of the federal government, and correcting any problems is also California's responsibility, without regard to whether or not California participates in Goals 2000. California is in the midst of revising its curriculum frameworks, and Governor Wilson has just signed legislation calling for the development of a new testing program. The state can use Goals 2000 funds to support its own activities in these areas, if it chooses to. Because education is so important, some aspects of reform are bound to generate controversy, but how these issues are addressed in California will be determined by the citizens of California, not by federal requirements—whether or not the state participates in Goals 2000.
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Response: These are transparent and illogical attempts to generate objections to Goals 2000 by purporting to find a link to the outcomes-based education controversy. To set the record straight: (1) The provision that allows the labs to respond to a school's request for help with its restructuring efforts is not intended to promote outcomes-based education; (2) A national "framework" for education reform means a structure of support and is not a secret code for OBE.

Goals 2000 doesn't promote any particular education philosophy or approach; that is a local decision. GOALS 2000 focuses on upgrading **academic** achievement and

preparing students for the world of work. Each state, school district, and school determines what content it wants students to learn, and whether that content should focus strictly on core academic and basic skills or should also include other areas. The federal government will not be involved in those kinds of local decisions.

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Response: Whatever the strengths or weaknesses of the program in this one district, it effectively illustrates the ability of local schools and communities to use Goals 2000 resources in ways not required by the statute or imposed by the federal government. By providing flexibility for states and localities to decide how best to use their Goals 2000 funds, the Act supports local control and decision making, rather than federal mandates. When control is decentralized, funds will be used to support a variety of initiatives. The point of establishing state standards and carrying out a state and local planning process, as Goals 2000 calls for, is to allow individuals and groups who are concerned about education reform to help decide how best to improve instruction and student performance.

It is ironic that the authors call for local control of education, and at the same time they criticize a local district's use of the authority and resources at its disposal. Supporters of local control in theory should also support it in practice.

Assertion: Rigorous academic standards will only be established by involving the public in a broad-based deliberation on the subject, thereby building a genuine and informed consensus. Goals 2000 obfuscates and delays that public debate by purveying the myth that new federal goals, standards, and strategies are meeting these needs.

Response: We agree completely that academic standards must be established through a broad-based process, and rest on an informed consensus. That is precisely what Goals 2000 supports—broad-based, grass roots involvement in the development of academic standards and the necessary education reforms so that students can reach those standards. It is the authors of this report who have been purveying myths and obfuscating the public debate. While their attacks are aimed at the federal law, if successful they will deny resources and opportunities to students, teachers and parents in California.

Setting the Record Straight: Responding to the Claremont Institute Report on Goals 2000 and Education in California

The Goals 2000 Act provides resources to states and local communities to improve academic achievement. States and school districts set standards for basic and advanced skills in academic subject areas. They undertake education reforms to improve teaching and learning, provide training to teachers, expand the use of computers in the classroom, increase parental and community involvement, and make other locally designed education improvements. The federal government supports these efforts by providing funding, and by providing expanded flexibility in how these funds, as well as all federal education funds, can be used to support locally designed reforms.

This document responds to the erroneous assertions made by Izumi and Williams about Goals 2000 and its potential to assist California's educational improvement efforts in *Goals 2000 and California Education: Devolution in Retreat?*, a report from the Claremont Institute. That paper attempts to cast Goals 2000 (along with related federal programs) as a mechanism for substantially increasing federal control over education, at the expense of local and state control. Indeed, as a review of the legislation and the U.S. Department of Education's track record will show, the paper displays a shocking ignorance of both new and longstanding federal education programs, and a complete misunderstanding of key provisions of the law.

More specifically, the paper makes the following assertions:

Assertion: *"The original six goals were expanded to eight by Clinton and his new Secretary of Education" (p. 3). Title I of Goals 2000, which contains the National Education Goals, "indicates a greater willingness by the federal government to impose its will than it would have the public believe. . . . [T]he Act uses the command word 'will' at least forty-five times . . . such as: All children will have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs" (p. 5).*

Response: The authors are confused. They can't tell the difference between Congressional endorsement of a vision for the future of American education and federal mandates. The rest of the analysis in the paper reflects equally glaring misunderstandings of the Act and of what its provisions actually mean.

- Through Goals 2000, Congress endorsed—on a bipartisan basis—the goals initially developed by the nation's governors and President Bush. While Congress added two goals (parental involvement and teacher professional development) to the original six, the wording of the goals and objectives is virtually the same as when the goals were initially developed by the governors and President Bush. The goals use the word "will"

precisely because they are goals—descriptions of what the governors and President hoped would occur in the future.

- The authors may have beancounted the verbs, but they missed the main point. The goals are not requirements, and there are no federal funds tied to adopting or meeting them. The goals have always enjoyed broad, bipartisan support, both before and after they were incorporated into the Goals 2000 Act. The wording the authors dissect and criticize has already been widely accepted by governors and legislators of both parties, parents, employers, state and local education officials, and civic groups of all stripes.

In addition, states and communities all across the country have adopted, or adapted them to fit their particular circumstances.

Assertion: *"The minute any state decides to accept any part of the Goals 2000 largesse, the supposedly 'voluntary' goals become mandatory" (p. 9). In order to receive funds under Title III of Goals 2000, states have to meet federal requirements, including developing a state education improvement plan and submitting it to the Secretary for approval. "[T]he federal Secretary has significant discretionary power to accept or reject a state's application based on the state's adherence to Washington's policies . . . [T]here will be powerful and irresistible pressure on states to conform to federal education policies" (p. 12).*

Response: These criticisms reflect another fundamental misunderstanding of the Act. They are strongly contradicted by the experience of states participating in Goals 2000.

- These criticisms are based on misinformed interpretations of specific provisions of the Act, taken completely out of context, and conveniently overlook the track record established over the past 15 months. Forty-eight states and hundreds of local school districts have received Goals 2000 funds. No state or school district has been told what policies, practices, or education improvement strategies to adopt as a result of participating in Goals 2000. Not one local school district has even submitted an education improvement plan to the federal government, nor will they. Fourteen states have submitted completed Goals 2000 plans. All have been approved, and not one state has been asked to change even a single word in its education reform plan.
- Neither Title III of the Goals 2000 Act nor any other federal legislation requires states to adopt or implement the National Education Goals as a condition of receiving federal funding. The provisions describing what state Goals 2000 plans must address do not require any particular

strategies for achieving the goals, and the reviews of state plans have not looked at this at all. The paper's warnings of federal intrusion and increased federal control are myths, designed to play on the fears of parents and, in this case, to pressure Governor Wilson into turning down funds that can help California schools.

- The federal government was a partner in establishing the goals. The agreement between the governors and President Bush at the 1989 Charlottesville Education Summit, as well as the goals themselves, explicitly acknowledge that the federal government must support state and local efforts to achieve these goals. It would make no sense to establish widely endorsed national goals and then make the federal government irrelevant to achieving them. Yet to have no relationship between federal education programs and the goals would do just that. Designing federal education programs to assist states in their own efforts to achieve the National Education Goals should be applauded, not criticized. Failure to do this would mean that the federal government was failing to do its limited and carefully defined share in helping to achieve the goals.
- The requirement that states develop education improvement plans is based on (1) the lessons state leaders themselves learned about how to improve education; and (2) the fact that every governor in the country committed to develop education improvement plans when they participated in the Charlottesville education summit.
- The requirement for Secretarial approval of state plans is for the purpose of responsible federal use of taxpayer funds, not for federal intrusion into state and local education matters. The review of state plans is conducted by educators, employers and parents, not federal officials. The purpose is simply to determine if the plans are promising enough to invest in. The Secretary does not approve academic standards, tests, or any specific part of a state plan. The law doesn't allow for an intrusive approach, the Secretary doesn't want an intrusive approach and the U.S. Department of Education has not used an intrusive approach—the track record since the enactment of Goals 2000 leaves no room for doubt.
- The Goals 2000 legislation incorporates the best features of an accountable block grant—providing unprecedented flexibility in how funds are spent in exchange for states and districts setting higher standards for results.
- Goals 2000 Act requirements are minimal and focus on achieving better results for students. In addition, the legislation authorizes states, local

districts, and schools to apply for waivers of requirements in elementary and secondary programs, when regulations hinder reform efforts. Moreover, the Education Department has issued no new regulations for the Goals 2000 Act.

Assertion: *The paper claims (supposedly quoting Gov. Roy Romer) that "parents and voters oppose" Goals 2000 (p. 7).*

Response: In fact, parent organizations, business groups, and educational organizations representing states and local communities have endorsed and continue to support Goals 2000. It supports their efforts to set challenging standards that will strengthen education in their states—teaching, curriculum, and testing aligned with the higher standards. The Goals 2000 Act provides support for effective change. It creates a partnership with states and local school systems to help our students achieve the high standards they will need if they are to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Assertion: *Goals 2000 "lists the strategies that they [states] must follow in order to meet the goals," including 'one-stop shopping' and other ways of providing social services, health care, and other nonacademic activities in schools (p. 11).*

Response: The Goals 2000 Act provides a broad and very flexible framework for state education improvement plans. It does not, however, in any way determine the specific content of the plans. Nor does it require any specific practices, such as provision of social services or the use of particular types of textbooks or instructional materials. The authors are simply wrong about this. These are local or state decisions.

Goals 2000 does not require any particular strategies; this is up to state and local discretion. Children who are hungry, need eye glasses or are encountering other problems do not learn well; ignoring these problems only leads to more problems in educating children. Fragmenting and duplicating bureaucracies is not a very effective way to solve such problems; many states and localities have found that coordination of services is a key to solving complex problems and using tax dollars more effectively. This legislation simply encourages states to build on what they have already decided works for them.

Assertion: *Goals 2000 creates "new bureaucracies" to advance federal control over education; "resisting federal 'advice' will not be as easy as it may seem" (p. 6). They include:*

—the National Education Goals Panel ["charged with an advocacy mission" (p. 6) to ensure that local leaders are "educated and propagandized until they come around. The federal goals will drive local reforms, not the other way around" (p. 7)];

—the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) ["the NESIC's possible demise does not eliminate the national standards themselves, or the fact that

states receiving federal funds will have to meet those standards" (p. 7)],
—the Regional Laboratories ["another group of bureaucracies created by the Act, which have so far received little attention"; they "have the potential to impose their will on local schools" (p. 8)], and
—the federal research institutes ["the mission outlined for them . . . contains provisions that would turn them into advocacy organizations" and prevent efforts to develop single-sex schools for African American males from receiving "a fair hearing and analysis" (p. 8)].

Response: Once again, the authors demonstrate a fundamental misunderstanding of various provisions of the Act and the extent to which they interrelate. They also demonstrate ignorance of ongoing national activities in support of educational improvement by states and localities—some dating back three decades or more.

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Response: We agree completely that academic standards must be established through a broad-based process, and rest on an informed consensus. That is precisely what Goals 2000 supports-broad-based, grass roots involvement in the development of academic standards and the necessary education reforms so that students can reach those standards. It is the authors of this report who have been purveying myths and obfuscating the public debate. While their attacks are aimed at the federal law, if successful they will deny resources and opportunities to students, teachers and parents in California.

Setting the Record Straight: Responding to the Claremont Institute Report on Goals 2000 and Education in California

The Goals 2000 Act provides resources to states and local communities to improve academic achievement. States and school districts set standards for basic and advanced skills in academic subject areas. They undertake education reforms to improve teaching and learning, provide training to teachers, expand the use of computers in the classroom, increase parental and community involvement, and make other locally designed education improvements. The federal government supports these efforts by providing funding, and by providing expanded flexibility in how these funds, as well as all federal education funds, can be used to support locally designed reforms.

This document responds to the erroneous assertions made by Izumi and Williams about Goals 2000 and its potential to assist California's educational improvement efforts in *Goals 2000 and California Education: Devolution in Retreat?*, a report from the Claremont Institute. That paper attempts to cast Goals 2000 (along with related federal programs) as a mechanism for substantially increasing federal control over education, at the expense of local and state control. Indeed, as a review of the legislation and the U.S. Department of Education's track record will show, the paper displays a shocking ignorance of both new and longstanding federal education programs, and a complete misunderstanding of key provisions of the law.

More specifically, the paper makes the following assertions:

Assertion: *"The original six goals were expanded to eight by Clinton and his new Secretary of Education" (p. 3). Title I of Goals 2000, which contains the National Education Goals, "indicates a greater willingness by the federal government to impose its will than it would have the public believe. . . . [T]he Act uses the command word 'will' at least forty-five times . . . such as: All children will have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs" (p. 5).*

Response: The authors are confused. They can't tell the difference between Congressional endorsement of a vision for the future of American education and federal mandates. The rest of the analysis in the paper reflects equally glaring misunderstandings of the Act and of what its provisions actually mean.

- Through Goals 2000, Congress endorsed—on a bipartisan basis—the goals initially developed by the nation's governors and President Bush. While Congress added two goals (parental involvement and teacher professional development) to the original six, the wording of the goals and objectives is virtually the same as when the goals were initially developed by the governors and President Bush. The goals use the word "will"

precisely because they are goals—descriptions of what the governors and President hoped would occur in the future.

- The authors may have beancounted the verbs, but they missed the main point. The goals are not requirements, and there are no federal funds tied to adopting or meeting them. The goals have always enjoyed broad, bipartisan support, both before and after they were incorporated into the Goals 2000 Act. The wording the authors dissect and criticize has already been widely accepted by governors and legislators of both parties, parents, employers, state and local education officials, and civic groups of all stripes.

In addition, states and communities all across the country have adopted, or adapted them to fit their particular circumstances.

Assertion: *"The minute any state decides to accept any part of the Goals 2000 largesse, the supposedly 'voluntary' goals become mandatory" (p. 9). In order to receive funds under Title III of Goals 2000, states have to meet federal requirements, including developing a state education improvement plan and submitting it to the Secretary for approval. "[T]he federal Secretary has significant discretionary power to accept or reject a state's application based on the state's adherence to Washington's policies . . . [T]here will be powerful and irresistible pressure on states to conform to federal education policies" (p. 12).*

Response: These criticisms reflect another fundamental misunderstanding of the Act. They are strongly contradicted by the experience of states participating in Goals 2000.

- These criticisms are based on misinformed interpretations of specific provisions of the Act, taken completely out of context, and conveniently overlook the track record established over the past 15 months. Forty-eight states and hundreds of local school districts have received Goals 2000 funds. No state or school district has been told what policies, practices, or education improvement strategies to adopt as a result of participating in Goals 2000. Not one local school district has even submitted an education improvement plan to the federal government, nor will they. Fourteen states have submitted completed Goals 2000 plans. All have been approved, and not one state has been asked to change even a single word in its education reform plan.
- Neither Title III of the Goals 2000 Act nor any other federal legislation requires states to adopt or implement the National Education Goals as a condition of receiving federal funding. The provisions describing what state Goals 2000 plans must address do not require any particular

strategies for achieving the goals, and the reviews of state plans have not looked at this at all. The paper's warnings of federal intrusion and increased federal control are myths, designed to play on the fears of parents and, in this case, to pressure Governor Wilson into turning down funds that can help California schools.

- The federal government was a partner in establishing the goals. The agreement between the governors and President Bush at the 1989 Charlottesville Education Summit, as well as the goals themselves, explicitly acknowledge that the federal government must support state and local efforts to achieve these goals. It would make no sense to establish widely endorsed national goals and then make the federal government irrelevant to achieving them. Yet to have no relationship between federal education programs and the goals would do just that. Designing federal education programs to assist states in their own efforts to achieve the National Education Goals should be applauded, not criticized. Failure to do this would mean that the federal government was failing to do its limited and carefully defined share in helping to achieve the goals.
- The requirement that states develop education improvement plans is based on (1) the lessons state leaders themselves learned about how to improve education; and (2) the fact that every governor in the country committed to develop education improvement plans when they participated in the Charlottesville education summit.
- The requirement for Secretarial approval of state plans is for the purpose of responsible federal use of taxpayer funds, not for federal intrusion into state and local education matters. The review of state plans is conducted by educators, employers and parents, not federal officials. The purpose is simply to determine if the plans are promising enough to invest in. The Secretary does not approve academic standards, tests, or any specific part of a state plan. The law doesn't allow for an intrusive approach, the Secretary doesn't want an intrusive approach and the U.S. Department of Education has not used an intrusive approach—the track record since the enactment of Goals 2000 leaves no room for doubt.
- The Goals 2000 legislation incorporates the best features of an accountable block grant—providing unprecedented flexibility in how funds are spent in exchange for states and districts setting higher standards for results.
- Goals 2000 Act requirements are minimal and focus on achieving better results for students. In addition, the legislation authorizes states, local

districts, and schools to apply for waivers of requirements in elementary and secondary programs, when regulations hinder reform efforts. Moreover, the Education Department has issued no new regulations for the Goals 2000 Act.

Assertion: *The paper claims (supposedly quoting Gov. Roy Romer) that "parents and voters oppose" Goals 2000 (p. 7).*

Response: In fact, parent organizations, business groups, and educational organizations representing states and local communities have endorsed and continue to support Goals 2000. It supports their efforts to set challenging standards that will strengthen education in their states—teaching, curriculum, and testing aligned with the higher standards. The Goals 2000 Act provides support for effective change. It creates a partnership with states and local school systems to help our students achieve the high standards they will need if they are to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Assertion: *Goals 2000 "lists the strategies that they [states] must follow in order to meet the goals," including 'one-stop shopping' and other ways of providing social services, health care, and other nonacademic activities in schools (p. 11).*

Response: The Goals 2000 Act provides a broad and very flexible framework for state education improvement plans. It does not, however, in any way determine the specific content of the plans. Nor does it require any specific practices, such as provision of social services or the use of particular types of textbooks or instructional materials. The authors are simply wrong about this. These are local or state decisions.

Goals 2000 does not require any particular strategies; this is up to state and local discretion. Children who are hungry, need eye glasses or are encountering other problems do not learn well; ignoring these problems only leads to more problems in educating children. Fragmenting and duplicating bureaucracies is not a very effective way to solve such problems; many states and localities have found that coordination of services is a key to solving complex problems and using tax dollars more effectively. This legislation simply encourages states to build on what they have already decided works for them.

Assertion: *Goals 2000 creates "new bureaucracies" to advance federal control over education; "resisting federal 'advice' will not be as easy as it may seem" (p. 6). They include:*
—*the National Education Goals Panel ["charged with an advocacy mission" (p. 6) to ensure that local leaders are "educated and propagandized until they come around. The federal goals will drive local reforms, not the other way around" (p. 7)],*
—*the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) ["the NESIC's possible demise does not eliminate the national standards themselves, or the fact that*

states receiving federal funds will have to meet those standards" (p. 7)],
—the Regional Laboratories ["another group of bureaucracies created by the Act, which have so far received little attention"; they "have the potential to impose their will on local schools" (p. 8)], and
—the federal research institutes ["the mission outlined for them . . . contains provisions that would turn them into advocacy organizations" and prevent efforts to develop single-sex schools for African American males from receiving "a fair hearing and analysis" (p. 8)].

Response: Once again, the authors demonstrate a fundamental misunderstanding of various provisions of the Act and the extent to which they interrelate. They also demonstrate ignorance of ongoing national activities in support of educational improvement by states and localities—some dating back three decades or more.

- None of these entities has authority over state and local matters; they are a set of resources that can be used at the discretion of states, local communities or individual schools.
- The National Education Goals Panel was established in 1990 by President Bush as a result of the President's education summit with the nation's governors. This independent, bipartisan panel has 18 members, nine Democrats and nine Republicans. Of the eight governors who are members, five of them (David Beasley of South Carolina, John Rowland of Connecticut, John Engler of Michigan, Kirk Fordice of Mississippi, and Christine Whitman of New Jersey) are Republicans. The Panel's primary purpose is to measure the nation's and states' progress toward the National Education Goals and to highlight successful community and state efforts to improve student performance.
- Concerning national standards, the authors have done what they accuse others of doing: confusing a national effort to improve education with a federal mandate. The U.S. Department of Education is encouraging states to set their own standards for what students should know and be able to do in core academic areas. While there are national efforts under way by various organizations to establish model standards, in many cases supported by funds provided by the Bush Administration, these are nationally-developed models, not federal standards. The Department will not promulgate or endorse them, and states and localities are not under any obligation to adopt them, regardless of whether or not they participate in Goals 2000.
- The regional labs and research institutes are part of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement—which has been in existence for

over 30 years, and which is independent of Goals 2000 or any other federal education program. Their role in schools is determined by local and state needs, not federal dictates. They provide assistance only upon request.

Assertion: *The National Skills Standards Board creates "federal entanglement in local education and the private sector job market" (p. 14). Furthermore, "the education standards created by the National Education Goals Panel will be incorporated into the national skills standards. . . . [T]he Clinton administration wants the business community to pressure local schools to use the education standards contained in the Act" (p. 14).*

Response: Once again, the authors are confused. The National Education Goals Panel is not creating standards and imposing them on states, and the business community is not being deputized to enforce federal changes to local school curricula. Federal funds are not contingent upon the use of skill standards in any way. Educational improvement is an issue of national importance and interest, and there is need for national leadership—from governors, legislators, educators, employers, and the public—on various aspects of education reform. The Goals Panel and the National Skills Standards Board provide the structure for this leadership, using modest amounts of federal funds to provide tools for supporting local and state education reform, with limited involvement of federal officials.

Response: The National Skill Standards Board (NSSB) and the business community's support for education standards are not about pressuring local schools to use a specific set of standards. NSSB is a group of private citizens -- business, education, and labor leaders -- that will facilitate a process whereby employers can articulate the skills they need from workers. Local schools can use that information to choose the curriculum and programs they think will prepare their students to meet the demands of employers. There is no federal entanglement. Local schools want the best futures for their children, and skill standards will provide them more information they can use to better prepare their students for their futures.

Assertion: *If the government is handing out skill certificates to select students, then these students will have an advantage [over students who attend private schools, home schools, and schools not participating in Goals 2000] in getting a job or perhaps getting into college.*

Response: Skill certificates give industry an opportunity to let students, parents, and teachers know what skills are required for employment. Skill certificates give students an opportunity to let potential employers know what skills they have. The government does not hand out skill certificates. A skill certificate is a credential issued by the local school-to-work program. What kinds of credentials to issue are decided on by the state through its planning process. Skill certificates only matter if employers look for them in hiring and employers will only look for

them if they certify the skills employers are looking for anyway. Therefore, students benefit from the opportunity to acquire the skills that industries are demanding. Individuals will also have the opportunity to acquire skill certificates through postsecondary education, union and apprenticeship programs, professional associations, and from employers -- not just from public schools.

Assertion: School-to-work exists in large part simply to further the reach of Goals 2000.

Response: The School-to-Work Act exists to provide states and communities resources to help their youth develop the skills they need for citizenship, career opportunities, and higher education. It is part of the Act's purpose to support academic achievement and, to that end, it simply says that state school-to-work activities should not operate at cross purposes with state academic requirements: if there are state academic standards, school-based school-to-work activities should be consistent with them. None of these provisions specify what those standards must be.

Assertion: *"Even though compliance with Goals 2000 is 'voluntary' for states, the law holds disadvantaged children hostage to its dictates" (p. 2) because states that receive funds under the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) must align their curriculum, assessments, and teacher professional development with Goals 2000 standards.*

Response: Neither disadvantaged students nor states are "held hostage" by either Goals 2000 or the Improving America's Schools Act, which provides assistance to disadvantaged students under the Title 1 program. Quite to the contrary, the provisions in both Goals 2000 and Title 1 clearly place the states and local school districts in charge of determining academic standards and educational policy. They also both serve to encourage states and local communities to set more rigorous academic standards for all students, including economically disadvantaged students.

- Goals 2000 requires that participating states establish their own academic standards in basic and advanced skills for students, and develop tests to measure student progress toward achieving these standards. The Title 1 program also requires that states set their own academic standards in basic and advanced skills for participating students, and test to determine progress toward achieving those standards. When the two programs operate together, the result will be that disadvantaged students served by the Title 1 program will be expected to reach for the same academic standards as are other students in the state. Rather than being "held hostage", disadvantaged students are freed from a tyranny of low expectations, and will be challenged to work harder and learn more.

- There are no "goals 2000" standards, only state or local standards, determined by state or local authorities. The same is true of curriculum, assessments, and ways of preparing and upgrading the skills of teachers. These are all determined at the state and local level, without federal direction or control.
- According to a recent report by the American Federation of Teachers, 49 states are setting their own academic standards for its students. The U.S. Department of Education independently counts all 50 states engaged in this process. For states participating in Goals 2000 and Title 1, they too will use the standards they are setting themselves. In either case, the academic standards that student will be held to are determined by the state, not by the federal government. And standards used for Goals 2000 and Title 1 are those same standards.
- No state is required to participate in Goals 2000 in order to continue to receive Title 1 funds or funds under IASA or any other federal education programs. This is stated explicitly in Section 213 of the Goals 2000 Act.
- This situation represents an increase in state and local control and a decrease in federal requirements. The federal government exercises no control over the resources that states and communities spend on education or over school and classroom practices. Therefore, if federal programs are to be effective, they must work in tandem with state and local reform efforts. The new legislation recognizes this and responds to concern that in the past compliance with rules and regulations surrounding federal education programs has often constrained the flexibility necessary to achieve improvement. For example, reliance on nationally-normed testing in the Title I program was often redundant with state testing and consequently cut into instructional time for students who needed extra help the most. The new Title I allows states to use their own state assessments that measure performance in attaining the skills and standards they deem to be important.

Assertion: *"The objectives of Goals 2000 are already mirrored in California's subject frameworks and its statewide assessment" (p. 2). California's math and English frameworks "have resulted in the de-emphasis of basic math skills and phonics" (p. 21). The "connection between these state Math and English frameworks and the Goals 2000 debate over measuring standards . . . lies with the California Learning Assessment*

System (CLAS). . . . The link is that the CLAS test was designed to measure the effectiveness of education reforms envisioned under Goals 2000 programs" (p. 22). This type of "performance-based" test "bases its scoring on non-academic benchmarks" not "right and wrong answers" (p. 22).

Response: Standards and testing procedures are determined by the state and by local school districts and schools, not by the federal government. This has been true in the past and will continue to be true under Goals 2000.

- Any flaws in previous curriculum frameworks and assessments in California were the complete responsibility of the state, not of the federal government, and correcting any problems is also California's responsibility, without regard to whether or not California participates in Goals 2000. California is in the midst of revising its curriculum frameworks, and Governor Wilson has just signed legislation calling for the development of a new testing program. The state can use Goals 2000 funds to support its own activities in these areas, if it chooses to. Because education is so important, some aspects of reform are bound to generate controversy, but how these issues are addressed in California will be determined by the citizens of California, not by federal requirements—whether or not the state participates in Goals 2000.
- Goals 2000 promotes assessments that are aligned with each state's **content** standards in academic subjects. These use valid and reliable academic performance measures to provide coherent information about student attainments relative to the state content standards.

Assertion: *Goals 2000 promotes outcomes-based education: (1) The Regional Laboratories have "a primary duty" to promote school restructuring, which is "a buzz word in many education circles . . . for promoting the controversial principles of outcomes-based education" (pp. 8-9); (2) One purpose of the Act is to provide "a national framework for education reform" and "the term 'frameworks' . . . is the buzzword for California's troubled experiment with outcome-based education" (p. 20).*

Response: These are transparent and illogical attempts to generate objections to Goals 2000 by purporting to find a link to the outcomes-based education controversy. To set the record straight: (1) The provision that allows the labs to respond to a school's request for help with its restructuring efforts is not intended to promote outcomes-based education; (2) A national "framework" for education reform means a structure of support and is not a secret code for OBE.

Goals 2000 doesn't promote any particular education philosophy or approach; that is a local decision. GOALS 2000 focuses on upgrading **academic** achievement and

preparing students for the world of work. Each state, school district, and school determines what content it wants students to learn, and whether that content should focus strictly on core academic and basic skills or should also include other areas. The federal government will not be involved in those kinds of local decisions.

Assertion: *One California school district plans to use its Goals 2000 funds to hire school counselors to address "the supposed emotional and social needs of district children" and focus on "'soft' areas of school management and school environment" rather than academics (p. 23). Therefore, Goals 2000 "will mean a significant expansion" in these areas, "with no assurance as to improved student performance or a higher quality classroom instruction" (p. 23).*

Response: Whatever the strengths or weaknesses of the program in this one district, it effectively illustrates the ability of local schools and communities to use Goals 2000 resources in ways not required by the statute or imposed by the federal government. By providing flexibility for states and localities to decide how best to use their Goals 2000 funds, the Act supports local control and decision making, rather than federal mandates. When control is decentralized, funds will be used to support a variety of initiatives. The point of establishing state standards and carrying out a state and local planning process, as Goals 2000 calls for, is to allow individuals and groups who are concerned about education reform to help decide how best to improve instruction and student performance.

It is ironic that the authors call for local control of education, and at the same time they criticize a local district's use of the authority and resources at its disposal. Supporters of local control in theory should also support it in practice.

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