



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE SECRETARY

September 12, 1997

Dear Member of Congress:

Next week, you will be voting on an amendment to H. R. 2264, the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations bill, that would prohibit the use of funds to develop or implement the voluntary national tests of fourth grade reading and eighth grade mathematics skills proposed by the Administration. I am writing to urge you to oppose that amendment.

As you are aware, yesterday the Senate approved -- by a strong bipartisan vote (87-13) -- an amendment that designates the independent National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) as the entity responsible for guiding the development and implementation of the tests and makes a number of changes in NAGB's composition. During the debate on that amendment, Senator Coats of Indiana stated what this issue is all about when he said, "A voluntary national test, which states and parents may choose to participate in, will give parents another tool . . . to measure their children's academic achievement and hold local schools accountable." I hope, as you cast your vote, you will consider Senator Coats' remarks.

Over the last several weeks, a number of arguments have been raised in opposition to these proposed tests. I would like to address these issues:

*** The tests will NOT lead to a national curriculum.** They are to be based on accepted standards that reflect widespread agreement on what students should know and be able to do. They would not define the approach to teaching that should be used in reaching those levels of academic achievement. States and local communities will continue to determine their curriculum. I vigorously oppose any movement toward a national curriculum. Making sure every child can read well and do algebra is not a national curriculum. It is a very old-fashioned idea of making sure that every child has mastered the basics once and for all. These tests are voluntary and are not a condition for receiving other Federal education funds.

*** There is a very important need for these tests: America's parents and educators deserve to know the truth about how our children are doing in meeting agreed upon academic standards regardless of where they live.** Other tests administered by states to students have widely different standards of performance. The attached graph compares the results of state assessments with the results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). While state standards are improving, they remain very uneven. In our mobile society, parents need to be able to determine if their children are learning the basics so they can compete with students throughout the nation and around the world. Furthermore, the design of these tests will provide for much more effective feedback to students, parents and teachers, as to the specific areas that need to be addressed in individual students' educational progress.

*** The tests will not be developed by Department of Education staff, nor will they be designed to promote some particular philosophy.** Reading is reading and mathematics is mathematics no matter where you live and no matter what your political philosophy. These tests do not endorse or

encourage any specific form of instruction. This is a local decision made by local educators. The Senate's action yesterday supports the Administration's recommendation that NAGB, not the Department, oversee development and administration of the tests. NAGB also oversees the development and administration of the widely respected NAEP tests.

*** We are proposing to spend only \$16 million in 1998 for test development. A request for funds to administer the tests would come in the fiscal year 1999 appropriation, not in this bill. Some have argued that the Department already spends over \$500 million in test development. This is incorrect. Approximately 90% of the funds included in that estimate are Goals 2000 funds which are used, as each state determines, for a wide variety of purposes including teacher professional development, promoting parental and community involvement in schools to bolster standards, and bringing educational technology into the schools. Only a very small part of Goals 2000 funding goes to tests. We estimate that the costs of administering the test will range from \$10 to \$12 per student tested. Decisions as to who will be tested depend entirely on voluntary decisions by states, local education agencies, and families.**

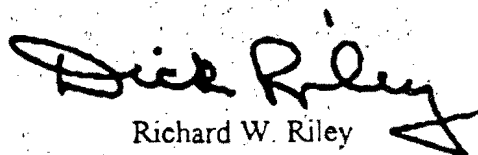
Some individuals are concerned that these tests will place low-income and minority students at a disadvantage. I understand and appreciate these concerns. However, I am very firmly convinced that one of the biggest obstacles to improved educational opportunities and results for those students has been the widespread and mistaken belief that students from these backgrounds cannot learn to the same high levels as other, more advantaged students. This belief -- the foundation of what I have called a tyranny of low expectations -- has pervaded the schooling experience of our most disadvantaged youngsters, and resulted all too often in watered down curricula, poorly prepared teachers, and under-investment in their schooling. **Challenging national standards and tests are a fundamental tool for overcoming these obstacles.**

We also know that changing expectations and setting higher standards lead to results. Test scores are up in New York City, Chicago, Detroit, and San Francisco to name a few cities. Philadelphia students made significant gains in reading, math, and science at the 4th, 8th, and 11th grade levels, and they did so at the same time that student participation increased substantially among students with disabilities, limited-English-proficient students, and low-income students. In Milwaukee, only 21% of the school district's eleventh grade students passed a rigorous mathematics proficiency examination. After an intense community-wide effort to bolster student achievement, 98% of the class of 1996 students passed the test.

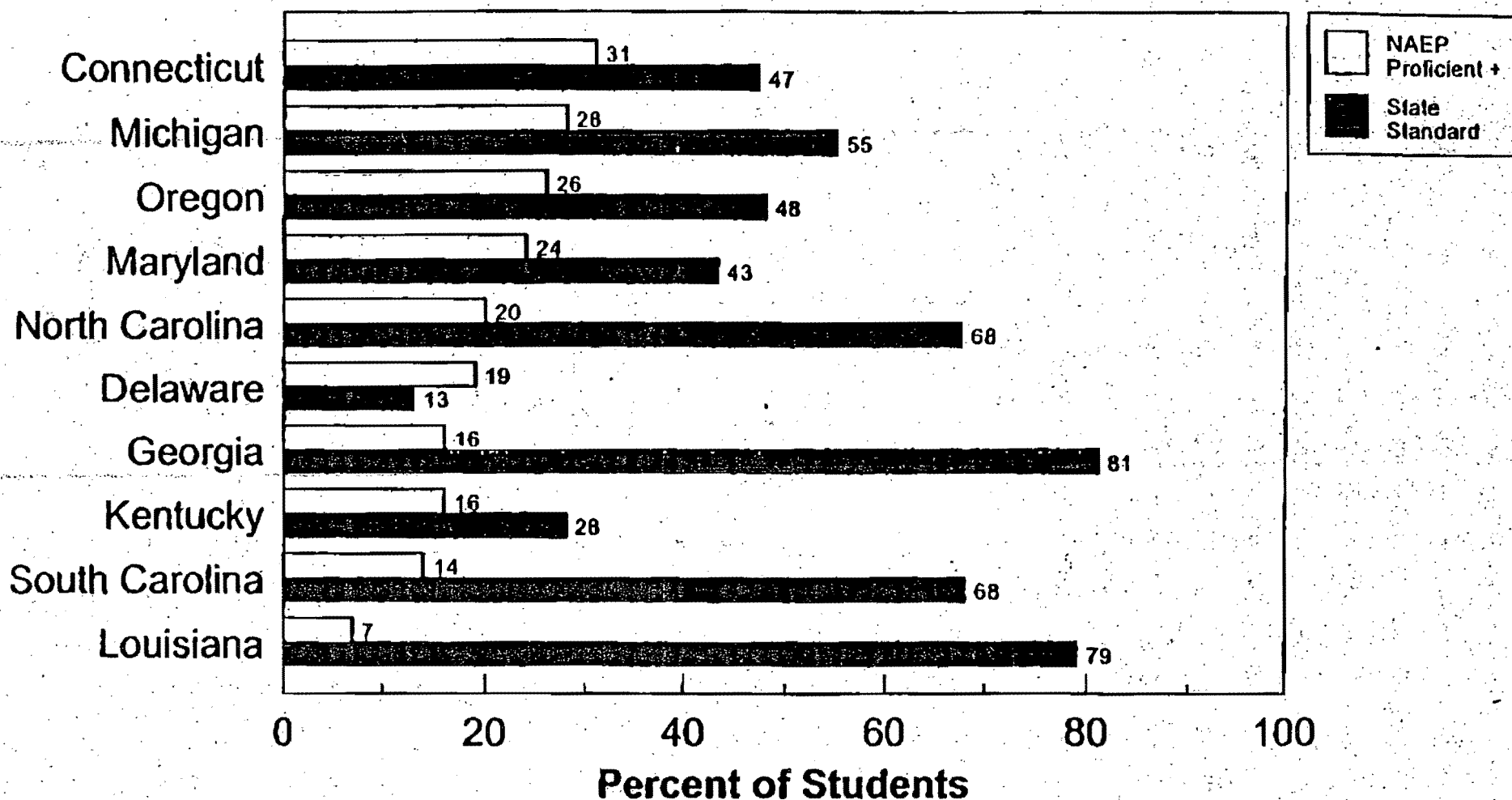
When you cast your vote, I urge you to put partisan politics aside and permit funding of this critical education reform tool. America's parents deserve a dependable means of finding out how their children are doing in reading and mathematics. America's students deserve to be given the challenge to perform to high standards of academic achievement and the support it takes from all of us to succeed. Local school officials should have the opportunity to decide for themselves whether to use these voluntary national tests.

I ask that you support the continued development of the voluntary national tests.

Yours sincerely,


Richard W. Riley

State 1996 NAEP Scores for 8th Grade Math Compared to States' Own Assessments*



★ State assessment results are for the 1995-96 school year. All are for grade 8 except for Michigan which is for grade 7. NAEP results are percentages of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level, state results reflect the state's standards.

Source: U.S. Department of Education and State Departments of Education: Individual State Reports.

SEP 26 3 11 12 PM '97 10 34300001 1.01700

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 24, 1997

Subcommittee on Labor-
HHS-Education Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Conferees:

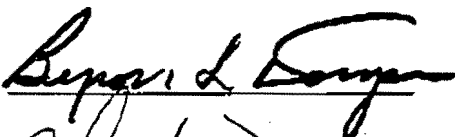
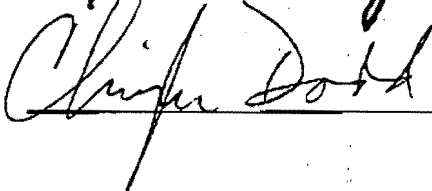
We the undersigned are writing to express our opposition to the Gorton amendment to S.1061 and to inform you of our intention to filibuster the conference report to the FY98 Labor-HHS-Education spending bill if it contains the Gorton provision.

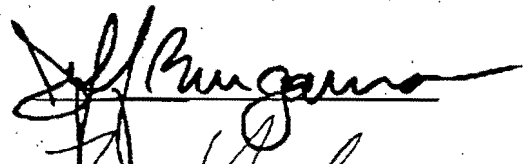
In essence, the Gorton amendment is a back-door attempt to abolish the U.S. Department of Education. It would eliminate the vast majority of programs for elementary and secondary school students, including successful programs to make schools safe for learning, help low-income children make progress in reading and math, serve special targeted populations, promote local character education efforts, improve teacher skills, and ensure that all our students are technologically literate.

Under the Gorton amendment, over \$13 billion in funding for education programs would be replaced by an ill-considered and unworkable system of block grants that would, in effect, cut education funding for many districts, disrupt effective local initiatives nationwide, and increase administrative burdens on local districts. The amendment also lacks accountability measures to prevent misuse or measure progress on meeting national education priorities.

Under the guise of promoting local control, the amendment represents a thinly-veiled attack on public education that would disrupt many promising efforts to improve our schools through partnerships among local, state, and federal agencies. We therefore strongly urge you to oppose it in the conference report.

Sincerely,




Patty Murray

Dick Clark

Max Baucus

John Chafee

Samuel R. Hahn

Paul Wellstone

Carl Levin

Pat Leahy

Dale Bumpers

Christopher

Jay Byrd

Danell Ford

Tim Johnson

Frank Lautenberg

Jack Reed

Al Wicker

Ed Kennedy

Jim VandeHee

John Cornyn

Ken Wyden

Will J. Fergold

Art Hallen

Chuck Rohrb

Paul Barham

Phil
Kearlan

Wm. R. Sten

Bob Gentry

Robert H. Roper

John Breault

Carl M. Wolfson

Dan Dinkin

Herb Kohl

John Glenn

Paul H.

Hampton

Glenn

Joe Biden

Samuel

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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Dear Conferees:

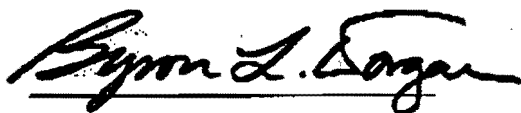
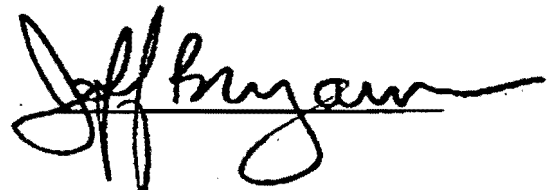
We the undersigned are writing to express our support for the voluntary national testing proposal that was approved by a vote of 87-13 and to inform you of our intention to filibuster the conference report on the FY98 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill if it fails to include the compromise testing plan.

The plan on testing that was approved by a vote of 87-13 supports the development of voluntary new reading and math tests for 4th and 8th graders under the control of the independent and bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board. The Board would be authorized to oversee all aspects of the tests being developed, and its membership would be expanded to provide greater independence and a more balanced mix of elected officials, business representatives, and others.

For the first time in our nation's history, this voluntary national testing program would allow parents around the nation to compare the academic performance of their children, their neighborhood schools, and their local district with any other place in the nation. A broad coalition of business and education groups have all expressed their strong support for this new way of measuring academic progress in a uniform manner. While the tests will not be administered until the spring of 1999, 7 states and 15 major school districts have already signed up for the tests.

Without this voluntary new test, parents will lack accurate and comparable information and students in too many schools will not be prepared for the demanding workplaces of the 21st century. We therefore strongly urge you support the bipartisan plan to develop these voluntary new tests in the conference report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Byron L. Dorgan".A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jeff Bryan".

Burr Base

Max Bauman

Jack

Max Cleland

Carl Levin

Harold Reid

Jack Reed

Kent Co

Ed Johnson

Wm J. Ford

Philip D. M

Dale Bumpers

Ron Wyden

Pat Leahy

Dendell Ford

Al King

Jim Bucher

Tom Rahn

Baker A. Nichols

Hubert H. Hefner

John F. Kennedy

Joe Biden

Paul Sarbanes

Frank R. Lautenberg

Patty Murray

Cory M. Booker

Tim Wirth

R. L. Allen

Herb Kohl

Al Franken

Ed Kennedy

Russ Feingold

Tom Harkin

Dianne Feinstein

Chuck Robb

Dan Claitor

Tim Wirth

Al Franken

John Glenn

John Edwards

Bob Grathew

Senate Bipartisan Agreement in Support of the President's Voluntary National Testing Initiative

September 11, 1997

- Today, with strong bipartisan support, the Senate rejected the status quo in education and joined the Administration in moving forward on national standards and tests in the basic skills.
- Today's action helps to insure that parents, teachers, students and communities will receive high quality information on whether students are reaching high standards in 4th grade English reading and 8th grade math, allowing us to hold schools accountable and get extra help to those students who need it.
- The bipartisan agreement reached today adopts the President's proposal to give authority for the Voluntary National Tests to the bipartisan, independent National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). NAGB currently oversees the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which tests a nationwide sample of students.
- The agreement also makes NAGB more independent, helping to insure that the National Tests will provide be free from politics in the years ahead.
- Under the agreement, NAGB will gain an additional Governor from the other party, as well as adding Mayors and additional businesspeople. The Board will continue to have strong representation of teachers, principals, school board members and other educators.
- We are delighted that we will be able to move forward without further delay on the President's plan, first announced in his State of the Union address this year.

E-mail Congress

Switchboard:

House
202-225-3121

Senate
202-224-3121

STOP Federal Government Tests On September 11 the Senate approved an amendment to the Labor/HHS appropriations bill that authorized federal government testing for 4th and 8th graders -- giving authority over the tests to the federally appointed National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) and basing them on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests. The twelve Senators who stood firm against national testing are: Allard (R-CO), Ashcroft (R-MO), Brownback (R-KS), Gramm (R-TX), Grams (R-MN), Hagel (R-NE), Hutchinson (R-AR), Inhofe (R-OK), Nickles (R-OK), Sessions (R-AL), Shelby (R-AL), and Thompson (R-TN).

We still have a chance to stop federal government tests in the House of Representatives. A vote on the Goodling amendment is expected Tuesday or Wednesday. This amendment prohibits federal funds from being used to develop or implement any new education tests.

ACTION: Call your Representative and tell them to vote **YES** on the Goodling amendment to stop federal government tests. Call your Senators and tell them to support a ban on federal tests when the L/HHS bill goes to conference committee (to iron out differences between the House and Senate bills.)

Senator Slade Gorton's amendment Guts Department of Education

On the bright side, Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA) offered a surprise amendment that provides for \$5.5 billion of Dept. of Ed. money to go directly to local districts, "to support programs or activities for kindergarten through grade 12 students that the local educational agencies deem appropriate." The amendment passed 51-49. The result of this amendment, if signed into law, would be the elimination of numerous Department programs including Goals 2000, Bilingual education, and all those burdensome mandates. The Department considers this amendment "devastating." Several Members of the House are considering offering a similar amendment in the House.

Defund the National Endowment for the Arts -- Helms/Ashcroft Amendment to Interior Appropriations bill

Early next week, the Senate is expected to vote on an amendment being offered by Senators Jesse Helms (R-NC) and John Ashcroft (R-MO) that will eliminate all funding (~\$100.5 million) for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) from the Senate Interior appropriations bill. The House of Representatives has already passed their version of the Interior bill with no money for the NEA.

ACTION: Call your Senators and urge them to support the Helms/Ashcroft amendment to defund the National Endowment for the Arts. Clinton has said he will veto the Interior bill if there is no money for the NEA. We say, "Let him!"



FOR RELEASE
August 26, 1997

**RILEY CALLS FOR NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD
POLICY ROLE IN VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS**

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley announced on CBS' *Face the Nation* last Sunday that he plans to ask Congress to authorize the bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to set policy for the voluntary national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade mathematics.

Riley said the administration will submit legislation to Congress that will expand NAGB's authority to include setting policy for the voluntary national tests. Riley's proposal is designed to assure that the voluntary national tests are responsive to and earn the confidence of parents, teachers, communities, states and local school districts.

President Clinton earlier this year proposed the annual voluntary national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade mathematics based on high standards for student achievement. The tests are to be based on the highly respected National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and for math, also will be linked to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study.

NAGB, an independent, bipartisan board established by Congress in 1989, formulates policy guidelines for NAEP, a series of assessments which measure student performance in a variety of subjects in grades 4, 8 and twelve. The board is responsible for selecting the subject areas to be assessed under NAEP; for setting appropriate student performance levels; for developing assessment objectives and test specifications through a national consensus approach;

-MORE-

for developing guidelines for reporting and disseminating NAEP results; for determining the appropriateness of test items and ensuring they are free from bias, and for taking actions to improve the form and use of NAEP.

Riley and the President have noted previously that the tests will be a valuable resource for parents, teachers and school districts to use in helping states and local school districts in their efforts to raise standards and improve student achievement.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

August 28, 1997

MEMORANDUM TO ANN LEWIS

ELENA KAGAN

MIKE COHEN

CC:

DAVID FRANK

SCOTT FLEMING

FROM:

LESLIE T. THORNTON

SUBJECT:

SEPTEMBER 2/PHILADELPHIA TEST EVENT

I have attached to this memorandum material from David Hornbeck's office on the September 2 test event in Philadelphia. The material includes: (1) a cover letter addressed to me requesting Secretary Riley's participation in the event; (2) a fact sheet entitled "Highlights of Spring 1997 SAT-9 Results which outlines in bullet form the good news; and (3) bar graphs showing 1996-1997 comparisons for fourth, eighth, and eleventh grade reading, math, and science scores. In addition, I have learned the following information so far about the tests results in Philadelphia and the event:

- ☐ One of the best parts of the story is how many more kids took the tests and did well. Schools engaged in a variety of measures to reach out to the many ESOL and special education students who in significant numbers generally do not take the tests, including teachers literally going out and finding their students on the streets (I have asked to get more anecdotal and other details on the measures). The **business community** apparently played a significant role in the effort by, among other things, funding a radio and print campaign to encourage teachers, parents and students to participate in the tests. Business community representatives will be a part of the press conference and may fund bill boards around the city congratulating teachers, kids, parents on the good results.
- ☐ The event begins with a 10:30am-12:00 noon press briefing conducted by the technical folks in assessments, etc. Parents, teachers, and others in the community have been invited to the press briefing in addition to the press. The **Press Conference** begins at noon. Mayor Rendell, David Hornbeck, Floyd Alston (president of the school board), John Street, president of the city council and Riley all will make remarks. They are also trying to get Ted Kirsch, head of the PFT, who as some of you know has not been a supporter of Hornbeck's.
- ☐ The message is primarily three-fold: (1) kids did better; (2) more kids were included and those kids did well; (3) while they still have a ways to go, standards

600 INDEPENDENCE AVE., S.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation.

aligned with the tests has proven to be an important diagnostic tool not only of how kids, teachers, schools are doing but also what works in getting kids, teachers, parents and the community involved in helping to make schools better.

cc: Sylvia Matthews

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

BOARD OF EDUCATION

21ST STREET S. OF THE PARKWAY

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19103-1099

DAVID W. HORNBECK
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

TELEPHONE (215) 299-7823-7524

August 28, 1997

Ms. Leslie Thornton
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary of Education

Dear Leslie,

This letter follows your conversation with David requesting an appearance of the Secretary for the announcement of our new Achievement scores.

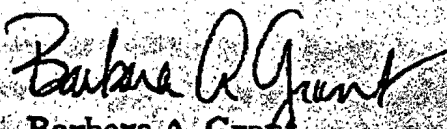
As David explained, we are very excited about what the data shows. These are the first fruits of three year effort to reverse a decades long pattern of declining achievement scores. The most important news is that students are doing better. But there is also important news in the successful outreach efforts that resulted in thousands more children being included in the testing.

Inclusion in this instance means many more children for whom English is not a first language and special education children. What their results showed is that they too, can achieve if given the accommodations- translated tests or tests in their native language, reading support for the visually challenged, and time extensions for children with other disabilities-that allow them to play on a level field.

We would like to share this good news with the nation and give the Clinton Administration an opportunity to show what standards and assessment aligned with national standards can do.

The Philadelphia education reform story has attracted national attention this past year from Education Week to the New York Times to ABC News. This month, David's mission here will be featured on two segments of the Merrow Report (September 12 and 19).

I have enclosed a summary of test result highlights and some charts indicating the progress the District is making on the achievement front. I hope the secretary can join us to share the good news. Please call me if there is anything else you need. I look forward to talking to you.


Barbara A. Grant
Executive Assistant

HIGHLIGHTS OF SPRING 1997 SAT-9 RESULTS

MAJOR IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENT PARTICIPATION

There was a strong increase in student participation in the testing program from school-year 1996 to 1997, as a much greater proportion of the students who were eligible to take the test took the test – for example:

- across the three grades and the three subjects of the test, the proportion of students taking each section of the test increased from an average of 64.9 percent in 1996 to 80.0 percent in 1997
- compared to 1996, when an average of 49 percent of the 11th graders missed each section of the test, in 1997 more than three-quarters took the reading section while more than two-thirds took the mathematics and science sections
- in 1997, an average of 84.4 percent of the 8th graders took each of the sections of the test – in 1996, the average percent of 8th graders taking each section of the test was 72.4
- in 1997, more than 90 percent of the 4th graders took each of the sections of the test (reading, mathematics, and science)

There was a strong increase in the number of special education and ESOL students who took the test in 1997 compared to 1996 – for example:

- the number of special education students tested more than doubled in mathematics and science (103 and 112 percent increases, respectively), and almost doubled in reading (97 percent increase)
- the number of ESOL students tested increased by more than 30 percent in each subject

SUBSTANTIAL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GAINS REALIZED

Substantial academic gains were recorded in each subject and at each grade level – for example:

- there was an increase of at least five (5) percentage points in the proportion of students performing at the basic level or higher in all grades and subjects,

except for 8th and 11th grade mathematics (3.1 and 2.7 percentage point increases respectively) and 11th grade science (3.5 percentage point increase)

Reading achievement improved at each grade -- for example:

- there was an increase of more than five (5) percentage points in the proportion of students achieving at the basic, proficient, or advanced level in each of the three grades.

Gains were made in science at each grade level -- for example:

- there was an increase of 8.9 percentage points in the proportion of 4th grade students achieving at the basic, proficient, or advance levels in science

Fourth grade academic achievement was strong -- for example:

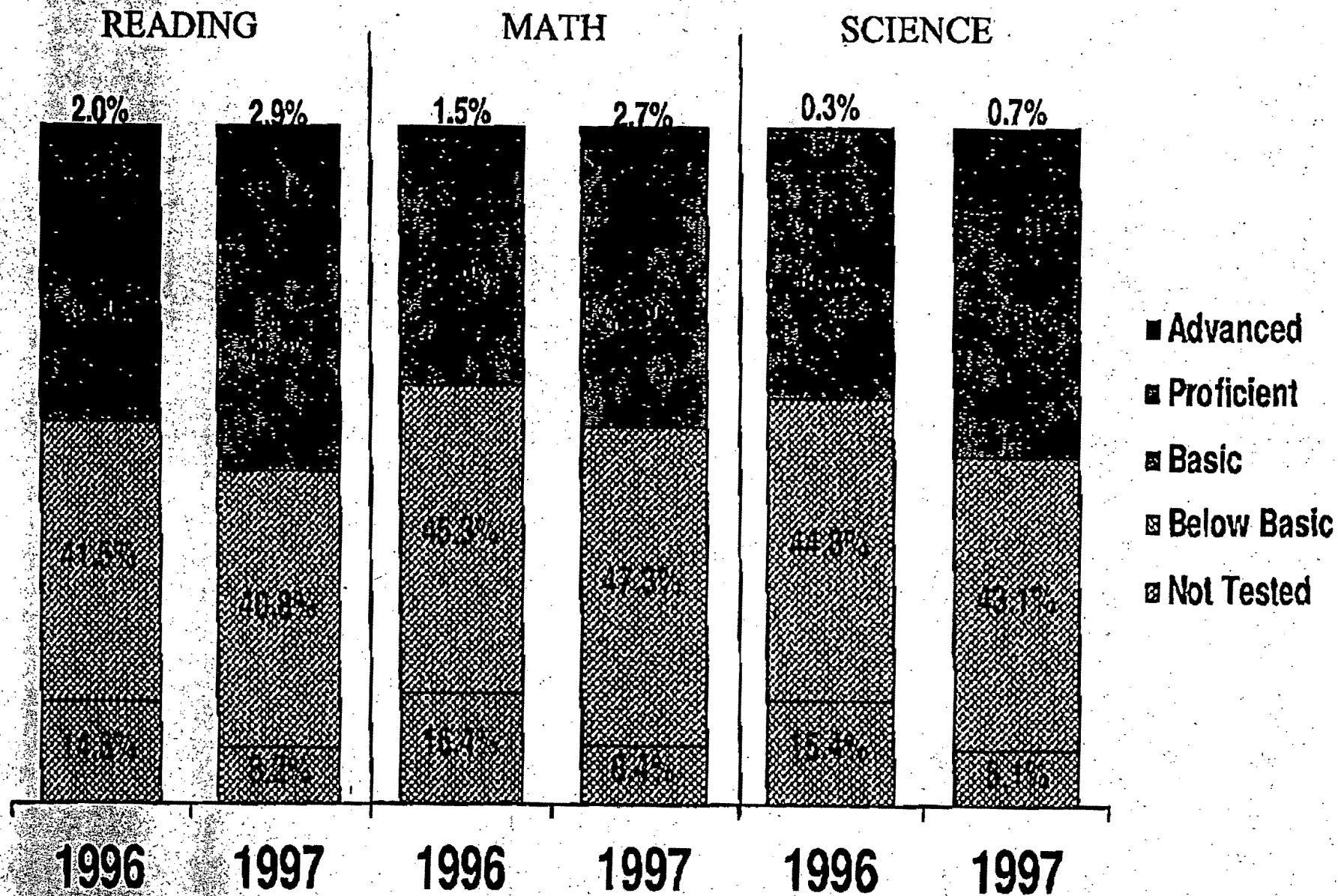
- in 1997, more than one-half (50.9 percent) of the fourth graders demonstrated basic, proficient, or advanced reading skills, while almost one-half of the fourth graders demonstrated basic, proficient, or advanced performance in mathematics and science (44.3 and 48.8 percent respectively)

INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS – AREAS ON WHICH WE NEED TO FOCUS

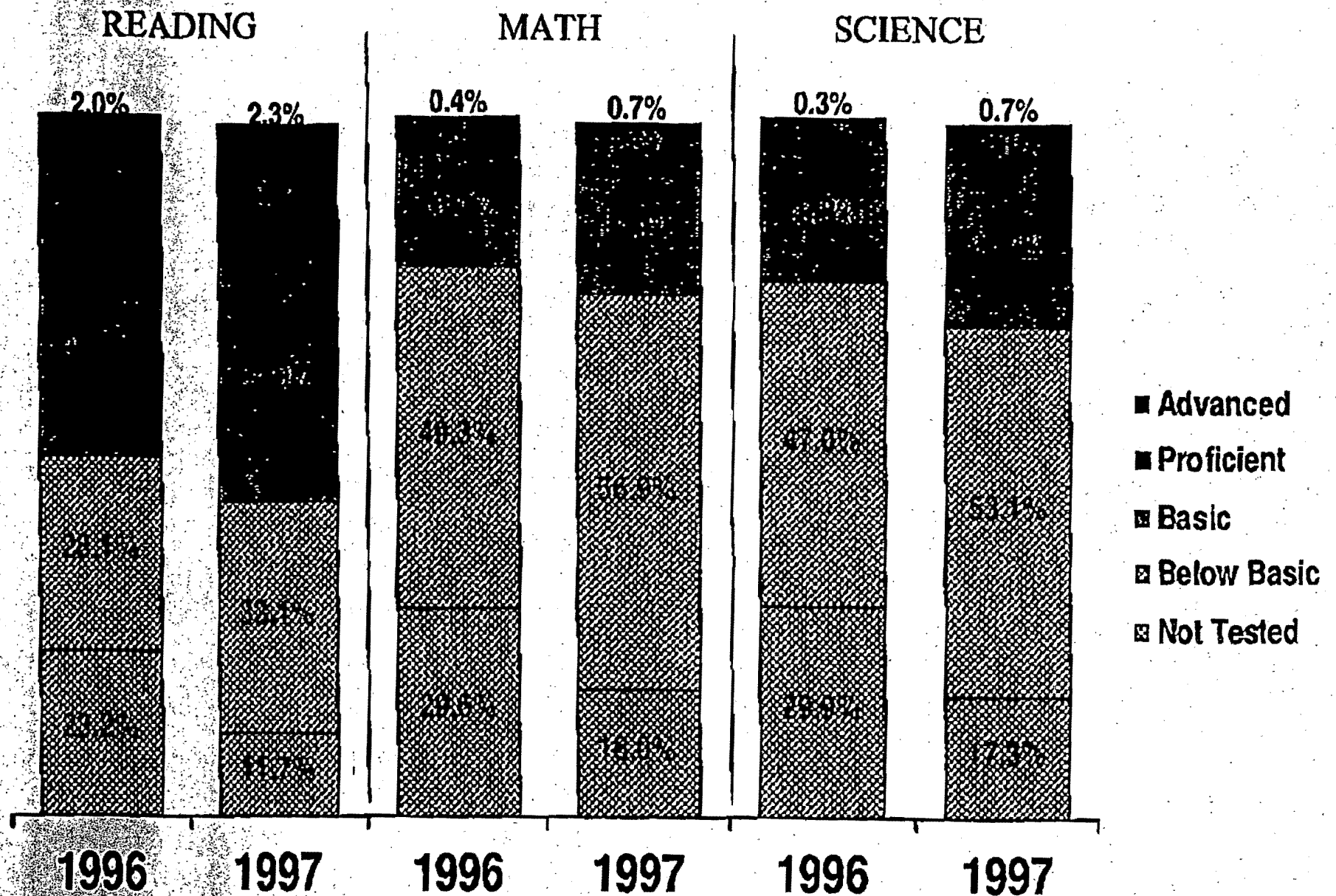
While there is a lot to celebrate, the 1997 SAT 9 results also help us to focus on areas of particular need. For example, while Philadelphia students showed gains in each subject and at each grade level:

- 8th and 11th grade performance lags behind that of 4th grade students
- 8th and 11th grade student performance in mathematics lags behind that of reading -- both the 1997 achievement and the improvement over 1996 results are low
- while the 1997 achievement in science improved at each grade since 1996, science performance (particularly in 11th grade) is not as strong as in other subjects

SAT 9: GRADE 4



SAT 9: GRADE 8



SAT 9: GRADE 11

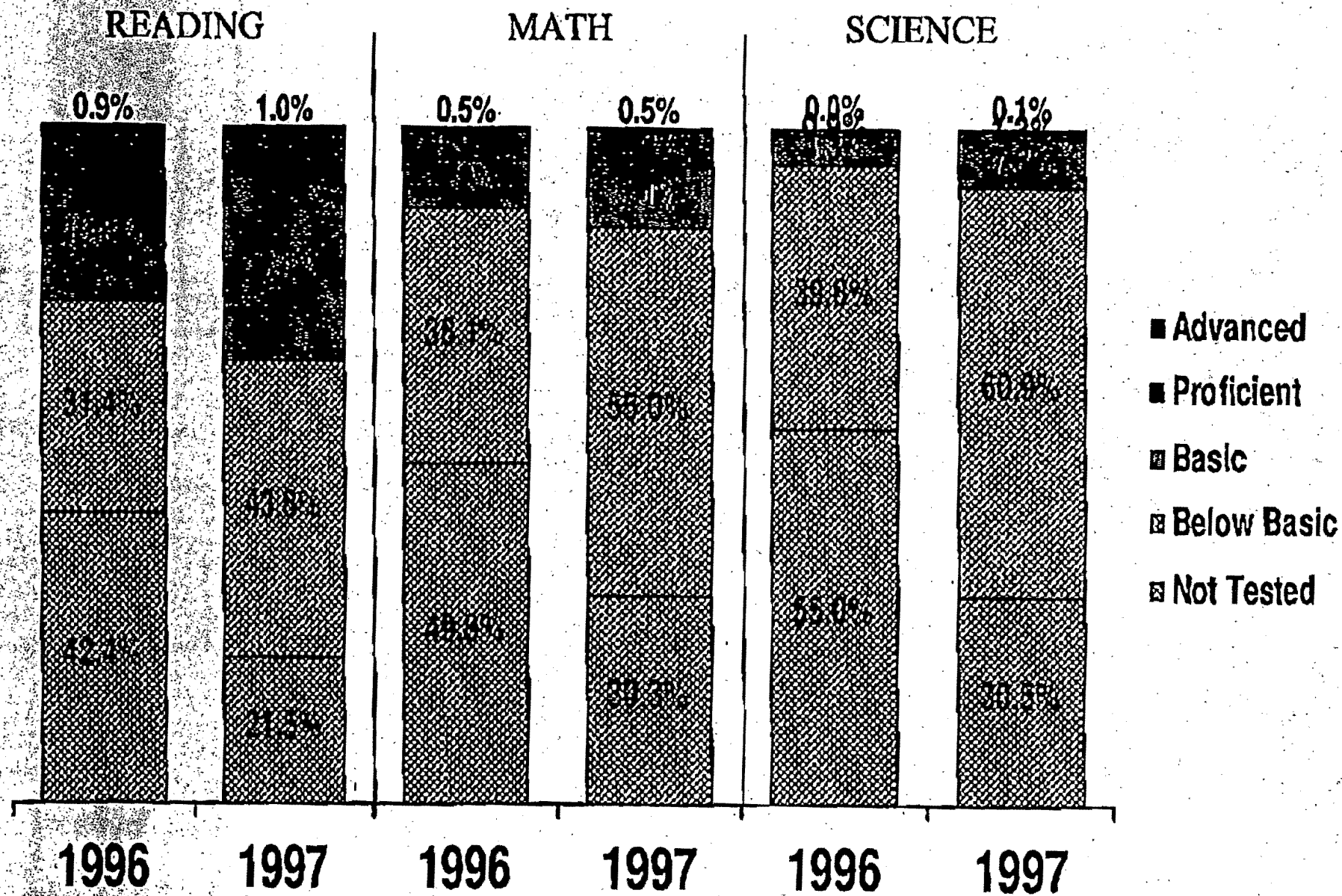


TABLE 2

Stanford Achievement Test, Version 9 (SAT-9) - Comparison of Results from Spring 1996 and Spring 1997 - All Students

Grade 4

	Reading						Mathematics						Science					
	1996		1997				1996		1997				1996		1997			
	N	%	N	%			N	%	N	%			N	%	N	%		
Advanced	349	2.0%	501	2.9%			252	1.5%	458	2.7%			50	0.3%	122	0.7%		
Proficient	1943	11.3%	2403	14.1%			1246	7.2%	1753	10.3%			915	5.3%	1406	8.3%		
Basic	5228	30.4%	5784	33.9%			5094	29.6%	5330	31.3%			5893	34.3%	6788	39.8%		
Below Basic III	3538	20.6%	3579	21.0%			3891	22.6%	4112	24.1%			3662	21.3%	3610	21.2%		
Below Basic II	2399	13.9%	2289	13.4%			3061	17.8%	3051	17.9%			2904	16.9%	2556	15.0%		
Below Basic I	1198	7.0%	1084	6.4%			837	4.9%	894	5.2%			1136	6.6%	1182	6.9%		
Not Tested	2548	14.8%	1397	8.2%			2822	16.4%	1439	8.4%			2643	15.4%	1373	8.1%		

Grade 8

	Reading						Mathematics						Science					
	1996		1997				1996		1997				1996		1997			
	N	%	N	%			N	%	N	%			N	%	N	%		
Advanced	299	2.0%	344	2.3%			66	0.4%	107	0.7%			48	0.3%	102	0.7%		
Proficient	2167	14.7%	2508	17.0%			632	4.3%	825	5.6%			579	3.9%	820	5.6%		
Basic	4703	31.9%	5149	34.9%			2410	16.4%	2635	17.9%			2768	18.8%	3301	22.4%		
Below Basic III	2262	15.4%	2430	16.5%			3651	24.8%	3897	26.4%			3090	21.0%	3595	24.4%		
Below Basic II	1312	8.9%	1572	10.7%			3129	21.2%	3756	25.5%			2834	19.2%	3014	20.5%		
Below Basic I	569	3.9%	876	5.9%			486	3.3%	724	4.9%			1007	6.8%	1216	8.3%		
Not Tested	3423	23.2%	1720	11.7%			4361	29.6%	2655	18.0%			4409	29.9%	2551	17.3%		

Grade 11

	Reading						Mathematics						Science					
	1996		1997				1996		1997				1996		1997			
	N	%	N	%			N	%	N	%			N	%	N	%		
Advanced	106	0.9%	112	1.0%			59	0.5%	55	0.5%			3	0.0%	10	0.1%		
Proficient	631	5.5%	870	7.7%			504	4.4%	587	5.2%			106	0.9%	146	1.3%		
Basic	2268	19.8%	2961	26.1%			822	7.2%	1031	9.1%			488	4.3%	824	7.3%		
Below Basic III	1686	14.7%	2187	19.3%			1584	13.8%	2158	19.0%			1330	11.6%	2056	18.1%		
Below Basic II	1127	9.8%	1563	13.8%			1945	17.0%	2860	25.2%			2056	17.9%	3156	27.8%		
Below Basic I	783	6.8%	1214	10.7%			842	7.3%	1217	10.7%			1176	10.3%	1696	15.0%		
Not Tested	4858	42.4%	2435	21.5%			5703	49.8%	3434	30.3%			6300	55.0%	3454	30.5%		

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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HHS-Education Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Conferees:

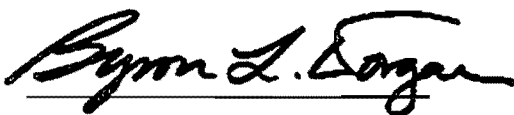
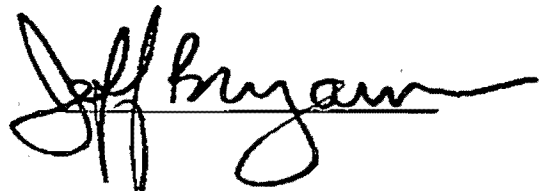
We the undersigned are writing to express our support for the voluntary national testing proposal that was approved by a vote of 87-13 and to inform you of our intention to filibuster the conference report on the FY98 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill if it fails to include the compromise testing plan.

The plan on testing that was approved by a vote of 87-13 supports the development of voluntary new reading and math tests for 4th and 8th graders under the control of the independent and bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board. The Board would be authorized to oversee all aspects of the tests being developed, and its membership would be expanded to provide greater independence and a more balanced mix of elected officials, business representatives, and others.

For the first time in our nation's history, this voluntary national testing program would allow parents around the nation to compare the academic performance of their children, their neighborhood schools, and their local district with any other place in the nation. A broad coalition of business and education groups have all expressed their strong support for this new way of measuring academic progress in a uniform manner. While the tests will not be administered until the spring of 1999, 7 states and 15 major school districts have already signed up for the tests.

Without this voluntary new test, parents will lack accurate and comparable information and students in too many schools will not be prepared for the demanding workplaces of the 21st century. We therefore strongly urge you support the bipartisan plan to develop these voluntary new tests in the conference report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Byron L. Morgan".A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Bryan".

Bruce Baker

Mr. Beaman

John

Max Cleland

Carl Levin

Harold Kent

Jack Reed

Philip D. M.

Dale Bumpers

Ken Wyden

Tom Carper

Dendell Ford

Alvin

Tom Harkin

SEP 25 '97 10:33 FR

TO 94565581

P.05/05

Non-Caucus Democrats Supporting Goodling Amendment on National Testing

Neil Abercrombie (HI)
James Barcia (MI)
David Bonier (MI)
Allen Boyd (FL)
Pat Danner (MO)
Peter DeFazio (OR)
Mike Doyle (PA)
Chet Edwards (TX)
Lane Evans (IL)
Virgil Goode (VA)
Gene Green (TX)
Ralph Hall (TX)
Lee Hamilton (IN)
Tom Holden (PA)
Chris John (LA)
Marcy Kaptur (OH)
Gerald Kleczka (WI)
Ron Klink (PA)
William Lipinski (IL)
Thomas Manton (NY)
Robert Matsui (CA)
Patsy Mink (HI)
Alan Mollohan (WVA)
John Murtha (PA)
Collin Peterson (MN)
Owen Pickett (VA)
Tim Roemer (IN)
Norma Sisisky (VA)
Ike Skelton (MO)
Charles Stenholm (TX)
Ted Strickland (OH)
Gene Taylor (MS)
James Traficant (OH)
Jim Turner (TX)

November 7, 1997, 1:40 p.m.

Section 305. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of Federal law, no funds provided to the Department of Education or to an applicable program (as defined in section 400(c)(1) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 USC 1221(c)(1))), in this Act or in any other Act in fiscal year 1998, may be used to field test, pilot test, implement, administer or distribute in any way, any national tests.

(b) **Exception.**--- Subsection (a) shall not apply to the Third International Math and Science Study or the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Section 306. (a) **Study**---The National Academy of Sciences, in consultation with the National Governors Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the White House, the National Assessment Governing Board, and the Congress, shall conduct a feasibility study to determine if an equivalency scale can be developed that would allow test scores from commercially available standardized tests and State assessments to be compared with each other and the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

(b) **Report of Findings to Congress.** (1) The National Academy of Sciences shall submit a written report to the White House, the Committee on Education and the Workforce in the House of Representatives, the Committee on Labor and Human Resources in the Senate, and the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate not later than September 1, 1998.

(2) The National Academy of Sciences shall submit an interim report no later than June 15, 1998.

Section 307 (a). National Assessment Governing Board. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the exclusive authority over all policies, direction, and guidelines for developing voluntary national tests pursuant to contract RJ97153001 previously entered into between the United States Department of Education and the American Institutes for Research and executed on August 15, 1997, shall be vested in the National Assessment Governing Board established under section 412 of the National Education Statistics Act of 1994 (20 USC 9011); *Provided*, That within 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall review the national test development contract in effect on the date of enactment of this Act, and modify the contract as the Board determines necessary and not inconsistent with this Act or applicable laws: *Provided further*, That if the contract cannot be modified to the extent determined necessary by the Board, the contract shall be terminated and the Board shall negotiate a new contract, under the Board's exclusive control, for the tests, not inconsistent with this Act or applicable laws.

(b) In carrying out its exclusive authority for developing voluntary national tests pursuant to contract RJ97153001, any subsequent contract related thereto, or any contract modification pursuant to subsection (a), the National Assessment Governing Board shall determine---

(1) the extent to which test items selected for use on the tests are free from racial, cultural or gender bias;

(2) whether the test development process and test items adequately assess student reading and mathematics comprehension in the form most

likely to yield accurate information regarding student achievement in reading and mathematics;

(3) whether the test development process and test items take into account the needs of disadvantaged, limited English proficient and disabled students; and

(4) whether the test development process takes into account how parents, guardians, and students will appropriately be informed about testing content, purpose and uses.

Section 308. Study. The National Academy of Sciences shall, not later than September 1, 1998, submit a written report to the Committee on Education and the Workforce in the House of Representatives, the Committee on Labor and Human Resources in the Senate, and the Committees on Appropriations in the House and Senate that evaluates all test items developed or funded by the Department of Education or any other agency of the Federal government pursuant to contract RJ97153001, any subsequent contract related thereto, or any contract modification by the National Assessment Governing Board pursuant to section 307 of this Act, for---

(A) the technical quality of any test items for 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics;

(B) the validity, reliability, and adequacy of developed test items;

(C) the validity of any developed design which links test results to student performance;

- (D) the degree to which any developed test items provide valid and useful information to the public;
- (E) whether the test items are free from racial, cultural, or gender bias;
- (F) whether the test items address the needs of disadvantaged, limited English proficient and disabled students; and,
- (G) whether the test items can be used for tracking, graduation or promotion of students.

Section 309(a). Study—The National Academy of Sciences shall conduct a study and make written recommendations on appropriate methods, practices, and safeguards to ensure that ---

- (1) existing and new tests that are used to assess student performance are not used in a discriminatory manner or inappropriately for student promotion, tracking or graduation; and
- (2) existing and new tests adequately assess student reading and mathematics comprehension in the form most likely to yield accurate information regarding student achievement of reading and mathematics skills.

(b) Report to Congress. The National Academy of Sciences shall submit a written report to the White House, the National Assessment Governing Board, the Committee on Education and the Workforce in the House of Representatives, the Committee on Labor and Human Resources in the Senate, and the Committees on Appropriations in the House and Senate not later than September 1, 1998.

Section 310. (a) The Federal Government shall not require any State or local educational agency or school to administer or implement any pilot or field test in any subject or grade, nor shall the Federal government require any student to take any national test in any subject or grade.

(b) Nothing in section 309(a) shall be construed as affecting the National Assessment of Educational Progress or the Third International Math and Science Study.

Section 311. No Federal, State or local educational agency may require any private or parochial school student, or home-schooled individual, to take any pilot or field test developed under this Act, contract RJ97153001, or any contract related thereto, without the written consent of the parents or legal guardians of the student or individual.

PROHIBITION ON VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTING

The House bill contained a prohibition on the use of federal funds for the development, planning or administration of any national program for testing in reading or mathematics. The provision exempts the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the Third International Math and Science Study.

The House bill also contained a provision prohibiting the administration of any national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics until the submission of a final report by the National Academy of Sciences.

The Senate bill contained several provisions. The first required the Office of Educational Research and Improvement to submit to the Senate Appropriations Committee a spending plan for activities under the Education Research, Statistics, and Improvement account prior to obligation.

The second gives the National Assessment Governing Board exclusive authority over the policies, direction and guidelines for implementing voluntary national tests for 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics. The provision also required that any such tests be voluntary and that within 90 days of enactment the Board shall review the contract for the national tests and, if necessary, modify or terminate and renegotiate any contracts. The provision lists the specific authorities of the board.

The third provision also expressly prohibited any State or local educational agency from requiring any private, parochial school student or home-schooled student to take any national test without the written consent of the student.

The fourth provision of the Senate bill changed the composition of the National Assessment Governing Board to add one governor, two mayors, and two business representatives and make technical changes to the make-up and process for appointment to the Board.

The conferees and the Administration agree that it is important to have high, voluntary standards in the basic skills of reading and math, to measure whether students are meeting these standards, and to provide that information to students, parents and teachers. The Administration has proposed voluntary national tests in order to measure student achievement related to national standards. However, every state already administers a number of tests, and many are concerned that an additional, national, test would be an unnecessary burden.

To address this concern, the conference agreement (sec. 305-311) states that the National Academy of Sciences will be commissioned to conduct a study of the feasibility of equating existing state and commercially available tests with each other and with the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The purpose of this study is to determine whether it will be possible to use existing tests administered by states and local school districts to compare individual student performance with existing, challenging national content and performance standards. The purpose is also to determine if the same tests can be used to compare the performance of students in different states and communities, on different tests, to each other. The NAS shall submit a report on this study to the Congress no later than June 15, 1998, and a final report no later than September 1, 1998.

The NAS will conduct this study in consultation with the National Governors' Association (NGA), the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), NAGB, the Congress and the White House. While the NAS study is being conducted, NAGB will have exclusive authority over contract RJ97153001, as stated in this Act, which will be based on the same content and performance standards as are used for NAEP, and which are linked to NAEP to the maximum extent possible.

➤ The conference agreement further provides that the National Academy of Sciences shall submit a written report by September 1, 1998 to the Committee on Education and Workforce in the House of Representatives, the Committee on Labor and Human Resources in the Senate, and the House and Senate Appropriations Committees that evaluates the technical quality, validity and reliability of developed test items on national 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics tests; evaluates whether test items are free from racial, cultural or gender bias; evaluates whether the test items address the needs of disadvantaged, limited English proficient and disabled students; and evaluates whether the test items can be used for tracking, graduation or promotion of students.

The conferees intend that the National Assessment Governing Board shall hold public hearings on these test development activities and on the recommendations submitted by the National Academy of Sciences. The National Assessment Governing Board shall ensure that such hearings are widely publicized, and that activities conducted to publicize such hearings communicate effectively with the broad and diverse populations that may be affected by such tests.

The Administration and the authorizing Committees of the U.S. Congress will work together to incorporate the findings from the NAS study into the reauthorization of NAEP and NAGB. The conferees understand that the Administration agrees that, where it is feasible and practical to validly and reliably equate test scores and link performance levels on State assessments and commercially available standardized tests with the National Assessment of Education Progress, then these tests may serve the same purpose as the proposed national test. To the extent that NAS study demonstrates ways in which existing tests can be equated with each other and with NAEP, or ways in which existing tests can be modified in order to facilitate such equating, the Administration and the House Committee on Education and the Workforce intend to work together to implement these recommendations through the reauthorization of NAEP.

In order to inform future deliberations on the appropriate uses of tests measuring student academic performance and to prevent the misuse of such tests, particularly for minority and limited English proficient students, the conference agreement provides for a third study to be conducted by the National Academy of Sciences that makes recommendations on appropriate methods, practices, and safeguards to ensure that existing and new tests that may be used to measure student performance are not used in a discriminatory manner or inappropriately for tracking or other "high stakes" purposes. The NAS is also directed to report on ways to ensure that such tests adequately assess student reading and mathematics comprehension in the form most likely to yield accurate information regarding student achievement in reading and mathematics. The conference agreement provides that this NAS report shall be submitted to the White House, National Assessment Governing Board, the Committee on Education and the Workforce in the

House of Representatives and the Committee on Labor and Human Services in the Senate, and the Committees on Appropriations in the House of Representatives and Senate not later than September 1, 1998.

The conferees encourage the National Assessment Governing Board and the National Academy of Sciences, in convening any advisory committees or expert panels needed to carry out the requirements of this Act, to take into account racial, ethnic and gender diversity and balance.

The conference agreement further provides that the federal government shall not require any state, local educational agency or school district to administer or implement any pilot or field test in any subject or grade, or require any student to take any national test in any subject or grade. In addition, no federal, state or local educational agency may require any private or parochial school student, or home-schooled student, to take any pilot or field test developed under this Act without the written consent of the parents or legal guardians.

The Conferees understand that the Administration will submit legislation for a revised school facilities initiative.

UNITED STATES SENATE

Facsimile Cover Sheet
1997-10-22 22:33:13

To: Mike Cohen
Fax: 94565581

From: Alexander Russo
Office of Senator Bingaman
Hart 703
Washington DC 20510

Phone: 224-0163
Fax: 224-2852

Subject: Third alternative...

Number of Pages: 1 (not including this page)

Comments Below:



COMPARISON OF HOUSE AND SENATE NATIONAL TESTING PROPOSALS

THE GOODLING/ ASCHROFT BAN

vs.

THE BIPARTISAN SENATE COMPROMISE

Prevents states and districts from deciding on their own if they want to use the new tests.

Allows states and districts to make their own decisions about whether to use the tests.

Provides no additional funding for teacher training, classroom resources, or any other need.

Empowers parents and lawmakers to call for additional funding where needed.

Prevents parents from having a chance to know how their children are doing on a world-class academic level.

Allows – but does not force – parents and schools to find out how they're doing.

Eliminates national leadership in helping raise academic standards.

Supports the standards-raising that states and districts are undergoing.

Undercuts states' momentum towards developing high standards.

Promotes the development by states of rigorous standards.

Suggests nothing can be done to raise the academic achievement of many students.

Sets the same high expectations for all children.

Criticizes the achievements of the National Assessment Governing Board

Builds on the Board's proven record administering NAEP.

Ignores the lack of accurate information that parents and teachers currently have.

Provides valuable information that parents do not currently have from state and commercial tests.

Costs the taxpayers to renege on a \$13 million test development contract.

Costs \$16 million in FY98 to develop and field test new national tests in reading and math.

UNITED STATES SENATE

Facsimile Cover Sheet
1997-10-22 21:12:42

To: Mike Cohen
Fax: 94565581

From: Alexander Russo
Office of Senator Bingaman
Hart 703
Washington DC 20510

Phone: 224-0163
Fax: 224-2852

Subject: Alternative one-pager

Number of Pages: 1 (not including this page)

Comments Below:

Does this look better? What about the text, which is slightly more aggressive than yours was? AR



DE-BUNKING MYTHS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT THE SENATE'S VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TEST PROPOSAL

TEST MYTHS

The national test is just another test.

This test creates a national curriculum.

Tests don't generate higher academic performance.

Testing compares students & schools unfairly.

More resources are all we need — not a new test.

The test is not widely supported.

TEST FACTS

The voluntary national tests math will provide specific and comparable information about schools and students that no other test can provide.

States and local communities will continue to determine independently their curricula and teaching methods. No federal funding can be withheld.

Results from voluntary national tests will engage and empower parents, teachers, and community members level to improve learning for all students.

There's nothing wrong with comparisons that accurately tell parents and teachers how well students and schools do measured against high standards of excellence.

Congressional Democrats and the Administration have supported increased investments in education that many test opponents have tried to cut or eliminate.

The voluntary national tests are strongly supported by the education community, business leaders, and the general public. The 7 states and 15 districts already participating represent about 20% of the 4th and 8th grade students in the U.S.

UNITED STATES SENATE

Facsimile Cover Sheet
1997-10-23 09:42:09

To: Mike Cohen
Fax: 94565581

From: Alexander Russo
Office of Senator Bingaman
Hart 703
Washington DC 20510

Phone: 224-0163
Fax: 224-2852

Subject: Stop me before I kill again....

Number of Pages: 1 (not including this page)

Comments Below:

My boss is going to like this approach, which is least focused but most calming. Any thoughts on all these before I make charts of them all?



THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SENATE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TEST PROPOSAL

VOLUNTARY

The tests are strictly voluntary. Neither states, nor districts, nor private, parochial, or home schooled children can be forced to use the test, or penalized financially.

INDEPENDENT

The tests are exclusively controlled by the independent and well-respected National Assessment Governing Board, made up of a bipartisan group of elected officials and a diverse set of community representatives.

RIGOROUS

The tests are developed along the lines of the 27-year old National Assessment of Educational Progress, which is already used in 40 states to provide an accurate state-level measure of student achievement.

WELL-DESIGNED

The Board is charged with ensuring that the content, specifications, and administration of the tests use the most widely-established procedures as possible.

INCLUSIVE

Congress retains approval over annual spending levels, reserves the right to modify this authority, and receives a new role in nominating new members to the Governing Board.

**Background on Bipartisan Agreement on The National Assessment
Governing Board (NAGB) and the Voluntary National Tests**
September 11, 1997

Under the bipartisan agreement reached today, the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) will be responsible for formulating policy guidelines for the voluntary national tests, just as it is for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NAGB will have the same responsibilities for both NAEP and the voluntary national tests.

What is the National Assessment Governing Board?

The NAGB is a bipartisan group of 26 persons appointed by the Secretary to formulate policy guidelines for the National Assessment of Educational Progress. In the exercise of its responsibilities, NAGB is independent of the Secretary and other officers of the Department of Education.

What will be the responsibilities of the National Assessment Governing Board with regard to the voluntary national tests?

NAGB will have exclusive authority over all policies, direction, and guidelines for establishing and implementing the national tests. Within 90 days of enactment, the Board must review the existing national test development contract and modify the contract as necessary. If the contract cannot be modified as necessary, NAGB is to terminate the contract and negotiate a new one under its exclusive control.

In its oversight of the voluntary national tests, NAGB will be responsible for:

- ensuring that the content and standards for the national tests are the same as the content and standards for NAEP, and that the tests are linked to NAEP to the maximum degree possible;
- exercising exclusive authority over any expert panel or advisory committee established with respect to the tests;
- developing the test objectives, test specifications, and test methodology that will guide the developers in writing test items and developing the tests;
- developing the guidelines that will govern administration of the tests, including the guidelines for inclusion of and accommodations for students with disabilities and limited English proficient students;
- developing the guidelines for how test results will be reported to parents, teachers, and students, including the use of achievement levels, and how tests will be used by states, school districts, and schools;
- ensuring that all items in the tests are free of racial, cultural, or gender bias; and

- final authority for the appropriateness of the items in the tests.

How Has the Composition of NAGB Changed?

- Added: One Governor (not of the President's party), two mayors, two business people.
- Removed: Two curriculum specialists; three testing and measurement specialists.
- Members terms will now last 4 years, rather than 3.

What is the Revised Membership of NAGB?

- three governors (or former governors), not more than one of whom is of the President's political party;
- two state legislators, not more than one of whom is of the President's political party;
- two mayors, not more than one of whom is of the President's political party;
- two chief state school officers;
- one school district superintendent;
- one member of a state board of education;
- one member of a local board of education;
- three classroom teachers;
- three business representatives;
- one nonpublic school representative;
- two school principals; and
- four representatives of the general public.

Ex Officio

- OERI assistant secretary

How Has the Appointments Process Changed?

In appointing individuals to NAGB, the Secretary will now select from among nominations he receives from NAGB, "after consultation with representatives of" the persons specified to be members of the board. The board is to nominate at least 3 persons per vacancy.

Within 30 days of enactment, the Secretary, is to appoint, in consultation with the bipartisan leadership in Congress, persons to fill vacancies on NAGB caused by expired terms or by the creation of new positions under the agreement.

Is it too late for the National Assessment Governing Board to assume oversight and policymaking authority for the voluntary national tests?

No. It is not too late for NAGB to exercise these responsibilities.

- **Precedent Exists for Involving NAGB at this Stage.** Bringing NAGB on board to set policy and provide oversight for the voluntary national tests at this juncture has a precedent in the past. When NAGB was first authorized in 1988, the Board was established after draft test specifications used to design the NAEP mathematics assessment had been developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), under contract with the Department of Education. These specifications, which had been developed through a national consensus process involving local teachers, parents, administrators and others, were turned over to NAGB when the Board met for the first time. The specifications were ultimately approved by NAGB, with some modifications.

A similar process has been followed in developing the Voluntary National Tests. The specifications are now in draft form, and can be turned over to NAGB for review, necessary modifications, and final approval.

- **The Test Development Process Has Closely Tracked the Approach Typically Used by NAGB.** NAGB has continued to contract with CCSSO, through a competitive award, for the development of NAEP specifications. The same approach has been followed in the development of the voluntary national tests.

The Department of Education has kept NAGB members and staff well-informed of progress in test development. Two members of NAGB sit on the panels preparing specifications for the voluntary national tests. The full NAGB membership has received briefings on national test development from Department of Education staff. Moreover, NAGB staff have been invited to and attended all major meetings associated with the national test development process. Thus, when the legislation giving NAGB oversight and policy-setting responsibility for the voluntary national tests is enacted, NAGB will be well-prepared to act expeditiously.

- **NAGB Will Have all Necessary Authority for Developing the Voluntary National Tests in the Context of the Existing Contract.** The contractor for the voluntary national tests is responsible for writing test items based on the test specifications, administering a pilot test of test items, administering a field test of the test form, and assembling the final tests. The contractor is also responsible for linking the test to NAEP and TIMSS (so parents, students and teachers will be able to compare student performance to those benchmarks), and for preparing guidelines for reporting, test security and test use.

Draft test specifications for the voluntary national tests are now available. When NAGB is given statutory authority, it will review, modify (if necessary), and approve these specifications. The contractor has begun preliminary writing of test items, but the test

development contract will be modified to ensure that the NAGB-approved specifications are used, and that all items developed for the tests will conform to the NAGB specifications -- even if rewriting of items is necessary. NAGB will also review all test items for bias, and will approve final items for the test.

In addition to its role in item development, NAGB will also take on responsibility for reviewing and approving guidelines developed by the contractor for reporting, test use and test security. NAGB will also review and approve the contractor's procedures for linking the test to NAEP and TIMSS.

The contractor has begun to assemble advisory committees on reading, math and technical matters, although these committees have yet to be established. The contractor is also preparing to contact schools to participate in the pilot test. These activities will continue, as appropriate, when NAGB assumes authority.

The bottom line is that NAGB can easily assume all of its responsibilities for the voluntary national tests in reading and math, and that any modifications in the test development contract necessary to conform test development to NAGB policy can and will be made.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FAX TRANSMISSION

Office of the Secretary
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202
Office: (202) 401-3058
Fax: (202) 401-0596

TO: MIKE COHEN **DATE:** August 27, 1997
FAX: 456 - 7028 **PAGES:** 5 (including cover)

FROM: Christopher Dwan
Office of the Secretary

SUBJECT: Letters Supporting National Test

COMMENTS: FINAL COPY; HOUSE & SENATE; SENT OUT BY INSIDE MAIL
TODAY!

NO. 3030 - Tr. 2
OFFICE OF SECRETARY
AUG. 27, 1997
COALITION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

August 27, 1997

Members of the United States Senate

Dear Senator:

**Subject: Support for funds in the FY 1998 Education Appropriations (S.1061)
to Develop National Tests in Mathematics and Reading**

The organizations listed below urge your support for the Appropriations Committee provisions in the Fiscal Year 1998 Labor/HHS/Education Bill (S.1061) which enable development of new voluntary national tests for individual students in mathematics and reading. We urge, also, your opposition to any amendments which would prohibit funding for development of the tests or otherwise impede their preparation.

Why develop voluntary national tests?

Our students must be able to benchmark their education progress now in ways never done before so they may prepare for their future. Although there is extensive testing in our nation, there is no individual student test of reading or mathematics which enables a student to compare his or her work with students in other states and in other nations. Our highly mobile students and their families need test results indicating their performance as they move among school districts and states. Our children will also compete for jobs across communities, states, and nations. They need test results indicating whether their achievement is competitive with other students around the world. In short, students and families want to know what level of learning is required to reach the high standards necessary as we enter the 21st Century.

The proposal for developing national tests in reading and mathematics is designed to provide that information at two critical points -- 4th grade in reading and 8th grade in mathematics. The selection of 4th grade reading is made because at that stage to succeed in all subjects in school, students must have proficiency in reading English. The selection of 8th grade mathematics is key, because that is the pivotal year for a student to determine what level of mathematics she or he will pursue in high school. This choice, in turn, heavily influences whether or not the student will advance to postsecondary education.

Design of the tests

The proposal for developing the tests included in the Appropriations Committee's bill takes maximum advantage of tests already in use. It enables students and families to have the achievement information they want in an efficient and timely way.

The new tests are built on the widely accepted testing done under the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NAEP enjoys strong, bipartisan support as a measure of national student samples and samples in more than 40 states of student achievement in mathematics and

reading. By basing the new individual student tests on content tested under NAEP, the new test is the most efficient way to link scores nationally to NAEP and internationally to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study. As a result, a long-standing hope will be realized by 2000: an individual student anywhere in the United States will be able to compare his or her academic achievement to that of students in other states and in more than 40 other countries.

Safeguards in test development

The Senate Appropriations Committee, with the agreement of the Administration, has provided clear safeguards for development of the tests. The development and field trials of the new tests will be reviewed by the National Academy of Sciences with a favorable report required in advance of any use of the tests. The process of Academy review is comparable to the quality controls required by Congress in the development of the NAEP, in that case, by the National Academy of Education. The Congress, the states and localities, and students and parents will have the advantage of a thorough technical and professional review before the national tests are actually administered.

Urgency for test development in 1997

The members of our organizations urge that development of the national tests moves forward in 1997. States and localities are now addressing significant choices regarding their future testing systems. The option of using the national tests in reading and mathematics is an extremely important one. We need to have that option, but final decisions require test availability by 1999 and design and field testing in 1997 and 1998. No state is required to participate, and no state should be denied the option by halting test development. This use of federal funds for test development is as cost-effective an investment in state, national and international reading and mathematics comparisons as could be made with public or private funds.

We urge the Senate to give the green light for developing voluntary national tests in reading and mathematics, thereby enabling our students and their families to genuinely benchmark their individual efforts and results to their counterparts throughout the United States and around the world.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

American Federation of Teachers
 Council for Exceptional Children
 Council of Great City Schools
 Council of Chief State School Officers
 National Association of Elementary School Principals
 National Association of State Directors of Special Education
 National Education Association
 National School Boards Association

NOV 27 1997 3:10PM OFFICE OF SECRETARY NO. 3030 P. 4

COALITION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

August 27, 1997

Members of the United States House of Representatives

Dear Representative:

**Subject: Support for funds in the FY 1998 Education Appropriations (H.R. 2264)
to Develop National Tests in Mathematics and Reading**

The organizations listed below urge your support for the Appropriations Committee provisions in the Fiscal Year 1998 Labor/HHS/Education Bill (H.R. 2264) which enable development of new voluntary national tests for individual students in mathematics and reading. We urge, also, your opposition to any amendments which would prohibit funding for development of the tests or otherwise impede their preparation.

Why develop voluntary national tests?

Our students must be able to benchmark their education progress now in ways never done before so they may prepare for their future. Although there is extensive testing in our nation, there is no individual student test of reading or mathematics which enables a student to compare his or her work with students in other states and in other nations. Our highly mobile students and their families need test results indicating their performance as they move among school districts and states. Our children will also compete for jobs across communities, states, and nations. They need test results indicating whether their achievement is competitive with other students around the world. In short, students and families want to know what level of learning is required to reach the high standards necessary as we enter the 21st Century.

The proposal for developing national tests in reading and mathematics is designed to provide that information at two critical points -- 4th grade in reading and 8th grade in mathematics. The selection of 4th grade reading is made because at that stage to succeed in all subjects in school, students must have proficiency in reading English. The selection of 8th grade mathematics is key, because that is the pivotal year for a student to determine what level of mathematics she or he will pursue in high school. This choice, in turn, heavily influences whether or not the student will advance to postsecondary education.

Design of the tests

The proposal for developing the tests included in the Appropriations Committee's bill takes maximum advantage of tests already in use. It enables students and families to have the achievement information they want in an efficient and timely way.

The new tests are built on the widely accepted testing done under the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NAEP enjoys strong, bipartisan support as a measure of national student samples and samples in more than 40 states of student achievement in mathematics and

reading. By basing the new individual student tests on content tested under NAEP, the new test is the most efficient way to link scores nationally to NAEP and internationally to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study. As a result, a long-standing hope will be realized by 2000: an individual student anywhere in the United States will be able to compare his or her academic achievement to that of students in other states and in more than 40 other countries.

Safeguards in test development

The House Appropriations Committee, with the agreement of the Administration, has provided clear safeguards for development of the tests. The development and field trials of the new tests will be reviewed by the National Academy of Sciences with a favorable report required in advance of any use of the tests. The process of Academy review is comparable to the quality controls required by Congress in the development of the NAEP, in that case, by the National Academy of Education. The Congress, the states and localities, and students and parents will have the advantage of a thorough technical and professional review before the national tests are actually administered.

Urgency for test development in 1997

The members of our organizations urge that development of the national tests moves forward in 1997. States and localities are now addressing significant choices regarding their future testing systems. The option of using the national tests in reading and mathematics is an extremely important one. We need to have that option, but final decisions require test availability by 1999 and design and field testing in 1997 and 1998. No state is required to participate, and no state should be denied the option by halting test development. This use of federal funds for test development is as cost-effective an investment in state, national and international reading and mathematics comparisons as could be made with public or private funds.

We urge the House of Representatives to give the green light for developing voluntary national tests in reading and mathematics, thereby enabling our students and their families to genuinely benchmark their individual efforts and results to their counterparts throughout the United States and around the world.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

American Federation of Teachers
 Council for Exceptional Children
 Council of Chief State School Officers
 Council of Great City Schools
 National Association of Elementary School Principals
 National Association of State Directors of Special Education
 National Education Association
 National School Boards Association

**LIST OF SENATORS SIGNING NATIONAL TESTING LETTER
TO LABOR/HHS APPROPRIATIONS BILL CONFEREES**

1. Allard
2. Ashcroft
3. Bond
4. Brownback
5. Burns
6. Craig
7. Enzi
8. Faircloth
9. Gramm
10. Grams
11. Hagel
12. Hatch
13. Helms
14. Hutchinson
15. Inhofe
16. Kempthorne
17. Kyl
18. McCain
19. McConnell
20. Nickles
21. Roberts
22. Sessions
23. Shelby
24. G. Smith
25. R. Smith
26. Thompson
27. Warner

Underlined Senators voted to support Coats originally

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2504

September 24, 1997

Dear Conferee:

As you begin your work on the FY 1998 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill conference report, we strongly urge you to adopt the House position of prohibiting the use of federal funds in FY 1998 for a new national testing program.

As you know, during his State of the Union Address this year, President Clinton announced his intentions to establish national tests for students in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. Without waiting for Congressional authority, the Department of Education surged ahead and began development of uniform national tests, with plans to administer them starting in 1999. In August, the Department announced the award of a \$13 million contract for its national testing initiative, and plans to spend an estimated \$50.6 million under the contract from FY 1998 through FY 2001, including \$12.3 million for FY 1998.

In response, Representative Bill Goodling, Chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, offered an amendment in the House which prohibits the expenditure of FY 1998 funds for a new national testing program. While the Senate failed to consider fully and vote on the Goodling approach during its debate of the Labor/HHS appropriations bill, the House embraced the Goodling Amendment, approving it by a resounding vote of 295 to 125.

The House vote sends a clear and strong signal that Congress should prohibit federal funds for national testing in education for FY 1998. In fact, the alliance of members from both sides of the political spectrum demonstrates the universal concern that the Administration's proposal is besieged by problems. Here are just a few of the many reasons why national tests should be opposed:

(1) Education experts such as Dr. Donald J. Senese, former Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement during the Reagan Administration, warn that **national testing will lead to a national curriculum.**

(2) Lynne Cheney, former Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities, reminds us that **federal efforts to set standards and tests have been disastrous.** She points to the politically correct federal history standards and the

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English/language arts standards, which were such an ill-considered muddle that even the Clinton Department of Education cut off funding for them after having invested more than \$1 million.

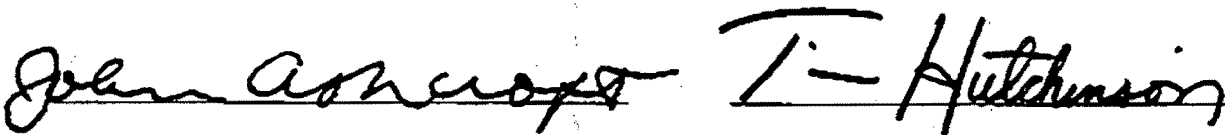
(3) The proposed math test is steeped in the new, unproven "whole math" or "fuzzy math" philosophy, which encourages students to rely on calculators, discourages basic math skills, and has resulted in declines in math performance. For example, the median percentile computation scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills taken by more than 37,000 DoDDS students one year after the Defense Department introduced whole math dropped 9 points for third graders, 12 for fourth graders, 11 for fifth graders, 10 for sixth graders, 10 for seventh graders, and 4 for eighth graders.

(4) The Administration's proposal fails to provide safeguards against the invalid and inappropriate use of test results. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. reports that "the widespread misuse of tests has particularly harsh and disproportionate adverse consequences for poor and minority children."

(5) Federal testing takes away local control and parental involvement. The federal government should not impose its will on school boards, parents, and teachers about the education of their children. Rather, this issue is best left to the state and local level, where parents have the greatest opportunity to be involved in the education of their child, by participating in the development of school curriculum and testing. After all, research confirms that parental involvement is the single most important element in educating our children.

Parents are looking to Congress to protect their right and their ability to shape the education of their children. A national testing system would deprive parents of this vital opportunity. As members of Congress, we can show our support for education by saying "no" to national testing and "yes" to the Goodling amendment.

Sincerely,

The block contains a handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "John A. Hutchinson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Wayne Allen

Jesse Helms

Bob Kram

David Reed

Richard Shelby

Don Nickles

Jim Chafe

Lucy Hainstock

Tom Vah

Don Kuhl

Jeff Leach

Conrad Burns

Long Zhang

Jim Hatcher

Michael B. Enzi

Mark McCracken

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Bob Smith

Rob Bond

Ch McL

Carl Sutton

Warner

Rich Langitt

Pat Roberts

Phil Z

Paul Johnson

Overview:

Senate Vote 234 ** S1061. Fiscal 1998 Labor-HHS Appropriations - National Education Standards.
 Gregg, R-N.H., amendment establishing that the National Assessment Governing Board has exclusive authority over all policies for establishing and implementing voluntary national tests for 4th grade English reading and for 8th grade mathematics. Adopted 87-13: R 42-13; D 45-0 (ND 37-0, SD 8-0), Sept. 11, 1997.

Date: (09/11/1997)

Positions:

Abraham, Spencer (R-MI)	Y	Hutchinson, Tim (R-AR)	N
Akaka, Daniel K. (D-HI)	Y	Hutchison, Kay Bailey (R-TX)	Y
Allard, Wayne (R-CO)	N	Inhofe, James M. (R-OK)	N
Ashcroft, John (R-MO)	N	Inouye, Daniel K. (D-HI)	Y
Baucus, Max (D-MT)	Y	Jeffords, James M. (R-VT)	Y
Bennett, Robert F. (R-UT)	Y	Johnson, Tim (D-SD)	Y
Biden, Joseph R. Jr. (D-DE)	Y	Kempthorne, Dirk (R-ID)	Y
Bingaman, Jeff (D-NM)	Y	Kennedy, Edward M. (D-MA)	Y
Bond, Christopher S. (R-MO)	Y	Kerrey, Bob (D-NE)	Y
Boxer, Barbara (D-CA)	Y	Kerry, John (D-MA)	Y
Breaux, John B. (D-LA)	Y	Kohl, Herb (D-WI)	Y
Brownback, Sam (R-KS)	N	Kyl, Jon (R-AZ)	Y
Bryan, Richard H. (D-NV)	Y	Landrieu, Mary L. (D-LA)	Y
Bumpers, Dale (D-AR)	Y	Lautenberg, Frank R. (D-NJ)	Y
Burns, Conrad (R-MT)	Y	Leahy, Patrick J. (D-VT)	Y
Byrd, Robert C. (D-WV)	Y	Levin, Carl (D-MI)	Y
Campbell, Ben Nighthorse (R-CO)	Y	Lieberman, Joseph I. (D-CT)	Y
Chafee, John H. (R-RI)	Y	Lott, Trent (R-MS)	Y
Cleland, Max (D-GA)	Y	Lugar, Richard G. (R-IN)	Y
Coats, Daniel R. (R-IN)	Y	Mack, Connie (R-FL)	Y
Cochran, Thad (R-MS)	Y	McCain, John (R-AZ)	Y
Collins, Susan (R-ME)	Y	McConnell, Mitch (R-KY)	Y
Conrad, Kent (D-ND)	Y	Mikulski, Barbara A. (D-MD)	Y
Coverdell, Paul (R-GA)	Y	Moseley-Braun, Carol (D-IL)	Y
Craig, Larry E. (R-ID)	Y	Moynihan, Daniel Patrick (D-NY)	Y
D'Amato, Alfonse M. (R-NY)	Y	Murkowski, Frank H. (R-AK)	Y
Daschle, Tom (D-SD)	Y	Murray, Patty (D-WA)	Y
DeWine, Mike (R-OH)	Y	Nickles, Don (R-OK)	N
Dodd, Christopher J. (D-CT)	Y	Reed, Jack (D-RI)	Y
Domenici, Pete V. (R-NM)	Y	Reid, Harry (D-NV)	Y
Dorgan, Byron L. (D-ND)	Y	Robb, Charles S. (D-VA)	Y
Durbin, Richard J. (D-IL)	Y	Roberts, Pat (R-KS)	Y
Enzi, Michael B. (R-WY)	Y	Rockefeller, John D. IV (D-WV)	Y
Faircloth, Lauch (R-NC)	Y	Roth, William V. Jr. (R-DE)	Y
Feingold, Russell D. (D-WI)	Y	Santorum, Rick (R-PA)	Y
Feinstein, Dianne (D-CA)	Y	Sarbanes, Paul S. (D-MD)	Y
Ford, Wendell H. (D-KY)	Y	Sessions, Jeff (R-AL)	N
Frist, Bill (R-TN)	Y	Shelby, Richard C. (R-AL)	N

Glenn, John (D-OH)	Y	Smith, Gordon H. (R-OR)	Y
Gorton, Slade (R-WA)	Y	Smith, Robert C. (R-NH)	Y
Graham, Bob (D-FL)	Y	Snowe, Olympia J. (R-ME)	Y
Gramm, Phil (R-TX)	N	Specter, Arlen (R-PA)	Y
Grams, Rod (R-MN)	N	Stevens, Ted (R-AK)	Y
Grassley, Charles E. (R-IA)	Y	Thomas, Craig (R-WY)	Y
Gregg, Judd (R-NH)	Y	Thompson, Fred (R-TN)	N
Hagel, Chuck (R-NE)	N	Thurmond, Strom (R-SC)	Y
Harkin, Tom (D-IA)	Y	Torricelli, Robert G. (D-NJ)	Y
Hatch, Orrin G. (R-UT)	Y	Warner, John W. (R-VA)	Y
Helms, Jesse (R-NC)	N	Wellstone, Paul (D-MN)	Y
Hollings, Ernest F. (D-SC)	Y	Wyden, Ron (D-OR)	Y

Vote Result Key

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