



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 10, 1997**

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**STATEMENT BY NORMAN R. AUGUSTINE, CHAIRMAN AND CEO
LOCKHEED MARTIN CORPORATION AND
CHAIRMAN, EDUCATION TASK FORCE OF
THE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE
ON PRESIDENT CLINTON'S CALL FOR NATIONAL TESTS IN
READING AND MATHEMATICS**

Washington, DC--The Business Roundtable applauds the President's continued efforts to make achievement of high academic standards a top priority--a goal the Roundtable itself has been pursuing. The Roundtable supports voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics. These tests will provide a national benchmark in reading and an international benchmark in mathematics that parents and educators can use to learn how their own children and students are performing.

The first step to improve education in the United States is to substantially raise academic standards and verify achievement through rigorous testing. In many local communities, parents are uncertain about whether their children are being adequately prepared to succeed. They do not know whether their child's grades or test scores measure up to expectations in other communities, states or countries. Parents who move frequently are surprised to discover that the rigor of what their children learn in school varies from place to place. Yet, when young people apply for a job, employers hold them to the same standard, no matter where they went to school, because employers must themselves compete on a worldwide basis.

The Business Roundtable urges states and local communities to continue to adopt standards in these basic subjects and in other core academic disciplines. Successful schools, like successful businesses, use data to improve their performance. The availability of a national benchmark in 4th grade reading and an international benchmark in 8th grade math should help drive the improvements that are needed to help students meet world-class academic standards.

The Business Roundtable is an association of more than 200 chief executives of leading U.S. corporations, employing over 10 million people. The CEOs examine public policy issues that affect the economy and develop positions which seek to reflect sound economic and social principles.

MASTERING THE BASICS: NATIONAL TESTS IN 4TH GRADE READING AND 8TH GRADE MATH

Overview

February 10, 1997

Tonight, I issue a challenge to the nation: Every state should adopt high national standards, and by 1999, every state should test every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math to make sure these standards are met. President Clinton, State of the Union Address, Feb. 4, 1997

A CHALLENGE TO EVERY STATE: MAKE SURE EVERY STUDENT MASTERS THE BASICS IN READING AND MATH. Every parent has the right to know how well his or her child is doing compared with students in other schools, states, and countries. The U.S. Department of Education will give every state, school district and parent the opportunity to use voluntary national tests of 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, beginning in 1999. These tests will help states and local communities raise standards of excellence for teaching and learning in every classroom, and provide parents with accurate information about their children's academic performance. These rigorous tests will provide scores for individual students, measured against widely accepted national standards, that show whether students have mastered critical basic skills. **This will be the first time rigorous tests of reading skills at grade 4 and math knowledge and skills at grade 8, tied to national standards, are available to measure individual student and school performance throughout the nation.**

WIDELY RECOGNIZED TESTS BASED ON WIDELY RECOGNIZED NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS. These new tests will be based on two existing, widely accepted tests: the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 4th grade reading test, and the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) 8th grade math test. Currently, these tests are used to assess the overall performance of the nation as a whole or of interested states. In their current form, they cannot be used to measure the academic performance of individual students.

The NAEP reading test is based on widely accepted national content standards -- developed by local teachers, reading specialists, curriculum specialists, parents, and researchers -- reflecting a national consensus on what students should know and be able to do when they reach the 4th grade.

The TIMSS test is also based on widely accepted content standards -- in this case developed by representatives of the 41 participating countries -- reflecting an international consensus on what students should know and be able to do in mathematics by the eighth grade. In addition, these international standards are highly consistent with the national math standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), which are used extensively by virtually every state.

A NEW GENERATION OF TESTS MEASURING INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS AS WELL AS STATES. The current NAEP and TIMSS tests are designed to assess how the entire nation, or individual states, perform in these subject areas. They do not show how individual students perform. The tests are administered to a sample of students in participating states or districts, rather than to all students. Each student in the sample takes only a portion of the total test questions. As a result, no student receives a score for these tests.

President Clinton's plan is to develop a new generation of the NAEP 4th grade reading test and the TIMSS 8th grade math test, that can be given to all students in the appropriate grades, and which will provide meaningful scores comparing individual student performance to these widely accepted national standards. These new tests will be ready for use in schools by the Spring of 1999.

4TH GRADE READING AND 8TH GRADE MATH ARE KEY. Reading and math skills provide foundation for future learning. Research shows that students who fail to read English well by the end of grade 3 have a greater likelihood of dropping out, and risk a diminished chance of success in school and in life. Students who master the basics of math, including the essentials of algebra by the end of grade 8 have the foundation to take tough math and science courses in high school to prepare for college and high-skill jobs.

THESE TESTS WILL BE RIGOROUS AND CHALLENGING. Though the focus is on basic skills, these tests are challenging, not low level. While many U.S. fourth graders perform well on the NAEP reading assessment, 40% of our students do not reach the "basic" achievement level. In TIMSS, the U.S. average score for 8th grade math is below the international average, and only 5% of U.S. eighth grade students score in the top 10% internationally.

THESE TESTS WILL ASSIST TEACHERS, PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND LOCAL AND STATE LEADERS. While most states assess their students in reading and math, they generally set their proficiency levels lower than the challenging levels in the NAEP. These voluntary national tests will give parents and communities reliable benchmarks for student performance which will show how well their students are progressing toward meeting challenging national standards of excellence. These new standard measures of excellence can help parents hold schools accountable for improved performance, can help teachers and principals improve curriculum and instruction, and can give students a guide for charting their own progress. They can identify students and schools that need extra help.

DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THESE TESTS. The new tests will be based on NAEP and TIMSS, and will measure the performance of individual students and schools. The U.S. Department of Education will contract with independent test developers to produce the new tests, which will be available for the first time in the Spring of 1999. The test will be updated each year. Guidance for the test development will come from the most successful math and reading teachers from across the country, parents, governors, and local and state education, civic and business leaders. Interested test publishers, states, and local school districts will be licensed to administer the tests each year.

States and school districts can administer the test as part of their local testing program. After each test's administration, the entire test (along with answers, scoring guides) will be released to the education community. At that time, the test along with supporting materials will be available on the Internet so that students, parents and teachers can know what is expected to reach standards of excellence in reading and math. A new test each year will keep the content of the test current. These tests will help show who needs extra help, what changes schools need to make in teaching and the curriculum, and which schools need to be improved.

TESTING TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING. President Clinton challenges the nation not only to take these new rigorous tests of reading and math but also to do the hard work of preparing schools, teachers, and students to reach these high standards. We will work with schools, school districts and states as they move forward to meet this challenge. The President's America Reads initiative will help mobilize an army of 1 million volunteer tutors to help children reach the basic level of performance on the NAEP reading test. His education budget -- with investments in teacher preparation, teaching the basics and advanced skills, technological literacy, choice and charter schools, and grass roots education reform -- will help improve teaching and learning in schools throughout the nation.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL READING AND MATH TESTS

Introduction

The President proposes a new, voluntary, annual reading test in English at grade 4 and math test at grade 8 that will, for the first time in history, provide parents and teachers with information about how their students are progressing compared to other states, the nation, and other countries. An individual student's reading achievement level in the fourth grade, and his or her mathematics achievement level in grade eight, will be related directly to information obtained from two state-of-the-art educational assessment surveys -- the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS). Parents can thus see how their own children measure up to the highest standards of performance at the national and international levels.

The tests will be based on challenging content criteria already established through national or international consensus processes. In the case of reading, the test content will be based on the framework developed for the NAEP. In the case of mathematics, it will be based on the framework established for the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS). Although the U.S. Department of Education will fund the development of the new examinations and provide continued technical assistance, it will not administer, score or report individual test results.

Key Differences Between the New National Tests and NAEP/TIMSS.

Although the new tests will be based on the NAEP and TIMSS frameworks, unlike NAEP and TIMSS (which test a random sample of students in order to produce estimates of overall State and national level student achievement) the new tests will be expressly designed to produce student-level scores. Some of the differences between the two tests are as follows:

NAEP and TIMSS	New Reading and Math Tests
Only a random sample of students is tested	All students in participating communities are tested
No student takes all of the items on the test	All students take all of the items on the test
Each student takes a different test booklet	Each student takes the same test booklet
Includes multiple choice and performance items	Is about 80% multiple choice, with 20% constructed response (students produce their own answers), including one extended constructed response item
45-60 minutes of achievement item testing per student	Up to 90 minutes of achievement item testing
Yields a TIMSS or NAEP score for countries and states	Yields a student test score plus a predicted student TIMSS or NAEP score

Users of the New Tests

The new tests will be used primarily by States, districts, schools, teachers, and other individuals to assess students in the Spring of every year. Many commercial test publishers will likely offer the tests as a component of their product line, typically as an addendum to their existing tests. Use of the tests will be strictly voluntary and decisions whether or not to participate would not affect continuing participation in Federal programs. The tests will be licensed to states, school districts and test publishers. These licensees will be responsible for administering and scoring the tests to insure that standards of validity and reliability are met. It is expected that reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities or with limited English proficiency will be provided by the school administrator. With each year's administration of NAEP and TIMSS, linking studies will be conducted to relate the scores on these national tests to the NAEP and TIMSS scales. After each administration, the entire test (along with answers, scoring guides and other materials) will be released to the press and the education community and placed on the Internet. The test will then be used by teachers or parents for a variety of purposes.

Operational Plan and Time Lines

The new tests would be developed during 1997 and 1998 with a full administration planned in the spring of 1999. Beginning in 1999 the test would be made available to test publishers, States, districts, schools and others under a licensing agreement or similar compact.

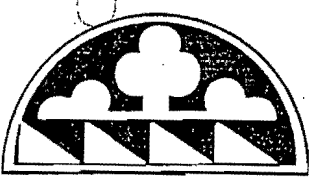
Cost

In 1999 the Department of Education will reimburse licensees (for example, States, school districts, and testing companies) who wish to administer the new tests. After 1999 the Department will continue to fund the development of new tests as well as provide the technical support and assistance needed to continue annual testing over many years.

An additional booklet of performance type items will also be made available to users. The booklet could be used for further supplemental testing but would not be a part of the national test. Scoring guides and test administration guidelines would be made available but the federal government would not fund the scoring costs associated with the use of the supplement.

Independent Guidance for the Activity

All of the activities related to the new test would be monitored by two types of advisory groups. The first would be a permanent standing panel that is broadly representative of potential users and consumers of the test. This group would include some of the most successful local math and reading teachers from across America, parents, and local and state educators, civic and business leaders, as well as representatives of the testing industry and at least one member of the National Assessment Governing Board. In addition a technical advisory group would be established consisting of the best testing experts and reading and math specialists in the country.



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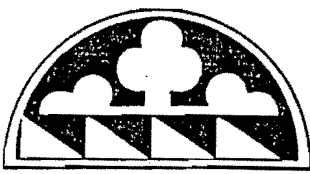
For more information: Ronald Peiffer (410)767-0473

Maryland to Pursue New National Tests ***Voluntary national assessments promise national comparisons;*** ***Extensive dialogue with parents and teachers promised***

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND--(February 10, 1997)--Following President Clinton's history-making speech to the Maryland General Assembly today, State Board of Education President Christopher T. Cross announced Maryland's interest in pursuing the proposed national tests in grade 4 reading and grade 8 mathematics. "Maryland," he said, "is ready to accept the challenge to determine how our students measure up." President Clinton praised Maryland's school reform work and discussed the plans that he announced last week in his State of the Union address.

The President's testing program will be complementary to the nationally acclaimed Maryland School Performance Assessment Program. The proposal has the merit of giving precise information down to the student level so that comparisons are possible across schools, districts, states, and even nations. "Maryland will examine how we can integrate this testing program into our existing program so that the burden on students, teachers, and schools is minimized. I urge other states to step forward to become a part of this great national effort to improve our schools. Good data is essential in this effort, and this proposal will give us good data," said Mr. Cross.

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