

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 9, 1997

Contact: Diane Jones (202) 401-3292
Erica Lepping (202) 401-2571

**STATEMENT BY U. S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION RICHARD W. RILEY
On Chairman Goodling's Action to Halt Mark-Up of Child Literacy Bill**

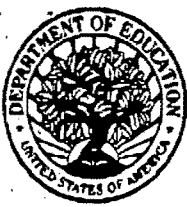
I was disappointed to learn that Chairman Goodling chose to pull the America Reads/children's literacy bill that we have been working on with his Committee. Chairman Goodling and I agree that reading is the foundation for all other learning and is the most basic skill children need to succeed. Without reading, children often fall further behind in school, lose interest, give up, and drop out. Every child in America should master this first basic skill, and the President is committed to achieving this national goal.

Earlier this year, Congress agreed to a bi-partisan balanced budget; within that agreement they committed to fund "a child literacy initiative consistent with the President's America Reads Challenge program." Chairman Goodling supported this balanced budget agreement, and the American people expect the Congress to fulfill its part of the bargain. The ultimate accountability for a child's ability to read is taking a challenging national test. We hope that Chairman Goodling would connect his strong interest in literacy with this voluntary national test.

Reading is a bi-partisan issue. We think it is important to help children read well and independently. We can do that by raising standards for all children and giving them the extra help they need to become good readers that the America Reads Challenge would provide. Trying to stop the voluntary national tests and the reading initiative is hardly the right way to help any child become a better reader.

We need to pass a bi-partisan bill for our Nation's children. We will continue to work closely with the Chairman and the Committee, and we urge them to work with us in this bi-partisan process. We continue to be optimistic that Congress will do what is right for America's children.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE SECRETARY

October 8, 1997

The Honorable William F. Goodling
Chairman, Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Goodling:

It is the Administration's goal to work with you to enact a bill that will offer all children a chance to participate in extended learning time opportunities where they can practice and further develop their reading skills. Such programs would include family literacy, in addition to after-school, summer and weekend volunteer tutoring programs, which are built on, and connected with, solid reading programs in our Nation's schools.

The President's America Reads Challenge, announced more than a year ago, reflects these goals and I believe that H.R. 2614, the "Reading Excellence Act," is a positive step to meeting these objectives. I welcome your efforts to go the extra step of stimulating States and schools to ensure that teachers are using the best available research on reading instruction. This is consistent with the Title I requirement, enacted in 1994, that schools use "effective means" in order to help students reach the standards that are expected of all students.

While I appreciate the efforts you have made to work with us on this legislation, I am concerned with several of its provisions, notably the requirements for tutorial assistance grants, and regret that I cannot support the bill in its current form.

The tutorial assistance grants are unnecessarily costly, bureaucratic and disconnected. In order to receive these funds, schools involved would be forced to use paid tutors instead of using well-trained volunteers who would be available at one-third the cost. Fewer children would be served under this model and there would be no guarantee that the tutoring programs would be connected to or supportive of the school's reading program. Furthermore, unlike the model put forth in the Administration's America Reads Challenge Act, these grants would lead to fragmentation of services and would not encourage the entire community to mobilize and organize around the need to improve their children's reading skills. While we support local flexibility for program design, it is not appropriate to impose these very specific and costly provisions on States or school districts who want to participate in America Reads.

I am also concerned that some provisions and definitions in the bill are far too prescriptive in a number of areas, that the lines for accountability for grant making are blurred, and that there is no national evaluation component. I further object to the new mandate imposed on schools participating in the Federal Work-Study program.

These outstanding issues prevent the Administration from supporting the "Reading Excellence Act" at this time, but I urge you to continue to work with us in this bipartisan process to help meet the need to improve the reading skills of our Nation's children.

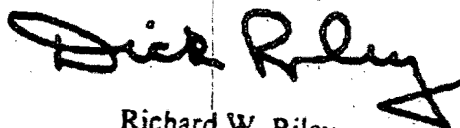
600 INDEPENDENCE AVE., S.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-0100

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

Page 2 - The Honorable William F. Goodling

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the submission of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dick Riley". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "D" and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Richard W. Riley



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR RELEASE
October 9, 1997

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 (TTY) — (202) 226-3372
MINORITY — (202) 226-3725
 (TTY) — (202) 226-3118

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 Oct. 9, 1997**

**CONTACT: Jay Diskey
 (202) 225-4527**

**STATEMENT FROM CHAIRMAN BILL GOODLING (R-PA)
 ON FEDERAL EDUCATION TESTS
 AND MARKUP OF THE "READING EXCELLENCE ACT"**

"Knowing the President shares our interest in a new reading program for America's children, I was prepared to have the Committee mark up a Republican literacy initiative today. However, because of the Administration's continued attempts to forge ahead with federal testing despite the objections of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have stopped this Committee's work on any reading initiatives.

"As I have said on many occasions, President Clinton's plan for two new federal education tests will not boost the academic performance of a single American child. Americans should not be misled into thinking that more testing will lead to better students. The President's plan is a waste of taxpayers' money and will not do anything except increase federal involvement in our schools. The Administration is trying to set national standards by hastily developing new tests in Washington. That is a huge folly. The President should halt the U.S. Department of Education's obnoxious attempts to implement federal testing without Congressional approval.

"We strongly support high academic standards, but strongly oppose new national tests. House Republicans would rather send federal dollars to the classroom, bolster basic academics and seek ways to increase parental involvement."

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October 7, 1997

FIELD(1)

Dear FIELD(2):

I am pleased to respond to your letter of October 1, 1997. I regret that you have been misled by a press account of the meeting held by the Council for Basic Education on September 22 and 23 and am happy to take this opportunity to provide factual information about the meeting. I am sending a similar reply to FIELD(3).

While the meeting was held at the Four Seasons Hotel, the meeting participants did not stay there. They stayed at the Georgetown Suites at a cost of \$124.00 per night, which is the standard government rate for Washington, D.C. The meeting was conducted at the Four Seasons because the Georgetown Suites did not have conference rooms available, the Four Seasons is within walking distance of the Georgetown Suites, and the Four Seasons provided meals for conference participants at rates comparable to other hotels, but with a lower service charge. The hotel accommodations and meeting costs were well within established government rates and do not represent an extravagant cost to the taxpayer.

The Acting Deputy Secretary of Education, Marshall S. Smith, did not attend the meeting or provide instructions to the participants. The panelists at the meeting were selected solely by the Council for Basic Education without the involvement or participation of the Acting Deputy Secretary.

Finally, the meeting was planned, announced and held prior to the decision by the Department to cease temporarily the contractor's work on test item development. The meeting was attended by 60 people at costs of \$13,654 for meals, rooms and conference space; \$7,600 for transcription services; \$7,350 for stipends to panelists; and approximately \$10,000 in transportation costs. The Department estimates that the contractors have obligated approximately \$3 million on the development of the voluntary national tests.

I hope this information is useful.

Yours sincerely,

Richard W. Riley

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about meeting
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about tests
proposal

*with regard
to your question
about expenditures,*

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 1997

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
1001 OCT - 1 P 3 45

The Honorable Richard W. Riley
Secretary of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Mr. Secretary:

When it was announced on Thursday, September 25, that you had halted temporarily the Department's work on the President's plan for federalized testing of all students, we took the announced suspension as a sign of your good faith.

However, it now appears the reported "suspension" of work came at the close of a busy and costly week designing test development. We must say, it would have been better for the country, and cheaper for taxpayers, if you had called timeout before the swarm of test developers descended for a two-day session at one of the capital's most expensive hotels, The Four Seasons. We are told that a one-night stay for two people there costs \$370 -- unless you want the best view.

These meetings cast doubt on the Administration's ability to work with Congress on this issue. Please note in the enclosed news article that the test designer participants in this gathering expressed their discomfort at flying in the face of congressional deliberations by suggesting that the meeting be put off until Congress settled the testing controversy. According to the article, your Deputy Secretary rejected the suggestion out of hand.

Moreover, while the expenditure of millions of dollars for federal testing concerns us deeply, the extravagance and arrogance of this session are an affront to the taxpayers of this nation. The taxpayers deserve to know the cost of this gathering on September 22 and 23, and what you will do to assure that they are not stuck directly or indirectly with the cost of travel, meeting rooms, lodging, and catered meals. Perhaps the next bunch of experts you bring to Washington could be persuaded to conduct the meetings at a college campus, or at the Department itself.

The extravagance of the venue and the arrogance attributed to the Deputy Secretary reinforce the justifiable suspicion held by American families over federalized student tests. The government's record in the area of federalized academic standards is one of abject failure. This new attempt by the Department to intrude further into local schools should be halted permanently.

Secretary Riley
October 1, 1997
Page 2

The Department's experiment with nationwide testing is multiply flawed. First, it will undercut the control of schools by parents, teachers, and local boards. This will occur because nationalized testing inevitably will drive curriculum and instruction, leading to a national curriculum designed in Washington. Such a national curriculum depriving families of their right to shape education at the local level would be a disaster.

Second, schools already administer many different tests. Our students need more knowledge, not simply more tests.

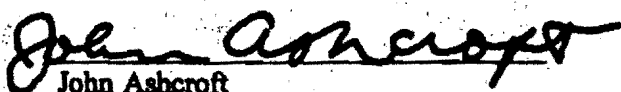
Finally, the use of "fuzzy" math, or whole math, in the proposed tests aligns the Department with yet another educational fad, one associated with falling test scores among Defense Department students subjected to such teaching methods and curriculum.

Please provide detailed responses to the following questions by October 7, 1997:

Did the Deputy Secretary in fact reject the idea of deferring test development until Congress had settled the issue? What was the total cost (including all expenses) associated with the meetings held at The Four Seasons Hotel on September 22 and 23? What will you do to assure that the taxpayers are not billed directly or indirectly for the cost of these meetings? How much has the Department expended to date on the development of nationwide individualized testing?

Thank you for your immediate attention to these matters.

Sincerely,



John Ashcroft
United States Senate



William F. Goodling
Chairman, Committee on Education and
the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives

Enclosure

CLINTON'S CONTRACTORS DIS CONGRESS

If anything is clear in the murky debate about national education testing, it's that Congress doesn't want the Clinton administration to continue in the course it's been on: constructing tests of fuzzy math and whole language with the help of committees and contractors picked by the Education Department from the heart of the public school establishment.

In recent weeks, the Senate voted 87-13 to reassign the testing venture to an independent board, while the House voted 295-120 to call a halt to the whole thing. You might suppose the White House—

which says salvaging this ill-begun venture is its top priority and is threatening vetoes if Congress kills it—would at least put its contractors on hold while it seeks to work with Congress. But no.

Last week, Georgetown's posh Four Seasons Hotel hosted a two-day meeting of test developers and several dozen "advisers" convened by the Council for Basic Education, which stands to earn a tidy sum for its part in the \$13 million contract now in force. When nervous participants asked the Education Department if maybe the meeting ought not be deferred until Congress

makes up its mind, Deputy Secretary Marshall Smith (who picked all these folks) said: Nothing doing.

Smith's Folly, as some Hill-dwellers term the testing scheme, continues at flank speed. "They're sticking their fingers in our eyes," complains a House staffer. Someone as deft at education politics as William Jefferson Clinton might be expected to know better. But the administration is getting cocky. Congress is scared to fight back. The contractors are getting paid. The hotel welcomes the business. And we foot the bill.

FROM: LIBBY QUAIL
Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 3, 1997

DRAFT

The Honorable Richard W. Riley
Secretary of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to urge you, in the strongest terms, to suspend work immediately on the national reading and math tests. We were shocked to learn that the Department is hastily arranging field trials for these controversial federal tests. To be truly informative and honest, and not merely cosmetic, your announced decision to curtail test development must cover all ongoing work by federal employees, contractors, and advisors on this ill-conceived project.

In comments to the media Wednesday, October 1, your spokesperson acknowledged that the Department is actively recruiting school districts and planning for the administration of field tests of these federal exams. In other words, the Department is moving ahead at full speed, even as Congress considers whether to authorize this project at all.

We cannot reconcile the Department's rush to begin field testing given your announcement that test development is being halted until Congress settles this contentious matter. First, it would appear that the "suspension" in development came only after the Department, its contractors and advisors had completed substantial work on test design. Thus, substantially all that could be accomplished in developing these tests, seemingly was accomplished. And, all that remains is to send the specifications to the contractor who will write the tests. Now, we learn that the Department, armed with specifications for the test writers, is plowing ahead to recruit schools and plan field trials.

If you are willing to give the American people and Congress a good faith opportunity to consider this issue, then you must suspend all activity on tests, and you must do so now.

As you know, our view is that developing national, individualized student tests is wholly inappropriate for the federal government. Such tests will drive curriculum and instructional decisions, leading to a national curriculum which displaces parents and school boards and replaces them with bureaucrats making vital decisions about education. A Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll revealed that support for the President's national tests fell to less than 50 percent when respondents learned that the federal government would be involved in establishing the math and reading exams.

Secretary Riley
October 3, 1997
Page 2

Furthermore, standardized exams are readily available to states and school districts and already can provide a basis for national comparison. Many states have invested substantial time and money in developing their own system of achievement tests involving parents, teachers, and local schools in the process. For Washington to develop a uniform, federal math test is like the Transportation Department deciding to create a one-size-fits-all, nationalized passenger car.

The Department should halt all work on national student testing. It would be an unauthorized power grab from parents and taxpayers to rush these tests into schools before the American people have a fair opportunity to consider the many consequences of federalizing this facet of public education.

Sincerely,

JOHN ASHCROFT

UNITED STATES SENATOR - MISSOURI

FAX

Date: October 3,

To: Secretary Riley
Dept. of Education

Fax: (202) 401-2098

From: Sen. John Ashcroft

Pages (including cover): 3

NOTE: Letter of Oct. 3

Please call (202) 224-6154 if you have any questions or have trouble receiving this fax.

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2504

October 3, 1997

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Secretary of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

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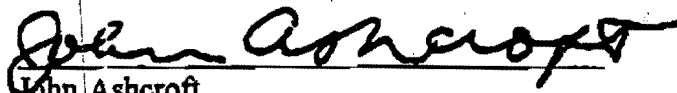
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SECRETARY RILEY
OCT 03 1997 03:58PM DOE/OFIC OF SECRETARY
Page 2

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Sincerely,



John Ashcroft
United States Senate

**Council for Basic Education**

October 2, 1997

Christopher T. Cross
*President*Mr. Jonathan Last
The Weekly Standard
1150 - 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

Via fax: 202-293-4901

Dear Mr. Last

This letter is in response to the October 6, 1997 article entitled "Clinton's Contractors Dis Congress." I want to clarify some misunderstandings about the advisory panel meeting for the voluntary national tests that was held September 22 and 23 in Washington, DC.

To correct the article's first inaccuracy, not one single panelist who serves on the two advisory panels for mathematics and reading stayed at the Four Seasons Hotel. Panelists stayed at the Georgetown Suites, which honors the government rate. The Four Seasons was used only for meeting space and meals. Meal costs at the Four Seasons were quite comparable to costs at other hotels—and the service charge was less.

A second inaccuracy in the article states that participants were nervous about the timing of the meeting—prior to congressional approval. As CBE recruited panelists and later advised them of the meeting date, there was no indication from the panelists of any nervousness about the timing of the meeting. Rather, CBE was struck by the enthusiasm that the panelists voiced in participating in this effort. During the meeting, advisory panel members were actively engaged in substantive and productive discourse. Contrary to the assertion that the "testing scheme continues at flank speed", much of the work, including our own, is on hold pending congressional resolution of the issue.

Finally, CBE took tremendous care in bringing to the table a diverse group of individuals to serve on the two panels. Ensuring that participants brought various views and perspectives to the discussion was essential; CBE made sure that this occurred. For example, the president of Saxon Publishers and a member of the panel that produced the Massachusetts English language arts standards serve on the panels and attended the meeting. Each of these panelists represents a traditional, basic skills approach to teaching and learning.

While CBE's costs and overhead for management of the technical panels are indeed reimbursed by the government, as a non-profit, we do not "earn a tidy sum." In fact, virtually all of our overhead costs are used to support our mission of advocating a strong liberal arts education for all children. Our belief in that principle, and in the need for parents to have decent information about the education their children receive, has motivated our participation in this effort.

The Council for Basic Education has always prided itself on its independence and insistence upon excellence. CBE maintains its adherence to these principles. The meeting held on September 22 and 23 is consistent with these principles and should not be considered otherwise.

Sincerely,

Christopher T. Cross

02/97 22:28 FAX 202 208 7751
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VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TEST0002/002
P. 02Council for Basic Education

October 2, 1997

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1150 - 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

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Sincerely,

Christopher T. Cross



For Immediate Release
Thursday, October 9, 1997

Contact: Steve Hilton (417) 881-7068
Greg Harris (202) 224-4589

Foes of Federal Student Testing Gain Support in the Senate

Memo to States Linked Proposed Test, Federal Funds

WASHINGTON -- Federal education officials already are linking supposedly "voluntary" national student tests with billions in funding for local school districts, U.S. Senator John Ashcroft (MO) disclosed today.

Ashcroft also said that opponents of testing in the Senate have secured 35 signers on a letter to Senate and House negotiators that endorses a House-passed ban on national testing. Three weeks ago, in a roll call taken on a hurriedly drafted compromise, only 13 Senators voted against national testing. In the House, a veto proof margin of 295-125 voted against national testing.

Ashcroft said the gain in the Senate shows that the President's plan for testing 4th and 8th graders is similar to his failed plan for extensive federal control of health care: "The more people learn about testing, the less they like it."

At a news conference with Chairman William Goodling (PA), Chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee, Ashcroft said a September 16 memorandum reveals that Department of Education officials are willing to use the leverage of Title I funds to gain acceptance for proposed national tests in reading and math. The memo from the Department to Chief State School officials says the federal agency will accept the national tests as an adequate assessment of the proficiency of Title I/educationally disadvantaged students.

Ashcroft said: "This offer is wholly inappropriate. First, this demonstrates how desperate the Department is to gain acceptance for these flawed federal tests. Second, use of the tests is being linked directly with federal funds. Today, use of the tests for Title I students is 'permitted.' It is only a matter of time before the tests will be required."

-more-

Ashcroft also rejected claims by Education Secretary Richard Riley that the Department has slowed its work, and awaits a decision by Congress. "The Administration is moving ahead at full speed on testing. There clearly is no halt in the Department's stampede. Test design has been completed. The tests are being offered as a way to comply with Title I assessment requirements. The Department is actively recruiting schools to use the tests. Statements that the Department has suspended test development until Congress resolves the issue are patently misleading. The Administration is rushing ahead at full speed to establish national testing before Congress and the public have a reasonable opportunity to consider the dangers to American education."

Title I funds are the largest single source of federal support for elementary and secondary education, accounting for \$7.3 billion in fiscal 1997. The funds are to be used to help educationally disadvantaged students.

The President seeks to establish national tests in reading and math, for 4th and 8th grade pupils. Ashcroft, Goodling, and other opponents of federalized testing oppose the effort on several grounds:

For example, use of a national test will drive teaching methods and content, leading to a national curriculum set in Washington. Control of education by parents, teachers, and community school boards will be displaced by bureaucrats in Washington;

The history of federal efforts to set instructional standards is one of failure. National history standards were killed by the Senate because they were "politically correct," omitting such figures as Paul Revere, Thomas Edison, Robert E. Lee, and the Wright brothers. The proposed new math test is based on "whole math," which emphasizes the use of calculators and devalues computational skills. Student test scores fell immediately when "whole math" was imposed by the Administration on Defense Department schools.

-end-

Attachment

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W
S****Congressman****LINDSEY GRAHAM****Third District, South Carolina**

1429 LONGWORTH BUILDING • WASHINGTON, D.C 20515 • (202) 225-5301

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 9, 1997Contact: Kevin Bishop
(202) 225-5301

Graham Urges President Clinton to Back Off Veto Threat Over Federal Testing Standards

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Rep. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) today made the following statement about President Clinton's threat to veto the Labor-HHS appropriations bill unless it contains funding for federal testing. Graham is a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

"I think it is irresponsible for the President to threaten a veto if his federal testing plan, which has very little support in Congress, is not included. The House of Representatives voted by a veto-proof margin in favor of the Goodling amendment to prohibit the use of federal funds for national tests.

"Everyone agrees that our nation's education system must be improved, but I do not believe that a new federal testing program will accomplish that goal. I strongly support the need for high standards for America's students. However, that is not the issue of concern. The central issue is an unneeded federally-developed national test to obtain high standards.

"The national testing program will direct resources away from improving instruction in the classroom. Students are already tested enough at the national, state, school district and classroom levels. Our efforts in Washington should be focused on returning to basic academics, increasing parental involvement, and sending more of the dollars we spend on federal education programs to our nation's classrooms.

"I urge the President to reassess his position on the prohibition of funding for national testing and sign the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill when it is presented to him.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FAX TRANSMITTAL

TO Mike Cohen

PHONE _____ FAX _____

FROM _____

PHONE _____ FAX 202-401-0596

PAGE(S) TO FOLLOW _____

MESSAGE: FYI from per CohenCONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

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

**JOHN ASHCROFT**

UNITED STATES SENATOR ■ MISSOURI

For Immediate Release
Thursday, October 9, 1997

Contact: Steve Hilton (417) 881-7068
Greg Harris (202) 224-4589

Foes of Federal Student Testing Gain Support in the Senate

Memo to States Linked Proposed Test, Federal Funds

WASHINGTON -- Federal education officials already are linking supposedly "voluntary" national student tests with billions in funding for local school districts, U.S. Senator John Ashcroft (MO) disclosed today.

Ashcroft also said that opponents of testing in the Senate have secured 35 signers on a letter to Senate and House negotiators that endorses a House-passed ban on national testing. Three weeks ago, in a roll call taken on a hurriedly drafted compromise, only 13 Senators voted against national testing. In the House, a veto proof margin of 295-125 voted against national testing.

Ashcroft said the gain in the Senate shows that the President's plan for testing 4th and 8th graders is similar to his failed plan for extensive federal control of health care: "The more people learn about testing, the less they like it."

At a news conference with Chairman William Goodling (PA), Chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee, Ashcroft said a September 16 memorandum reveals that Department of Education officials are willing to use the leverage of Title I funds to gain acceptance for proposed national tests in reading and math. The memo from the Department to Chief State School officials says the federal agency will accept the national tests as an adequate assessment of the proficiency of Title I/educationally disadvantaged students.

Ashcroft said: "This offer is wholly inappropriate. First, this demonstrates how desperate the Department is to gain acceptance for these flawed federal tests. Second, use of the tests is being linked directly with federal funds. Today, use of the tests for Title I students is 'permitted.' It is only a matter of time before the tests will be required."

-more-

Ashcroft also rejected claims by Education Secretary Richard Riley that the Department has slowed its work, and awaits a decision by Congress. "The Administration is moving ahead at full speed on testing. There clearly is no halt in the Department's stampede. Test design has been completed. The tests are being offered as a way to comply with Title I assessment requirements. The Department is actively recruiting schools to use the tests. Statements that the Department has suspended test development until Congress resolves the issue are patently misleading. The Administration is rushing ahead at full speed to establish national testing before Congress and the public have a reasonable opportunity to consider the dangers to American education."

Title I funds are the largest single source of federal support for elementary and secondary education, accounting for \$7.3 billion in fiscal 1997. The funds are to be used to help educationally disadvantaged students.

The President seeks to establish national tests in reading and math, for 4th and 8th grade pupils. Ashcroft, Goodling, and other opponents of federalized testing oppose the effort on several grounds:

For example, use of a national test will drive teaching methods and content, leading to a national curriculum set in Washington. Control of education by parents, teachers, and community school boards will be displaced by bureaucrats in Washington;

The history of federal efforts to set instructional standards is one of failure. National history standards were killed by the Senate because they were "politically correct," omitting such figures as Paul Revere, Thomas Edison, Robert E. Lee, and the Wright brothers. The proposed new math test is based on "whole math," which emphasizes the use of calculators and devalues computational skills. Student test scores fell immediately when "whole math" was imposed by the Administration on Defense Department schools.

-end-

Attachment



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

SEP 16 1997

MEMORANDUM TO CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

Subject: Questions and Answers on the relationship of Title I Requirements to the National Voluntary Tests

Enclosed are questions and answers that clarify the Department of Education's position on the relationship between the standards and assessment requirements of Title I and the proposed National Voluntary Tests in reading in grade 4 and mathematics in grade 8.

If you need further clarification, call Mary Jean LeTendre at 202-260-0826 or fax your questions to 202-260-7764.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald N. Tirozzi".

Gerald N. Tirozzi

Enclosure

cc: State Title I Coordinators

Q. May the national tests be used by the States, in part, as the assessments required under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act?

A. Yes. Title I requires a State to use challenging content and student performance standards developed for all students under the Goals 2000: Educate America Act or under another process or, absent such standards for all students, to develop for children served under Title I challenging content and student performance standards that reflect the State's expectations for all children. The State must also develop or adopt assessments aligned with these standards. Thus, if a State determines that the national tests are aligned with the State's standards, those tests may be used for Title I purposes. Because the national tests will be based on the content frameworks of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, they will reflect a national consensus among educators, testing experts, and other leaders on what children should know and be able to do in reading English at the fourth grade level and in mathematics at the eighth grade level. We therefore expect that the tests generally will be aligned with most, if not all, States' efforts to develop challenging content and performance standards in these subjects at the indicated grade levels. Moreover, the national tests will be developed according to the highest professional and technical standards; will be administered with accommodations for children with disabilities and limited English proficient children; will yield scores at three levels of performance; and will permit scores to be disaggregated in accordance with Title I provisions. The national tests thus can be an important resource to States in carrying out Title I's vital goal of holding students who participate in Title I to the same high standards expected of all students.

Q. Will use of the national tests by a State fully meet its assessment obligations under Title I?

A. For most children, use of the national tests will meet a State's obligations under Title I to assess performance in reading at the fourth grade level and in math at the eighth grade level. However, consistent with the inclusion criteria for the national tests, some students with limited English proficiency or with disabilities may not be included in the national tests. Other appropriate assessments would need to be administered for those students in reading/language arts and math to meet the Title I requirements. Moreover, Title I requires annual State assessments in at least reading/language arts and math in at least one grade in each of the following clusters of grades: grades 3 through 5; grades 6 through 9; and grades 10 through 12. Therefore, other assessments would be needed for the grades 10 through 12 cluster if there are Title I programs in schools serving those grades. In addition, other State assessments in math in the grades 3 through 5 cluster and in reading/language arts in the grades 6 through 9 cluster would be required under Title I.

Q. Since the fourth grade national reading test will be given only in English, can it be used for Title I assessment purposes?

A. States generally are required by Title I to test all students--including children with disabilities and limited English proficient children--in reading/language arts in the grades selected for

assessment. Limited English proficient children are to be assessed, to the extent practicable, in the language and form most likely to yield accurate and reliable information on what those students know and can do to determine their mastery of skills in subjects other than English. Thus, a State may use a particular test, such as the national reading test, for limited English proficient children for whom the test would be appropriate, and use other comparable reading tests that assess the State's standards, but would be more appropriate for children with less English proficiency.

We believe that the fourth grade test in reading English—with appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities and limited English proficient children—will be appropriate for most fourth grade children. Inclusion criteria for the tests will reflect that judgment. Limited English proficient students who may be excluded from the national reading test—i.e., children who have received instruction in English for less than three years—would need to be given for Title I purposes, another State reading/language arts test in, to the extent practicable, the language and form most likely to yield accurate and reliable information on what they know and can do. Title I requires the States to make every effort to develop assessments in languages other than English as they are needed and directs the Secretary, through the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, to assist the States, at their request, in identifying appropriate assessment measures in other languages. The Department is prepared to provide that assistance.

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W
S****Congressman****LINDSEY GRAHAM****Third District, South Carolina**

1429 LONGWORTH BUILDING • WASHINGTON, D.C 20515 • (202) 225-5301

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 9, 1997Contact: Kevin Bishop
(202) 225-5301

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"The national testing program will direct resources away from improving instruction in the classroom. Students are already tested enough at the national, state, school district and classroom levels. Our efforts in Washington should be focused on returning to basic academics, increasing parental involvement, and sending more of the dollars we spend on federal education programs to our nation's classrooms.

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ATTN - Melinda

JOHN ASHCROFT

UNITED STATES SENATOR ■ MISSOURI

For Immediate Release
Wednesday, October 1, 1997

Contact: Steve Hilton (417) 881-7068
Greg Harris (202) 224-4589

Ashcroft and Goodling: Test Meeting at Posh Hotel Wasteful, Arrogant

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator John Ashcroft (MO) and U.S. Representative William Goodling (PA), Chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, want answers from U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley about disturbing circumstances surrounding a recent planning session for federalized student tests at a luxury hotel in Washington.

Last Thursday, Riley reportedly suspended work on national tests until Congress decides whether to allocate money for the tests. Yet, it is reported that the Department held a costly planning session for the tests immediately prior to the alleged suspension — and that a top-ranking official of the Department rejected suggestions at the session that development be halted.

"We must say, it would have been better for the country, and cheaper for taxpayers, if you had called time out before the swarm of test developers descended for a two-day session at one of the capital's most expensive hotels, The Four Seasons. We are told that a one-night stay for two people there costs \$370 — unless you want the best view," Ashcroft and Goodling wrote in a letter to Riley.

Ashcroft and Goodling asked Riley to report the total cost for this planning session; what he will do to protect taxpayers from footing the bill for meeting space, lodging, and catered meals; and what the Administration has spent to date on testing. They questioned the Administration's good faith in announcing a suspension at the close of a major work session on the project.

"Perhaps the next bunch of experts you bring to Washington could be persuaded to settle for space at a college campus, or at the Department itself," Ashcroft and Goodling wrote.

Ashcroft has introduced legislation to bar nationwide individualized exams. He opposes the tests because they will drive curriculum decisions, undercut control by parents and teachers, and will be based on academically suspect theories such as "whole" math. Ashcroft also has indicated he will filibuster the FY98 spending bill for the Department of Education unless it bans funds for the tests. The ban has been approved by the House, but rejected by the Senate. The issue is in conference between the Senate and House.

-end-

Attachments: Letter to Secretary Riley, *The Weekly Standard*, October 6, 1997.

NO. 4838 P. 3
U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1997
Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 1997

The Honorable Richard W. Riley
Secretary of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Mr. Secretary:

When it was announced on Thursday, September 25, that you had halted temporarily the Department's work on the President's plan for federalized testing of all students, we took the announced suspension as a sign of your good faith.

However, it now appears the reported "suspension" of work came at the close of a busy and costly week designing test development. We must say, it would have been better for the country, and cheaper for taxpayers, if you had called timeout before the swarm of test developers descended for a two-day session at one of the capital's most expensive hotels, The Four Seasons. We are told that a one-night stay for two people there costs \$370 -- unless you want the best view.

These meetings cast doubt on the Administration's ability to work with Congress on this issue. Please note in the enclosed news article that the test designer participants in this gathering expressed their discomfort at flying in the face of congressional deliberations by suggesting that the meeting be put off until Congress settled the testing controversy. According to the article, your Deputy Secretary rejected the suggestion out of hand.

Moreover, while the expenditure of millions of dollars for federal testing concerns us deeply, the extravagance and arrogance of this session are an affront to the taxpayers of this nation. The taxpayers deserve to know the cost of this gathering on September 22 and 23, and what you will do to assure that they are not stuck directly or indirectly with the cost of travel, meeting rooms, lodging, and catered meals. Perhaps the next bunch of experts you bring to Washington could be persuaded to conduct the meetings at a college campus, or at the Department itself.

The extravagance of the venue and the arrogance attributed to the Deputy Secretary reinforce the justifiable suspicion held by American families over federalized student tests. The government's record in the area of federalized academic standards is one of abject failure. This new attempt by the Department to intrude further into local schools should be halted permanently.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Secretary Riley
October 1, 1997
Page 2

The Department's experiment with nationwide testing is multiply flawed. First, it will undercut the control of schools by parents, teachers, and local boards. This will occur because nationalized testing inevitably will drive curriculum and instruction, leading to a national curriculum designed in Washington. Such a national curriculum depriving families of their right to shape education at the local level would be a disaster.

Second, schools already administer many different tests. Our students need more knowledge, not simply more tests.

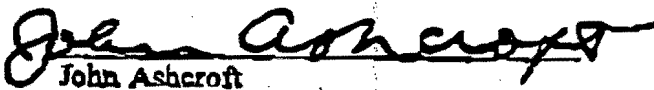
Finally, the use of "fuzzy" math, or whole math, in the proposed tests aligns the Department with yet another educational fad, one associated with falling test scores among Defense Department students subjected to such teaching methods and curriculum.

Please provide detailed responses to the following questions by October 7, 1997:

Did the Deputy Secretary in fact reject the idea of deferring test development until Congress had settled the issue? What was the total cost (including all expenses) associated with the meetings held at The Four Seasons Hotel on September 22 and 23? What will you do to assure that the taxpayers are not billed directly or indirectly for the cost of these meetings? How much has the Department expended to date on the development of nationwide individualized testing?

Thank you for your immediate attention to these matters.

Sincerely,


John Ashcroft
United States Senate


William F. Goodling
Chairman, Committee on Education and
the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives

Enclosure

CLINTON'S CONTRACTORS DIS CONGRESS

If anything is clear in the murky debate about national education testing, it's that Congress doesn't want the Clinton administration to continue in the course it's been on: constructing tests of fuzzy math and whole language with the help of committees and contractors picked by the Education Department from the heart of the public school establishment.

In recent weeks, the Senate voted 87-13 to reassign the testing venture to an independent board, while the House voted 295-120 to call a halt to the whole thing. You might suppose the White House—

which says salvaging this ill-begun venture is its top priority and is threatening vetoes if Congress kills it—would at least put its contractors on hold while it seeks to work with Congress. But no.

Last week, Georgetown's posh Four Seasons Hotel hosted a two-day meeting of test developers and several dozen "advisers" convened by the Council for Basic Education, which stands to earn a tidy sum for its part in the \$13 million contract now in force. When nervous participants asked the Education Department if maybe the meeting ought not be deferred until Congress

makes up its mind, Deputy Secretary Marshall Smith (who picked all these folks) said: Nothing doing.

Smith's Folly, as some Hill-dwellers term the testing scheme, continues at flank speed. "They're sticking their fingers in our eyes," complains a House staffer. Someone as deft at education politics as William Jefferson Clinton might be expected to know better. But the administration is getting cocky. Congress is scared to fight back. The contractors are getting paid. The hotel welcomes the business. And we foot the bill.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FAX TRANSMITTAL

ASAP

TO:

MIKE COHEN

ORGANIZATION:

FAX NUMBER:

456-5581

PHONE NUMBER:

FROM:

SUSAN FROST

PHONE NUMBER:

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1175	—	103	218-4110

**Contact: Jay Diskey
or Leslie Field
(202) 225-4527**

*By trying to turn over the national test project to the National Assessment Governing Board, it's as plain as day that the Clinton Administration is setting up NAGB to be a national school board. That's the last thing this country wants or needs, but the action seems consistent with the Administration's new attempts to run local schools from Washington. What the U.S. Department of Education should do is stop development of these tests altogether. Instead, the Department continues to foist poorly designed federal tests from Washington bureaucrats onto local schools.

"It's also clear that the Administration is suspending test development in order to look good for the House-Senate Conference. The Clinton Administration is arrogant to assume that a Senate Amendment will soon become law. By using language such as 'when NAGB assumes its new role' the Department of Education is once again flouting the U.S. House of Representatives. We intend to stand firm in our opposition to his federal testing program. I consider our 295-125 vote to be veto-proof.

"There is no support for new school tests from Washington. Only six states and 15 of 15,000 U.S. school districts have signed up for the President's plan. Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate has reworked the plan, 27 Senators have signed a letter against it, seven out of every 10 members of the House have voted to halt funding for it, and a new poll shows that only 22 percent of the American want Washington involved in creating new tests. Isn't this enough to convince the Administration that new federal tests are a bad idea and a waste of \$100 million of the taxpayers' money? The nation wants common sense education ideas — not hastily designed tests from Washington. This Administration is determined to circumvent the recent work of 46 states that have developed high academic standards and tests without Washington's interference. This is the arrogance of Washington at work again.

"We strongly support high academic standards and better schools, but strongly oppose new education tests developed by Washington bureaucrats. We should help our students learn - not test them again. We would rather send dollars directly to the classroom, bolster basic academics and increase parental choice and involvement in our schools."

111

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS

FOR RELEASE
September 25, 1997

Contact: Melinda Kitchell Malico
(202) 401-1008

**STATEMENT BY U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION RICHARD W. RILEY
on voluntary national test specifications**

The Council of Chief State School Officers and the panel it established have concluded work on recommendations for specifications for national tests in the basic skills of reading and math. I thank them for their hard work on this very important effort.

The Administration has proposed that the independent bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) be in charge of the tests and I am pleased that the Senate voted by a large bipartisan majority to adopt our proposal. I hope and expect that this provision will soon be enacted into law when Congress completes work on the appropriations bill and sends the President a bill he can sign. At that point, NAGB will assume full responsibility for overseeing the development of the voluntary national tests.

NAGB already oversees the widely used and respected National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP frameworks were developed through a broad national consensus process and 43 states participate in the NAEP tests. The voluntary national tests will be based on the NAEP content and performance standards and must be fully consistent with NAEP. The voluntary national tests can be thought of as individualized versions of NAEP that, unlike NAEP, will for the first time provide parents, teachers and students with information about how well individual students are doing compared to national standards. It is important that Congress act expeditiously to ensure NAGB's role in overseeing these tests.

Because of its role in overseeing NAEP, NAGB is best suited to ensure comparability between the voluntary national tests and NAEP tests. One issue that NAGB will need to address is the National Test Panel's recommendation that students be permitted to use calculators for the entire eighth-grade mathematics test. NAEP permits calculators to be used on just over a quarter of the exam. In my view, a test of eighth-grade students should measure, as NAEP does, whether students have learned how to do arithmetic accurately without a calculator. But a visit to any good eighth-grade classroom will show students who have moved beyond arithmetic to more advanced topics -- and are using calculators to do work in algebra and geometry, such as finding square roots, exponents and other rigorous work. That is why a test of eighth-grade students should also measure, as NAEP does, whether students can do advanced mathematics using calculators as a tool.

In order to ensure that test development does not proceed before NAGB assumes its new role, I will not forward the test panel's recommended specifications to the test contractor at this time. When NAGB assumes its new role, I will urge them to take the steps necessary to ensure that the specifications for the national tests are fully consistent with those for NAEP. NAGB will be responsible for the final specifications that will guide the selection of test items. The contractor will discontinue development of test items until NAGB has approved test specifications.

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FOR SCANDINAVIAN FLOWERS



**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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OF THE AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION

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11/14/2023

Press Release
Sept. 25, 1997

Contact: Jay Diskey
or Leslie Field
(202) 225-4527

**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BILL GOODLING (R-PA)
IN RESPONSE TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S
TEMPORARY HALT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL TESTS**

"By trying to turn over the national test project to the National Assessment Governing Board, it's as plain as day that the Clinton Administration is setting up NAGB to be a national school board. That's the last thing this country wants or needs, but the action seems consistent with the Administration's new attempts to run local schools from Washington. What the U.S. Department of Education should do is stop development of these tests altogether. Instead, the Department continues to foist poorly designed federal tests from Washington bureaucrats onto local schools.

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444

OFFICE OF SECRETARY

SEP. 25. 1997 2:43PM

NO. 3817 P. 2

E X E C U T I V E O F F I C E O F T H E P R E S I D E N T

25-Sep-1997 07:13pm

TO: BALDERSTON_A

TO: cohen_m

FROM: David_Stevenson

SUBJECT: Re: Q&A's for Secretary's Statement

September 25, 1997

Talking points on statement by Secretary on test panel recommendations

1. The Secretary wants to ensure that NAGB sets policy for the voluntary national tests and this test specifications.
2. The Secretary wants to ensure that the voluntary national tests are consistent with NAEP.
3. The Secretary will not forward the test panel's recommended specifications to the test contractor.
4. The contractor will discontinue development of test items until NAGB has approved test specifications.
5. The Secretary urges Congress to act quickly so that NAGB may assume its official policy role.

September 25, 1997

Questions and answers

1. Why did you stop the contractor from developing test items?

We believe that NAGB, a bipartisan body that sets policy for NAEP, should set policy for the voluntary national tests. To develop test items requires test specifications and NAGB is not yet authorized to set test specifications for the tests.

2. Does this mean that the test will not be ready in March of 1999?

No.

3. How long do you expect the delay to last?

We expect Congress to act quickly to authorize NAGB to set policy for the tests.

4. Why didn't the Department send up legislation for NAGB earlier?

The Department anticipated that Congress would take up the reauthorization of NAGB. When this did not occur, the Department sent to Congress legislation to change the authority of NAGB to include setting policy for the voluntary national tests.

5. What work will the contractor be doing?

The contractor will not be doing work on item test development. The contractor will be planning for the pilot and field tests so there will be no unnecessary delays once NAGB assumes its policy role and the development of test items resumes.

6. Do you expect NAGB to make major changes in the specifications? How long will it take for NAGB to approve the test specifications?

We expect there will be some changes. We expect NAGB to act quickly once Congress authorizes NAGB to set policy.

7. Does the Secretary have concerns about the test specifications in addition to his concern about the use of calculators?

The Secretary believes that NAGB should set the test specifications and that the panel's recommendations need to be reviewed by NAGB.

8. What are the cost implications of this delay?

We are going to direct the contractor to stop this work today and we need to work with them over the next several days to determine the cost implications.

BILL GOODLING
19TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

TOLL FREE DISTRICT NUMBER:
800-832-1811

CHAIRMAN:
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND
THE WORKFORCE
COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3819

September 24, 1997

ROOM 2283
RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-5806

DISTRICT OFFICES:
FEDERAL BUILDING
200 SOUTH GEORGE STREET
YORK, PA 17405-9999

CHAMBER BUILDING
212 NORTH MANOVER STREET
CARLISLE, PA 17013-2423

140 BALTIMORE STREET
ROOM 301
GETTYSBURG, PA 17325-2311

2020 YALE AVENUE
CAMP HILL, PA 17011-5456

44 FREDERICK STREET
HANOVER, PA 17331-3598

President Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500-0005

SEP 25 PM5:36

Dear Mr. President:

In your recent speech before the AFL-CIO, you said, "...there is nothing more important for the future of this country than giving our kids a decent education."

I agree with that statement 100 percent.

You went on to say, "For the first time, 4th graders scored above the global average in mathematics and science."

What you didn't say was that happened because of the efforts of the states to raise their academic standards and better prepare teaching staff with some financial assistance from the federal government.

You continued with the statement, "I know all children can learn and I know we've got people who can do the job. We've just got to support them and bear down and do more of the kinds of things that we know will work."

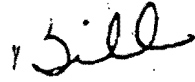
That is exactly what I am trying to do. With your shotgun approach -- with a little money spread everywhere -- I'm left with \$200 million to do the one major initiative you proposed that truly makes sense: improvements of literacy.

For \$200 million spread throughout the country, I have to design a program that will have all children reading-ready by the time they reach 1st grade. That means intensive pre-school reading readiness programs. That means an all-out effort to help parents become the child's most important teacher. That means training and retraining teachers in how to teach reading using proven research and methods. That means remedying those children who are presently in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades who are not reading at grade level.

That's a big order for \$200 million. But it is positively necessary to accomplish this before we get into the business of giving students one more standardized test.

Your stance on testing is making my job of authorizing an "America Reads" program almost impossible. I need your help if your most important initiative -- having all Americans read -- is ever going to see the light of day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill", with a stylized flourish at the end.

BILL GOODLING
Chairman, House Committee on
Education and the Workforce

P.S. I called you last Thursday to discuss the "America Reads initiative."

WFG/ts



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

FAX COVER SHEET

DATE: 9-22

TIME: 4:15

① Delay Work on it
until Co. encl & press
in chape

②

TO: Mike Smith

FAX#: 401-3095

FROM: Sue Betka

Number of pages including fax cover: 2

PLEASE CALL (202) 219-1335 IF THERE ARE ANY PROBLEMS
IN TRANSMITTAL.

Special Comments:

Effect of Delaying All Item-Related Work on the Voluntary National Tests for 30 Days

With such a delay, the contractor would continue the following work:

- Identifying and contacting schools for participation in the pilot tests;
- Gaining cooperation of schools for the pilot tests;
- Drawing the sample for the field tests;
- Contacting schools and gaining cooperation of schools for field tests;
- Sharing information with pilot and field test schools about the tests;
- Identifying coordinators for the pilot and field tests;
- Working on their website; and
- Identifying alternative methodologies for the linking studies.

Without a delay, in addition to the above, the contractor would also continue this work:

- Writing items;
- Assembling test booklets;
- Convening reading and math committees; and
- Reviewing items and booklets for content, bias and cultural sensitivity, conformity with the specifications, and accuracy of the answer keys.

Because the contract was awarded 30 days ahead of schedule, a delay of 30 days at this time would not affect the contractor's ability to conduct the field tests in March. A longer or later delay would.