



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FAX

TO:

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WA -

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FROM:

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OF PAGES: 8 (INCLUDING COVER SHEET)

COMMENT:

8
Sending you selected pages of ~~material~~
Special interest #20

L1251

NEC 1997

Saturday, June 28, 1997, 9:15 a.m.

Los Angeles Ballroom

American Education in the 21st Century

Jack Kemp, Empower America

Tape #1

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and the leadership of this dynamic group of men and women, to enter the millennium, to enter the new age, to enter the new decade, with the type of educational reform and opportunity and access alluded to earlier, that can truly make this country the democracy it was meant to be.

And I personally believe, parenthetically, that we cannot preach democracy in Eastern Europe if we don't make it work in East L.A., East Palo Alto, East St. Louis, East Harlem, and every urban area of America that is crying out for reform.

May I pay my respects mightily to the teachers being honored here this weekend? Michael went to school in the San Fernando Valley; I went to school in West Los Angeles - graduate of Fairfax High School, went on to Occidental College, met my wife at Oxy, but I am a product of public schools. My mother was a teacher, my daughter is a teacher - public school teacher - my father-in-law is public school, Superintendent of Schools in Ventura County, California.

I want to pay respects by saying that, reminding you of that wonderful movie of the life of Sir Thomas More,

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do not themselves run the schools. Public officials retain the power to cancel school management contracts or charter contracts on grounds of consistently poor performance, but they do not directly supervise or control the means by which the school and the teacher in the classroom pursue those ends.

Under this reform, under this entrepreneurial or reinventing education paradigm reform, education must be delivered, in my opinion, through charter schools, as one example. Licensed by public authorities, such as state and city or local school districts. They can opt out schools that secede from their local education agencies - run themselves with what amounts to a block grant of public funds. Which in my opinion, is what the federal government should be doing, more than attempting to run or supervise that school.

* | In all situations, the continuing responsibility of the public authority, particularly in Washington, is to, as the President suggested, establish national standards, but not impose them. This is what I would call public accountability, and where people and families can actually

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where the sister went on to school, could not get a job,
 thus had diminished their expectations, led them to the
 streets. One little boy was asked by Alex Kotlowitz,
 "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

And he said, "Well, if I grow up, Mr. Kotlowitz, I
 want to be..."

If? If I want to grow up? Every child should have
 the equality of opportunity to maximize his or her
 potential, and school choice is a part of that effort. We
 can disagree about how vast it should be, but it seems to
 me, as an axiom, and certainly in urban schools of America
 among low-income people, there must be greater choice.
 There has to be greater freedom for families.

→ Number two - Diane Ravitch defines charter schools
 this way - she says, "Think of a charter school as a
 public school district with but one school."

It receives public funds, agrees to meet clear
 academic standards, accepts all students who apply, but
 unlike existing public schools, it has a contract that can
 be revoked if the school fails to make good on its

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commitment to education. As I pointed out, many states are doing it.

But we can ask the question, why couldn't National Geographic or The Learning Channel not have a charter school? Why couldn't The Smithsonian or Georgetown or George Washington University or Library of Congress or the NEA or AFT have a charter school of its own? Can you imagine what \$8,000 per child would buy if organizations such as these and many, many more were in charge of using that money to create a school that would be considered the type of schools that are being honored and the type of teaching that's being honored here by the Milken Family Foundation?

They don't all work. Marcus Garvey in Washington, D.C. proved that. But it's the school board's job to take care of that problem, and instead of inventing things for teachers and schools to do and telling families and children which school they must attend, the school board should devote its energies, in my opinion, to making sure that an ever-increasing number of magnificent public schools and school choice does exist.

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→ Third - excellence. I agree with President Clinton.

He suggested making available the Reading and Math Test from the Nation's Report Card, so that local school boards, families and other citizens can tell whether children are learning what they need to know and be able to do so. The Congress should enact the President's proposal, and our cities should use those tests, as well as our schools and states.

→ Fourth - accountability. There is a fourth step that in my opinion, the President has yet to recommend, that the, that just, that school boards should take. This step would have to do with accountability. New choices won't be real, new charter schools won't succeed, children's test scores won't change until principals are expected to lead, teachers are expected to teach, in a way that achieves results.

→ In essence, the recipe for reform in education in America begins with creating the best schools in the world for our children. The ingredients are choice and freedom and excellence and accountability. I'd like to see the

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KEMP: This is the Geraldo Rivera part of my, the Oprah Winfrey..

STRASZHEIM: We all know that Washington, the State House, and the courthouses are involved in various different ways in education, and those ways may change in the future. But most people's livelihood comes from the private sector.

Question is, how might we get America's companies more involved in the educational decision process in this country?

KEMP: Well, first of all, it's happening. And I would give tremendous credit to Michael Milken for helping to stimulate that very discussion, which will be taking place subsequent to my remarks in the panels, and the men and women from the business community who are here - A.

B - it is absolutely axiomatic that industry, business, the private enterprise system, has a huge stake in the outcome of this debate going on this weekend, and of course, endemically across the face of the country.

→ Thirdly, I was on, had the opportunity to visit a school in East Palo Alto with Larry Ellison of Oracle.

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Oracle is, along with Sun Microsystems and Apple Computer Company in Silicon Valley, took a very strong interest in Flood School in East Palo Alto. Provided network computing for every child. And it is so clear to me that this has inspired the type of educational achievement - discipline has improved immensely. The motivation factor has been essential, and I think every man and woman in this room knows that education without motivation is basically leading nowhere.

And I want to just suggest that I am convinced, as business and industry and technology partner with the public and private schools of America, we can turn both into great schools and bring in the type of educational opportunity that we want for our country. So I believe the, the panels will have a tremendous opportunity to visit this subject.

STRASZHEIM: Other questions here from the floor?

Yes, right down here. We've got some microphones; we have one here in the center. Do any of the microphones...

KEMP: Or you can use mine.

STRASZHEIM: Okay.



The National Association of Secondary School Principals

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Position of the National Association of Secondary School Principals on Voluntary National Tests 4th Grade Reading - 8th Grade Mathematics

The President, in his State of the Union Address, proposed a new national education initiative to develop and make available voluntary national tests for 4th grade students in reading and 8th grade students in mathematics.

The Department of Education has moved forward with this initiative by entering into a contract with two parties to develop and market these tests.

Members of Congress are concerned that the administration has moved forward with this initiative and expended federal funds without the express approval of Congress. In addition, they are concerned about the role of the Department in administering these tests. In response to these concerns, the administration has agreed to turn over the development and administration of these tests to the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB).

Position:

The development and administration of more tests in itself is not prudent or necessary. However, as proposed by the Administration, these tests would be used as a tool to provide students, teachers, and parents with an assessment of the student's strengths and weaknesses in two fundamental areas -- reading and mathematics.

As recommended in *Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution*

The high school will assess the academic progress of students in a variety of ways so that a clear and valid picture emerges of what they know and are able to do. (p. 53)

Assessments of student work should provide a rich collection of information that reflects on a student's progress in moving through the high school curriculum. (p. 54)

While it is important to assess individual students so that their academic progress may be known, it is equally vital to disclose how the school as a whole fares. (p. 56)

NASSP supports the President's National Voluntary Test initiative if these tests are used to improve teaching and learning and align the assessment of students to pre-established standards and curriculum. It is important that the standards and curriculum be determined prior to the development of a test.

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FOR RELEASE
August 18, 1997



NEWS

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CONTRACT TO DEVELOP VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS AWARDED TO ALLIANCE OF MAJOR TESTING FIRMS

An alliance that includes the nation's most respected test publishers and a bipartisan council on basic skills will be responsible for developing the voluntary national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade mathematics, the U.S. Department of Education announced today. The \$13 million contract awarded today is for the first year of a five-year project. The tests will be used first in 1999.

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) will oversee the multi-year effort. Major test publishers and others involved as subcontractors include California Test Bureau/McGraw Hill (Monterey, Calif.); Council for Basic Education (Washington, D.C.); Educational Testing Service (Princeton, N.J.); Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement (San Antonio, Texas); National Computer Systems (Iowa City, Iowa); Riverside Publishing (Itasca, Ill.); and Westat, Inc. (Rockville, Md.).

The contractor, AIR, is a national, nonprofit organization with broad experience in education-related research, including work in large-scale assessments, policy analysis and program evaluation.

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

-MORE-



resource for interested school districts and states to use as part of their efforts to improve schools. And the tests will show parents, schools and communities how well their children are performing in math and reading -- two subjects critical to student success at pivotal points in time.

"The voluntary national tests will provide valuable information to help children master the basics," U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley said. "Raising expectations and standards in education motivates students to learn more and work harder. For the first time, the tests will inform parents, teachers and students themselves about what it takes to reach national and even international standards of achievement no matter where they live in this great country -- something no other test currently does.

"These tests are about giving young people the basic skills they need to prepare them to navigate the changing times and get a solid foundation that prepares them for college or technical careers following high school."

The \$13,035,848 contract was awarded competitively following a review and recommendation by an evaluation panel. The reviewers included state and school district representatives, as well as reading, math, assessment and civil rights experts.

The responsibilities of the project subcontractors are:

- Riverside Publishing will help develop the reading test;
- Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement will help develop the mathematics test;
- Westat, Inc. will design and conduct the pilot and field tests;
- California Test Bureau/McGraw Hill and National Computer Systems, Inc. will be responsible for scoring the field test;
- Educational Testing Services will assist with data analysis and other technical issues; and
- Council for Basic Education will oversee the coordination of the National Advisory Committee meetings.

This fall, advisory panels will be named to oversee test development, including subject matter, technical issues and accommodations for limited-English-proficient students and those with disabilities. They will build on work already done by committees of expert teachers, administrators, parents, policy makers and business and community leaders -- as well as findings from public meetings and hearings that solicited the views of parents, teachers and communities.

Test items and scoring criteria are to be developed this fall, with a field test to be ready next spring (1998). Sample tests will be posted on the Internet in fall 1998. AIR will oversee efforts to get public comments -- from parents, students and educators -- on the sample tests and to develop user-friendly reports of student test results.

Six states, 15 cities, and the Department of Defense Schools -- encompassing nearly 20 percent of the nation's 4th and 8th grade public school enrollment -- have already signed on to participate in the voluntary national tests.

Funds for the test development contract are from the department's Fund for the Improvement of Education, in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

AIR has offices in Washington, D.C.; Palo Alto, Calif.; and Concord, Mass.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE SECRETARY

August 19, 1997

Letters to the Editor
The Washington Post
1150 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Editor:

Representative William Goodling's recent attack on the voluntary national tests (*Washington Post* 8/13) is based in large part on his belief that, "Americans don't want and don't need a new national reading test for fourth graders and a new national math test for eighth graders." With this, he demonstrates a misunderstanding of the importance of these national tests to families, students and teachers who want to know if our students have mastered the basics no matter where they live and work.

This is not simply "another test." It is about setting high expectations and standards for students and then measuring achievement based on these goals. The new voluntary tests of fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade mathematics will offer, for the first time, to interested school districts and states an assessment of individual student performance in these two critical subject areas based on national and international standards of excellence. No current test nor state or local assessment currently achieves this important goal. Unlike other tests, after these tests are given all the test items will be made publicly available and will be accompanied by information that lets teachers and parents know what goes into the tests, what they mean and how parents can help their children get ready for them. A test that is based on high standards and that gives individual results back to students, parents and teachers can yield important information about what students know and can do in these subject areas and can identify where extra help is needed so additional progress can be made. Raising expectations and standards in education motivates students to learn more and work harder.

I differ with Rep. Goodling's view that these tests are inconsistent with Goals 2000. Like the rest of the President's education initiatives, these tests will give local schools and states new opportunities to improve. The last thing that we should do at the federal level is to prevent local schools and states from participating in these tests of excellence.

As former governors, President Clinton and I strongly support the essential state and local nature of education. We have no interest or intent in creating a national curriculum. Providing a voluntary reading test in grade 4 and a mathematics test in grade 8 has nothing to do with creating

such a national curriculum. What we are concerned with, and what these tests will help achieve, is the creation of high national standards of achievement. We want to strengthen local education by giving state and local governments and parents the chance to know how well their students have learned to read and to do math.

Perhaps the most disappointing suggestion by Rep. Goodling is that a national test would be "inappropriate" for some "disadvantaged" students. We must stop perpetuating the cycle of low expectations that keeps so many young people from achieving their full potential. We should not be willing to tolerate low standards for any group of students. Only if we are willing to break free from the tyranny of low expectations and help individual states and schools to challenge students can we achieve higher standards of learning for all students. Already fifteen large urban school districts have committed to having their students take the test.

No one is suggesting that these tests or any other tests are an education panacea. But we do know that quality testing that informs communities, parents, and teachers about how their students are achieving -- combined with a rigorous local core curriculum of the basics -- can improve education. We at the national level should do our part by increasing investments in pre-school programs like Even Start and Head Start, strengthening the recruiting and training of teachers, improving basic skills instruction funded by Title I, and funding the "America Reads Challenge" now, to get children reading well and independently by the end of third grade. These initiatives, along with the tests and local and state initiatives, will help raise our standards of learning for all students across America.

Yours sincerely,


Richard W. Riley

Day and Evening Telephone No. (202) 401-3026

Voluntary National Testing: It's a No Brainer

**By
Michael Casserly***

When Congress returns for its Fall session, members will take up one of the most defining education issues they have faced in some time: voluntary national tests for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math.

President Clinton proposed the tests to spur the flagging standards movement. He was right to do so. The drive to heighten educational standards is losing steam. The standards and assessments now being developed by the states are spotty at best, and many have begun to question whether all the work is worth it. The national tests could provide direction to these disparate efforts and breathe some much-needed life into the standards movement.

The question before Congress, posed by Education and Economic Opportunity Committee Chair Bill Goodling (R-PA), is whether the legislature should prevent the Clinton Administration from using federal funds to develop and administer the new assessments. The vote is, of course, a proxy on the tests themselves. But Congress—Republican and Democrats—should support the tests for a number of reasons.

First, Republicans should remember that these tests are direct descendents of the ones proposed by President Bush in "America 2000". The White House and Congressional Republicans, at the time, pushed tests to spur excellence in public education. Clinton never strayed far from the original blueprint in proposing "Goals 2000" then or Voluntary National Tests now. The tests have spanned the administrations of both parties and encompass an idea around which a national and bipartisan consensus is now clear.

Second, the 106th Congress—beginning in 1999—will reauthorize the main engine of federal involvement in schools, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and will want answers to tough questions that national test results could help answer.

Third, some Democrats fear that test results could reflect badly on minority children. Many worry about the use of the tests to label or exclude them. It is a concern worthy of vigilance. Advocates argue, correctly, that testing is not teaching, and that the challenge is to provide opportunity for achievement, not just the measurement of it. The sorry truth, however, is that we are never going to get to issues of opportunity until the debates on standards are more settled. The nation should be able to walk and chew gum at the same time as it pursues both ends of the educational reform process, but apparently it cannot—or will not. The national tests will give liberals a better data base from which to advocate greater opportunity for poor kids.

There are many issues that remain to be solved, including problems of duplicate testing, accommodations for students who are disabled or do not speak English, and costs. The Administration has just resolved one by placing control of the exams under an independent board, and is working to solve the others.

Urban public school systems in 15 major cities, for their part, announced recently that they would take the exams, a move Clinton called historic and astonishing. But they stepped forward not to surprise people or to tweak the states over their sluggish pace. They volunteered because high standards have more significance to urban communities from which so little is expected than they have almost anywhere else. And they volunteered to say clearly to the nation that urban school children could compete with any kids anywhere if they are given an opportunity to learn. That should be a no brainer for conservatives and liberals alike.

The initial test results, particularly out of urban schools, may—in fact—be low. That should catch few by surprise. It may astound more people that some city schools will do well and that many wealthier districts are not as good as their public relations firms advertise. Few people have noticed yet that America's urban public school systems are coming back. This new ascendance has a lot to do with the attention big city schools are paying to their bottom line: student achievement. Nothing sharpens one's attention better than test results. And while not all urban schools will want to take the Voluntary National Tests, they sure would like the opportunity to decide. Now that's local control.

* Michael Casserly is Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools.



Overview of Plans for the National Test in Reading and Mathematics

Gary Phillips
4/25/97

Prior Decisions

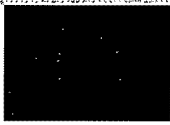
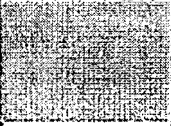
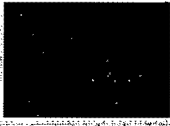
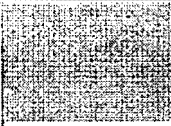
- The tests will provide an *annual indication of overall individual student proficiency in reading in English (grade 4) and math (grade 8)* that can be reported to *parents and teachers*.
- Reading and math will provide national standards from NAEP and math will provide international standards from TIMSS.
- Items will be released to the public every year.
- The first administration of the tests will be in 1999.

Gary Phillips
4/25/97

Basic Design

- Voluntary
- No individually identifiable data from the test administration is given to the Federal Government
- Tests will be consistent with Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (APA, AERA, NCME)
- Inclusion criteria and appropriate accommodations will be required.
- Individual tests in reading (grade 4) and math (grade 8)
- Parallel forms from year to year
- Report in a metric easily understood by parents and teachers
- NAEP framework but with different item and test specifications
- Linked to NAEP and TIMSS - Provides a reading and math score plus a predicted NAEP (reading and math) and TIMSS score (math)
- Up to 90 minutes of testing time
- Approximately 80% multiple choice and 20% constructed-response (including one extended constructed-response). About half of the testing time will be spent on the non-multiple choice items.
- Ongoing research component
- Ongoing evaluation component
- Advisory structure
- Three year assessment cycle (see attached graph)
 1. Item writing, item pilot
 2. Field test, equating new forms, linking to NAEP and TIMSS
 3. Administration, reporting

Testing Cycle for National Test in Reading and Mathematics

	Year	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03
Cycle								
1999								
2000								
2001								
2002								
2003								



1 Item Writing (Jan.-Feb.), Item Pilot (March)



2 Field test (March) and equating old test to new test (March); linking NAEP/NTR (Feb., March) and NAEP/NTM (Feb., March); linking NTM/TIMSS (March)



3 Administration (March)

Gary Phillips 4/25/97

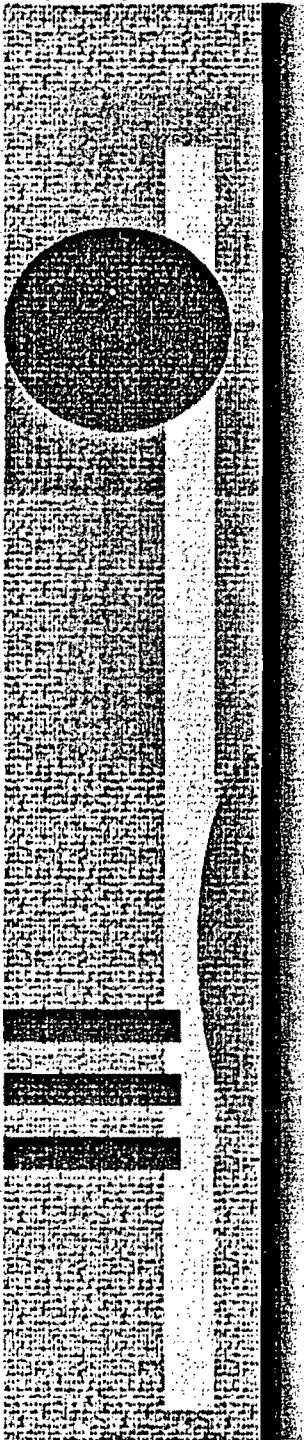
Administration, Scoring, Analysis, and Reporting (conducted by certified entity)

- **First administration in March, 1999.**
- **Administration will be carried out by licensed test administrators (test publishers, states, school districts, etc.).**
- **A random sample of the licensed test sites will be monitored.**
- **During the first year of administration (and possibly in subsequent years) the certified entities will be reimbursed for their costs.**
- **Test administration will be consistent with civil rights laws and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**
- **Test reporting strategies are local options.**

Gary Phillips
4/25/97

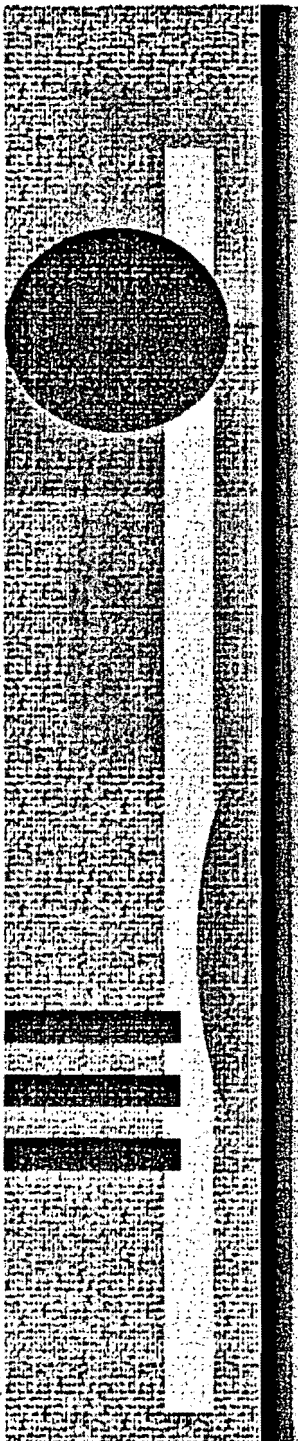
RFP and Timelines for National Tests in Reading and Mathematics

	1997	1998	1999	2000+
RFP written	February			
Draft SOW for comment	March			
Pre-solicitation conference	March/April			
RFP release	April			
Proposals due	June			
Contract award - Reading and Math develop.	August			
- Technical Panel	September			
- Linking	October			
- Certifications/Licensing	November			
- Evaluation	November			
Item and test specifications	May-August			
Item writing	Oct-Nov	Jan-Feb	Jan-Feb	Jan-Feb
Item pilot		March	March	March
Field test and equating study		March	March	March
Administer reading and math test			March	March
Linking study NAEP/reading and math test*		Feb/Mar	Feb/Mar	Feb/Mar
Linking study TIMSS/math test*		Mar/Apr	Mar/Apr	Mar/Apr
* linking study done a year in advance to be used in the year the test is administered				4/25/97



Overview of Plans for the Voluntary National Tests in Reading and Mathematics

Gary Phillips
6/12/97



Overall Design

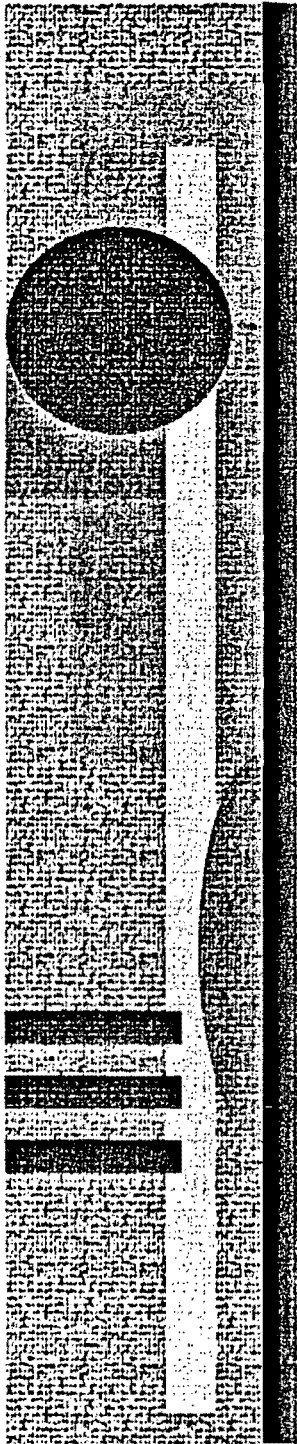
- Voluntary
- The tests will provide *an annual indication of overall individual student proficiency in reading in English (grade 4) and math (grade 8)* that can be reported to parents and teachers.
- Reading and math will provide national standards from NAEP and math will provide international standards from TIMSS.
- Items will be released to the public every year.
- The first administration of the tests will be in 1999.

Gary Phillips
6/12/97

Detailed Design

- No individually identifiable data from the test administrations are given to the Federal Government
- Not Linked to Federal Funding
- Tests will be consistent with Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (APA, AERA, NCME) and the Code of Fair Testing Practice
- Inclusion criteria and appropriate accommodations will be required
- Guidelines for test reporting and use
- Supplementary materials
- Comparable forms from year to year
- Report in a metric easily understood by parents and teachers
- NAEP framework but with different item and test specifications
- Linked to NAEP and TIMSS - Provides a reading and math score plus a predicted NAEP (reading and math) and TIMSS score (math)
- Up to 90 minutes of testing time
- About half of the testing time will be spent on the non-multiple choice items
- Approximately 80% machine-scorable and 20% constructed-response (including one extended constructed-response)
- Special booklet of extended constructed response items
- Sample tests in 1998
- Tests and scoring guide released to the Web every year
- Results will be reported within the same school year
- Ongoing research component
- Ongoing evaluation component
- Advisory structure
- Three year assessment cycle (see attached graph)

Gary Phillips
6/12/97



Advisory Structure

- Overall Advisory Committee
- Technical Advice
- Content and testing experts for each development contract
- Evaluation

Gary Phillips
6/12/97

RFP and Timelines for Voluntary National Tests in Reading and Mathematics

	1997	1998	1999	2000+
Item and test specifications	May-August			
Contract award - Reading and Math develop.	September			
- Linking	October			
- Evaluation	October			
- Licensing	November			
Item writing	Oct-Nov	Jan-Feb	Jan-Feb	Jan-Feb
Item pilot		March	March	March
Field test and equating study		March	March	March
Administer reading and math test			March	March
Linking study NAEP/reading and math test*		Feb/Mar	Feb/Mar	Feb/Mar
Linking study TIMSS/math test*		Mar/Apr	Mar/Apr	Mar/Apr

* linking study done a year in advance to be used in the year the test is administered

6/12/97

Testing Cycle for the Voluntary National Tests in Reading and Mathematics

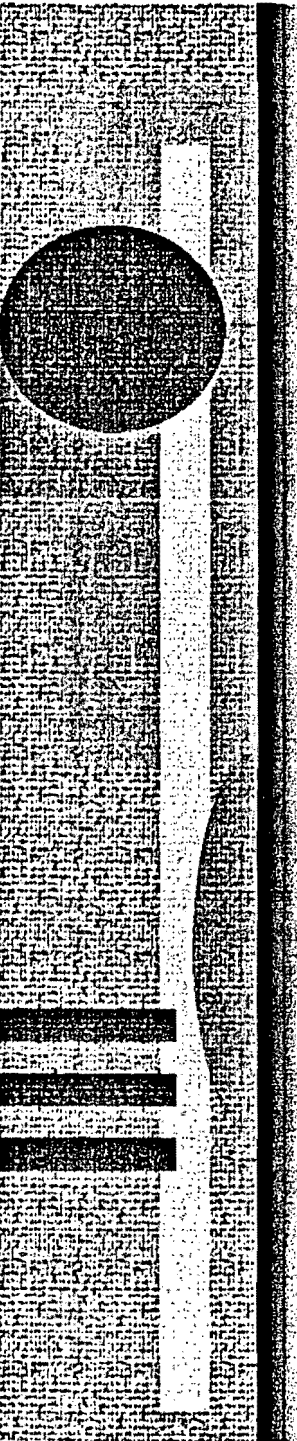
Year	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03
Cycle							
1999		■	■				
2000			■	■			
2001				■	■		
2002					■	■	
2003						■	■

1 Item Writing (Jan.-Feb.), Item Pilot (March)

■ 2 Field test (March) and equating old tests to new tests (March); linking NAEP/NTR (Feb., March) and NAEP/NTM (Feb., March); linking NTM/TIMSS (March)

■ 3 Administration (March)

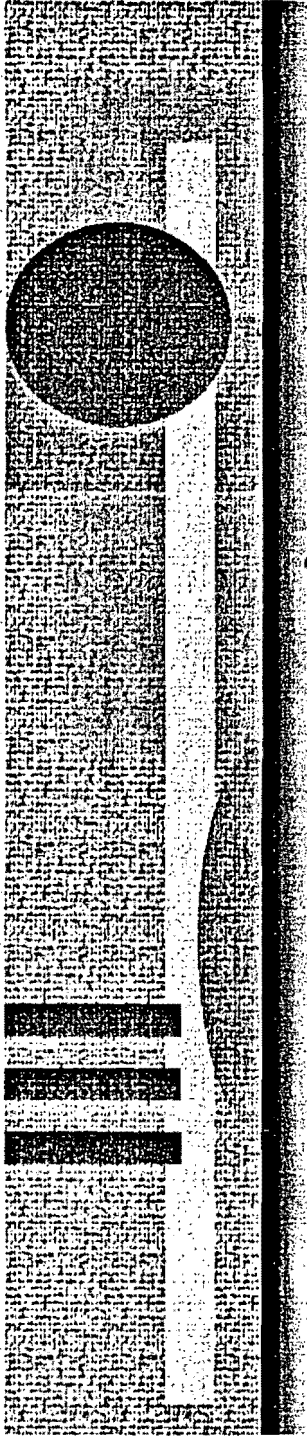
Gary Phillips 6/12/97



Administration, Scoring, Analysis, and Reporting (conducted by licensed organizations)

- First administration in March, 1999.
- Scoring, analysis, and reporting will be carried out by licensed organizations (test publishers, states, school districts, etc.).
- A random sample of test administrations and activities of licensed organizations will be monitored.
- During the first year of administration (and possibly in subsequent years) the licensed organizations will be reimbursed for their costs.
- Test administration will be consistent with civil rights laws and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Test reporting strategies are local options.

Gary Phillips
6/12/97



Department of Education Web Site

- <http://www.ed.gov/nationaltests>

Gary Phillips

6/12/97

CLINTON ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION AGENDA: HELPING STUDENTS REACH HIGH STANDARDS

[T]he struggle for excellence for all must be our great mission. We must demand high standards of every student; our schools and teachers must meet world-class standards. But we must demand that every child be given the opportunity to meet those standards. Every child must have a chance to succeed in this new economy.

President Clinton, Speech to the NAACP National Convention,
July 17, 1997

High Expectations for All Students and Resources to Help Them Learn

A hallmark of President Clinton's efforts to improve American education has been that we should have high expectations for every student. He has urged states and school districts to adopt challenging academic standards in all core subjects, and to adopt high national standards in the basics of reading and mathematics. The President has strengthened existing federal programs and fought for new resources to improve local schools and help students reach these standards. President Clinton's Budget Agreement with Congress includes the largest increase in our investment in education in 30 years and the largest single boost in college aid since the G.I. Bill. But we still have much to do in order to meet the President's goal of insuring that all Americans have the best education in the world.

Strengthening Existing Programs

- **Expanding Head Start to Reach 1 Million Children a Year.** President Clinton has made Head Start an Administration priority. For over 30 years, Head Start has helped low-income families create an environment where their children are ready to learn by taking a comprehensive approach to child development - improving children's learning skills, health, nutrition, and social competency. Under the Clinton Administration, funding for Head Start has increased 55%, enabling Head Start to serve 836,000 children and their families in FY 98 under the Budget Agreement, and continuing expansion toward the President's goal of serving 1 million children in 2002.
- **Raising Standards for Over Ten Million Low Income Students.** The Clinton Administration's Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 overhauled Title I, which provides extra help with basic and advanced skills to disadvantaged students in elementary and secondary schools. As a result of this Act, states now hold more than ten million low income students to the same high standards set for all other students in the state, and hold schools accountable for the results. The new law also provides funds for teacher training, and strengthened requirements for parental involvement. Under the Clinton Administration, investment in Title I has grown by over \$ 1 billion.
- **Making Schools Safe, Disciplined and Drug Free.** The Clinton Administration passed the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act and successfully fought Republican efforts to cut this program, which supports school security, drug prevention and education programs.
- **Expanding Opportunity for Disabled Children.** President Clinton signed legislation reauthorizing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), strengthening and reaffirming our nation's 20-year commitment to disabled children and their parents.

- **Bilingual and Immigrant Education.** The President's budget includes major increases in bilingual and immigrant education. These increases are specifically protected in the balanced budget agreement.

New Initiatives Already Working to Strengthen Local Schools

- **America Reads.** President Clinton launched the America Reads Challenge, a nationwide effort to mobilize a citizen army of a million volunteer tutors to make sure every child can read independently by the end of third grade. The President's Balanced Budget provides for a child literacy initiative consistent with these goals.
- **Goals 2000.** Goals 2000, President Clinton's education reform initiative enacted in 1994, helps States establish standards of excellence for all children, and plan and implement steps to raise achievement. Communities in every state are using Goals 2000 funds to upgrade curriculum, improve teaching, increase parental involvement in schools, and make greater use of computers in the classroom. Since Goals 2000 was enacted in 1994, over \$1.3 billion has been invested in this vital initiative.
- **Strengthening the Skills of Classroom Teachers.** Under the Clinton Administration, funding for the Eisenhower Professional Development has increased by over 25%, strengthening the ability of teachers to improve their teaching skills in math, science and other core subjects. In addition, the President has called for supporting the work of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to help certify 100,000 master teachers -- at least one for every school -- over the next ten years.
- **Expanding school choice and accountability in public education.** The President has challenged every state to let parents choose the right public school for their children. The Clinton Administration is helping teachers, parents and community groups start charter schools -- innovative public schools that stay open only as long as they produce results and meet the highest standards. The President's proposed budget doubles funding to \$100 million help start charter schools so that there will be more than 3,000 charter schools at the dawn of the 21st century.
- **Expanding Access to Educational Technology**
Bringing Computers to the Classroom. The President's 1997 Budget Agreement with Congress doubles the funding for America's Technology Literacy Challenge, catalyzing private-public sector partnerships to put the information age at our children's fingertips. The President is committed to helping communities and the private sector ensure that every student is equipped with the computer literacy skills needed for the 21st century. For 1998, the budget proposes \$425 million, more than doubling the \$200 million that Congress provided in 1997.

Linking Schools and Libraries to the Internet. The Clinton Administration is implementing a plan to create an "E-Rate," a discounted education rate for telecommunications services so schools and libraries will be able to bring technology into the classroom, set up phone lines and access the Internet at a fraction of the cost. The FCC has already approved a plan to make discounts worth \$2.25 billion annually available to our schools and libraries, with low-

income schools eligible for discounts of up to 90%.

- **Expanding School-To-Work.** The Clinton Administration is providing hundreds of thousands of students with school-to-career opportunities, where they experience work-based learning and gain access to pathways from high school to good jobs and post-secondary education. In 1994 and 1995, over 500,000 young people in 1,800 schools throughout the nation, as well as 135,000 employers, participated in school-to-work systems that integrate academic and vocational instruction and provide work-based learning.

New Proposals to Improve Student Learning

- **Attracting and Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers.** President Clinton has proposed a 5-year initiative to attract nearly 35,000 talented people of all backgrounds into teaching at low-income urban and rural schools across the nation, and to dramatically improve the quality of training and preparation given to future teachers. The President's initiative will help recruit and prepare teachers nationwide to help our neediest students succeed in the 21st century.
- **Create 1,000 after-school safe havens in communities across the country.** The President's budget calls for extending learning opportunities for children and their families at schools across the country, keeping schools open late, on weekends, and in the summer so young people will stay off the streets and out of trouble.
- **School Construction.** The Administration will continue its push to help address the serious need for renovating and building schools nationwide.

Widening Access to College and Lifelong Learning

- **The largest Pell Grant increase in 20 years.** President Clinton has already increased Pell Grants from \$2,300 in 1993 to \$2,700 in 1997. These grants provide a total of 3.7 million low-income students the opportunity to attend college. And he plans to do more. The President's Budget Agreement with Congress includes the largest increase in Pell Grants in two decades -- a funding boost of 25%. The maximum award will reach \$3,000, \$700 more than in 1993. In the 1998 budget alone, nearly 350,000 additional students will receive grants.
- **Higher education tax cuts.** The balanced budget agreement calls for roughly \$35 billion in tax cuts to help families pay for college. Congress has enacted the President's \$1,500 HOPE Scholarship tuition tax credit, to make the first two years of college universally available. Students beyond the first two years, or part-time students seeking to improve or acquire job skills, can now receive a 20% lifelong learning tax credit for up to \$5,000 of tuition and required fees through 2002, and \$10,000 thereafter.
- **Expanding Educational Opportunity Through Service.** The Clinton Administration has enabled 70,000 volunteers to earn money for college by serving their communities and their country in the AmeriCorps program since the inception of the program.

**VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS -- SENIOR STAFF PACKET
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September 22, 1997

FACT SHEET ON THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

- **The voluntary national tests will test 4th grade reading and 8th grade math - two basic subjects at two critical times in students' academic development.**
- **The tests will be voluntary.** States and local districts will have the opportunity to participate in the tests, but the tests are not mandatory.
- **No federal funds will be withheld if a state or district does not participate.**
- **The tests will provide parents and teachers individual student scores linked to national and international standards - information they currently do not have.** Parents and teachers will directly receive a score for their child that includes national and international comparisons. Students' results will be linked to the standards set by the National Assessment of Educational Progress and results from the 8th grade math test will be linked to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study which involved students from 41 countries.
- **The tests will be based on the widely respected National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).** Also known as the "nation's report card," NAEP is used in 43 states. The tests will be different from NAEP by providing individual student information; NAEP is designed to assess how well the nation and states perform based on a small sample of students. No parents know how their own children do on the NAEP test.
- **Private schools may participate in the tests and home schoolers will have access to the tests each year.** State and local school districts' usual guidelines toward assessing home schooled students apply. Should parents want to use the tests, they will be available each year on the Internet after administration.
- **The tests will be given for the first time in the spring of 1999.**
- **The public, business leaders, and members of the education community support voluntary national tests.** A recent Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll found that 79% of Americans approved of the President's national testing plan. Also, a Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll indicated that 77% supported "national standards for measuring the academic performance of schools" and 67% favored "using standardized national tests to measure the academic achievement of students." Endorsements from business leaders and education organizations also indicate that these tests will provide something Americans value -- high standards for all students.

For more information, visit our website at <http://www.ed.gov/nationaltests/>

- **States and Cities that have volunteered to participate.** The following states have signed on to participate: Alaska, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, and West Virginia. The following large urban school districts have also signed on: Atlanta, GA; Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale), FL; Chicago, IL; Cincinnati, OH; Detroit, MI; El Paso, TX; Fresno, CA; Houston, TX; Long Beach, CA; Los Angeles, CA; New York City, NY; Omaha, NE; Philadelphia, PA; San Antonio, TX; and Seattle, WA. The Department of Defense schools will also participate. Together, these states and districts make up approximately 20 percent of the students at the 4th and 8th grade levels.



VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS IN READING AND MATHEMATICS A STRATEGY TO MASTER THE BASICS AND REACH HIGH STANDARDS

STRONG SCHOOLS WITH CLEAR STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND DISCIPLINE ARE ESSENTIAL TO OUR CHILDREN AND SOCIETY. These standards are needed to help instill the skills and encouragement for hard work that our children need to succeed in school and in life. Toward that end we must establish meaningful standards for what students should be expected to learn and achieve in the basic subjects of reading and mathematics.

A CHALLENGE TO PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOOLS TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERY STUDENT MASTERS THE BASICS IN READING AND MATHEMATICS. Reading well by grade 4 and mastering mathematics -- including the foundations of algebra and geometry -- by grade 8 are the gateways for further learning and achievement. Research shows that students who fail to learn to read English well by the end of grade 3 are at greater risk of dropping out and facing diminished success in school and life. Students who fail to master the basics of mathematics by the end of grade 8 do not have the foundation to take tough mathematics and science courses in high school which in turn prepare them for college and better jobs.

While our students have been making progress in reading and mathematics, we are not yet where we need to be as a nation. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 40 percent of our 4th grade students do not reach the "basic" achievement level. In the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the U.S. 4th graders score above average in math and science. However, our 8th graders score below the international average in mathematics, and only 5 percent of U.S. eighth grade students score in the top 10 percent internationally.

RIGOROUS VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS IN 4TH GRADE READING AND 8TH GRADE MATHEMATICS. Parents need to know that students have mastered the basics no matter where they live or move in this country. And they have the right to know how well their children are doing compared with students in other schools, states, and countries. To help give parents this information, the U.S. Department of Education is prepared to offer every state and school district the opportunity to use voluntary national tests of 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics, beginning in 1999. These rigorous tests will provide parents, for the first time, scores for individual students, measured against widely accepted national and international standards of excellence. They will give states, local communities, teachers and parents the kind of accurate information they need to help students master basic and advanced skills and strengthen academic performance.

TESTS BASED ON WIDELY RECOGNIZED NATIONAL STANDARDS. The tests will be modeled on the NAEP in 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics. The NAEP tests are based on widely accepted standards developed by parents, teachers, reading and mathematics specialists, curriculum specialists, and researchers. The NAEP standards reflect a national consensus of what students should know and be able to do when they reach these crucial stages of learning. The voluntary national tests will be linked to NAEP and, in the case of mathematics, linked to TIMSS, so that scores can be compared to national and international standards. In a compromise with the Administration, the US Senate has passed an amendment to give the independent bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) authority to make policy decisions for the voluntary national tests as it currently does for NAEP.

NATIONAL EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE ODDS FOR STUDENTS. Schools and communities are already working hard at educational improvement; they are committed to parent involvement, getting technology into the classroom, and ensuring a trained and dedicated teacher in every classroom. The federal government provides funding to states and communities to support these efforts. But these efforts cannot be fully effective unless parents, schools and communities are aiming at clear, high standards of achievement. That is why these national tests are already spurring a renewed nation-wide effort to support school improvement and strengthen student achievement in these core subjects. Reading and literacy groups are coming together to improve reading. The mathematics and science community, engineers and business leaders are working to improve mathematics teaching and learning. To assist parents, teachers, principals and communities in using the tests effectively, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Science Foundation and others are developing a tool chest that includes information for parents and teachers on how to prepare to meet these high standards, how to use test results to improve education, and what high standards in reading and mathematics look like. As part of this effort, every year the entire test (along with answers, scoring guides, and other materials) will be released to the public and available on the Internet so that students, parents, and teachers can know what is expected for students to reach standards of excellence.

TOOLS FOR PARENTS; GUIDES FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES. The current NAEP is designed to assess how well a sample of students across the entire nation and individual states perform in reading and mathematics. Not all students participate in NAEP, and no parents know how their own children do on this test. In contrast, the voluntary national tests will provide students, parents, and teachers with meaningful scores to compare individual student performance to widely accepted national and international standards and to identify students and schools that need extra help. These standard measures of excellence will help parents hold schools accountable for improved performance, help teachers and principals improve curriculum and instruction, and give students a guide for charting their own progress.

DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE TESTS. The voluntary national test development contract was awarded to a group led by the American Institutes for Research. Subcontracting companies include some of the most respected test publishers and research organizations in the country. The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences will be awarded the voluntary national test evaluation contract to monitor and evaluate the development process and testing administration. Guidance for test development has come from the most successful mathematics and reading teachers, parents, and local and state education, civic and business leaders.

Individual test scores will *not* be collected by the federal government; state and local school districts will decide how to use the data. States and school districts will have the option to administer the tests as part of their local testing programs. The voluntary national tests will first be administered in the spring of 1999.

For more information, visit our web site at <http://www.ed.gov/nationaltests/>

TALKING POINTS FOR SENIOR STAFF ON THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

The voluntary national tests for 4th grade reading in English and 8th grade math provide an opportunity for states and local school districts to gain valuable information about their students' academic achievement and will be a motivational tool to stimulate nationwide interest in ensuring all children master the basics of reading and mathematics.

THE TESTS ARE VOLUNTARY

- States and local school districts, as well as private schools and the parents of children schooled at home, have the opportunity to offer the tests to their students beginning in the spring of 1999, but it is not mandatory.
- No state or school will be required to give these tests as a condition of receiving federal funding, or for any other reason imposed by the federal government.

THE TESTS ARE BASED ON WIDELY RECOGNIZED, RIGOROUS STANDARDS

- The tests will be based on the widely respected National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP - also known as the Nation's Report Card) which is used in 43 states.
- NAEP's content frameworks and performance standards are widely accepted and were developed with strong input from teachers, curriculum experts, and state education officials.

PURPOSES FOR THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

- These tests can improve the odds of success for all students by arming parents and educators with the knowledge of their students' individual achievement in comparison to widely respected national and international standards.
- By highlighting the importance of reading independently by the 4th grade and challenging mathematics by 8th grade, the voluntary national tests will focus national attention on the need to improve basic and advanced skills in reading and mathematics. This attention will raise awareness that learning to read enables students' to read to learn in all subjects and encourage more students to take math courses required for college admission and success in the workplace.
- By giving parents and teachers individual student scores measured against high national and international standards, the voluntary national tests will help standards come to life. The tests' concrete examples of the kind of work students in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math should be able to do will help school reform permeate to the classroom and home.
- Local efforts to improve teaching and learning in reading and mathematics to high standards are energized through strong indicators like the voluntary national tests. These tests contribute to raising the standard of instruction for all students and stimulate greater use of high-quality materials to help teachers and parents prepare students well.
- The national tests will provide students, parents, and teachers with accurate and reliable information about student performance measured against national standards. Congress already receives this information at the national and state levels, but parents and teachers should have access to students' levels of achievement on national standards. These tests will give families and schools information on exactly what questions their students answered correctly, and what areas need improvement for each student.

THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS ARE NOT A NATIONAL CURRICULUM

- The voluntary national tests will help determine a child's academic achievement, but will not guide a national curriculum.
- The tests will provide information to parents and teachers about individual students' levels of achievement.
- Local education authorities will determine how to use the results in shaping their own curricula.

WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

- The American public strongly supports national standards and tests in the basic skills. They have the common sense to know that we need high national standards. A recent Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll found that 79% of Americans approved of the President's national testing plan. Also, a Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll indicated that 77% supported "national standards for measuring the academic performance of schools" and 67% favored "using standardized national tests to measure the academic achievement of students."
- This initiative has bipartisan support from states, business leaders, and education organizations (including the National Chamber of Commerce, Business Roundtable, National Alliance of Business, 240 high-tech CEO's, Council of Chief State School Officers, National School Boards Association, Council of Great City Schools, National Association of Elementary School Principals, Council for Exceptional Children, National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education).

A DECISION TO PREVENT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FROM FUNDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TESTS WOULD PREVENT PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND TEACHERS FROM GETTING VALUABLE INFORMATION

- The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 2264 to deny federal funding to the voluntary national tests. President Clinton has stated that he will veto any bill denying such funding.
- Parents and teachers need this information to appropriately judge the progress of their students and the effectiveness of their school. Students all over the country will benefit from clearly defined and widely accepted national and international standards.
- After each administration, the complete reading and math tests will be placed on the world wide web to serve as instructional tools for teachers and clearly highlight for parents what skills students should know and be able to do in these basic subject areas.
- States and local school districts enrolling 20% of America's 4th and 8th grade students have already indicated their intention to participate in the voluntary national tests; denying funding would take away their opportunity to utilize this resource to assess individual students, as well as state and local progress in achieving high standards.

TEST DEVELOPMENT BY INDEPENDENT BIPARTISAN GROUPS

- In a compromise with the Administration, the US Senate has passed an amendment to give the independent bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) authority to make policy decisions for the voluntary national tests as it currently does for NAEP.
- The voluntary national test development contract was awarded to a group led by the American Institutes for Research. Subcontracting companies include some of the most respected test publishers and research organizations in the country. The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences will be awarded the voluntary national test evaluation contract to monitor and evaluate the development process and testing administration.

THE 8TH GRADE TEST COVERS BASIC MATH AS WELL AS THE FOUNDATIONS OF GEOMETRY AND ALGEBRA, NOT THE SO-CALLED "WHOLE MATH"

- The voluntary national math test will be designed to determine if students are mastering the basic skills in math.
- In addition, it will also include more challenging material based on tough demanding standards including the foundations of geometry and algebra.
- International research shows that most other industrialized nations introduce their students to algebra and geometry in grades much earlier than the United States.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES THAT HAVE INDICATED THEIR DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE

- Alaska, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, and West Virginia
- The large urban school districts of Atlanta, GA; Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale), FL; Chicago, IL; Cincinnati, OH; Detroit, MI; El Paso, TX; Fresno, CA; Houston, TX; Long Beach, CA; Los Angeles, CA; New York City, NY; Omaha, NE; Philadelphia, PA; San Antonio, TX; and Seattle, WA
- The Department of Defense schools
- Together, these make up approximately 20 percent of all 4th and 8th grade students.

SUPPORT FOR THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

✓ **The American Public Supports High National Standards**

Parents deserve to know how their children are performing based on rigorous national standards no matter where they live in this country.

A recent Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll found that 79% of Americans approved of the President's voluntary national testing plan. A Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll also indicated that 67% favor using standardized national tests to measure the achievement of students and 77% favor national standards for measuring the academic performance of our schools.

✓ **Educators Support Continued Development of Voluntary National Tests**

"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. 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."

Letter signed by the following:

American Federation of Teachers

Council for Chief State School Officers

National Education Association

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of State Directors of Special Education

Council for Exceptional Children

Council of the Great City Schools

National School Boards Association

"For those states opting to participate in the program, it offers an unprecedented opportunity for individual students to compare their abilities with other students from across the nation...We believe the states should be afforded the opportunity to decide for themselves whether to take part in these national assessments."

Brenda Lilienthal Welburn, Executive Director of the National Association of State Boards of Education

"A voluntary national test would give teachers and parents the ability to measure their students and children against high national standards. Currently, 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."

Gerald D. Morris

Director of Legislation, American Federation of Teachers

✓ **Business Community Support for the Voluntary National Tests**

"The proposed standards and tests will help provide parents, students, educators and policy makers with the information they need to ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed in the 21st century world and workplace."

Edwin Lupberger, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee

"There is certainly a place for legitimate discussion over details...But these and other arguments should not weaken or overshadow our commitment to raising academic standards and assessing student performance. Without a national assessment, raising academic standards will be, at best, an amorphous goal."

Jim Orr, CEO, UNUM Corporation, Chairman of the National Alliance of Business

"The Alliance believes these voluntary tests could be used by state and local school districts to measure the progress of American students in these core subjects. The Alliance recently surveyed its members on this issue and an overwhelming number supported the initiative to develop the voluntary national tests."

National Alliance of Business

"As the CEO of a company that does business in every state in the union and 70 countries worldwide, voluntary national tests that give individual student scores make sense. Here's why. When prospective employees apply for a job, employers hold them to the same standard, no matter where they went to school. In our global economy where employers are competing on a worldwide basis, the quantitative and communications skills needed for a particular job are not unique to Delaware or Texas or California."

**John A. Krol, Dupont President and CEO and
Chairman of the Business Roundtable Education Task Force**

"President Clinton's national testing initiative offers a new opportunity to use widely accepted national benchmarks in reading and math against which states, school districts and parents can judge student performance."

**Jim Barksdale, CEO and President, Netscape Communications, and
L. John Doerr, Partner in the firm of Kleiner, Perkins, Caulfield and Byers
on behalf of 240 technology industry leaders**

✓ Editorial Support for the Voluntary National Tests

"Yes on Tests...The results of the new tests would be available for individual students, classes, schools and school districts, rather than expressed in broad national or regional terms. The idea is that, yes, they might then become instruments for change, but not dictated from above. Rather, parents and others would use them as a standard for comparison, and for demanding improvement on the ground, at the local level...The danger is not that the federal government is going to take over the nation's schools. The danger rather is that poor performance will continue to be tolerated and obscured."

The Washington Post

"Put Schools to the Test...American children won't notice, but the public schools they return to this fall lack something important: a reliable, uniform means of assessing how well they're doing their job. Erasing that lack is what President Clinton has in mind when he call for national tests...For the sake of America's students, the political and philosophical hurdles have to be cleared. Reliable national tests won't in themselves rebuild public education, but they're an important foundation stone."

The Christian Science Monitor

**CURRENT PARTICIPANTS IN THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS IN
4TH GRADE READING AND 8TH GRADE MATHEMATICS**

STATES

Alaska
Kentucky
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
North Carolina
West Virginia

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Atlanta, GA
Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale), FL
Chicago, IL
Cincinnati, OH
Detroit, MI
El Paso, TX
Fresno, CA
Houston, TX
Long Beach, CA
Los Angeles, CA
New York City, NY
Omaha, NE
Philadelphia, PA
San Antonio, TX
Seattle, WA

The Department of Defense schools will also participate.

Together, these states and school districts represent 20% of all 4th and 8th graders.

For more information, visit our web site at <http://www.ed.gov/nationaltests/>

August 29, 1997



**FOR RELEASE
September 16, 1997**

**Contact: Erica Lepping, 401-2571
Melinda Malico, 401-1008**

**STATEMENT BY U. S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION RICHARD W. RILEY
On the U. S. House of Representatives' action on voluntary national tests**

I regret that the U. S. House of Representatives has voted to halt funding for voluntary national tests. It was a vote against empowering parents and teachers with the information they need to prepare students for success in the 21st century.

Voluntary national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade math would help American students to master the basics once and for all. They would measure student performance against national and even international standards of excellence, giving teachers an important new tool for raising achievement and giving parents a reliable way to know how well their children are doing in school.

The House action would undermine accountability and deny states and school districts the right to decide for themselves about these tests. Already, states and districts that serve 20 percent of the nation's children have chosen to offer the tests. The House of Representatives would forbid them from doing so.

The House's decision today stands in sharp contrast to the overwhelming 87-13 vote in the U. S. Senate last week to allow the tests to proceed. The Senate approved a plan to have an independent, bipartisan board—the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB)—develop and oversee the tests. I have supported that bipartisan plan. But the House of Representatives did not vote today on NAGB. I urge conferees to join together behind this bipartisan approach and give America's children the chance to reach for high standards of learning.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 16, 1997

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I am disappointed that the House of Representatives voted tonight to block my proposal for voluntary national tests in the basic skills. These tests will help raise expectations for our students, provide clear standards of achievement in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, and give parents the tools they need to measure the progress their children are making. They will help our students learn and our schools continue to improve.

Yet the House of Representatives tonight cast a vote for the status quo and against better schools. The same old forces that have resisted education reform over the past decade came together to defeat high national standards in the basics. They have voted against a plan to improve our schools by raising standards, empowering parents and increasing accountability.

The House vote is unacceptable, and it will not stand. Last week, by a bipartisan vote of 87-13, the Senate endorsed my plan for voluntary national tests to help students master the basics, and embraced my proposal to place them under the control of the independent, bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board. My Administration will work hard to make sure that the final legislation reflects the bipartisan support of the Senate and the broad support of the American people.

-30-30-30-

Clinton Threatens Veto in Fight to Preserve Education Proposals

By JAMES BENNET

SAN CARLOS, Calif., Sept. 20 — Setting himself on a collision course with the Republican Congress, President Clinton vowed today to veto a mammoth spending bill if it contains amendments blocking his national school standards and testing plan or channeling money away from his other cherished Federal education programs.

The House has passed an amendment to stop the school testing program, while the Senate has voted to take money away from many Federal education programs, like bilin-

gual education, and give it instead to school boards in block grants.

"If either one of these provisions makes it into the final bill, I will have to veto it," Mr. Clinton warned this morning at a school appearance here. Mr. Clinton also threatened to veto the bill during his weekly radio address this morning.

The House and Senate must now negotiate with each other over whether either or both of the amendments should survive as part of the \$279 billion spending bill for the departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services.

A veto of the spending bill, one of 13 that pay to run the Government, would also block financing for a number of the President's favorite initiatives, including scholarships to help pay for the first two years of college. Further, it would resurrect the specter of gridlock in Washington.

But, pointing to polls that show the President's approval at an all-time high and national education standards as an overwhelmingly popular issue, White House aides expressed confidence that Mr. Clinton would win such a fight. Indeed, they seem to be spilling for one.

The day after he dropped his daughter, Chelsea, at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., Mr. Clinton turned his attention today both to crusading for his education goals and to raising money for the Democrats. He planned to raise almost \$1 million at three San Francisco fund-raisers.

This morning, Mr. Clinton appeared visited a so-called charter school here to highlight \$40 million in new Federal grants for such experimental institutions, which are freed from many public school regulations in exchange for creating a charter, or contract, that lays out how the

21, 1997

school will operate. Mr. Clinton warned that the Senate change to the finance bill "would abolish very specific and highly successful education programs, like the charter schools."

After amicable talks on the outlines of a balanced-budget deal, Mr. Clinton's education standards plan is emerging as the first devil in the details of this year's budget. Mr. Clinton is asking for a relative pittance, \$16 million, to develop tests that would be measured against new, voluntary reading and math standards. But a House coalition of conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats has staked out its opposition.

On Friday, a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll found that 62 percent of Americans, the highest proportion

in that survey to date, approved of the job Mr. Clinton was doing. It also found that 79 percent approved of his national testing plan.

With his popularity high, Mr. Clinton has kept raising money for the Democrats despite the investigations into his finance practices. Today in San Francisco, he planned to raise \$300,000 at a lunch with 70 guests, \$600,000 at a dinner with 30 guests and \$50,000 at a reception with 400 less wealthy donors.

Aides said the dinner was organized in part by John Doerr, a venture capitalist and one of a group of Silicon Valley millionaires whose policy input and political support Vice President Al Gore has been aggressively soliciting in recent months.

CURRENT PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES FOR THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

You will be notified regularly of updates and changes in documents available.

NATIONAL TEST DOC	FILE NAME	AUDIENCE	LAST UPDATED
Fact sheet	ntfact.doc		9/22/97
Two pager -- hill	nt2pgh.doc		9/22/97
Q & A	ntqa.doc		in development
Talking Points -- senior staff	nttkptss.doc		9/22/97
Purpose	ntpurp.doc		9/2/97
Support w/press quotes	ntsuppr.doc		9/22/97
Current Participants	ntcurpart.doc		8/29/97
Additional documents available			
Support w/Senators quotes	ntsuph.doc		9/5/97
Resources to states	ntresrst.doc		9/15/97
Resources to cities	ntresrc.doc		7/25/97
NAGB definition	ntnagb.doc		9/8/97
NAGB members (S. 1061)	nagbmem.doc		9/12/97
CEO's Support List	ntceo.doc		4/2/97
Kids' Quotes CNN	ntkidsq.doc		9/8/97
Test Development & Admin.	nttdao.doc		7/23/97

September 22, 1997

Why Voluntary National Tests in Reading and Mathematics

1. Why voluntary national tests?

Today's students will be entering a highly competitive workforce that will demand greater knowledge and skills. Key to gaining the needed knowledge and skills is to have a sound foundation in reading and mathematics. The voluntary national tests will focus sustained national attention on the need to improve basic and advanced skills in reading and mathematics.

The tests will be catalyst for mobilizing the efforts of parents, teachers, businesses, and communities to help all students achieve to higher academic standards. The tests will provide measures of a student's achievement against rigorous national and international standards. After the test is given, all of the items on the test will be made publicly available on the Internet so that parents, teachers, students, and the public can see what is being asked of students and where we need to improve. We hope that these items will be published widely and discussed around the kitchen tables across the country. All students will have their answers returned so parents, teachers and students can see and review their performance.

2. Why 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics?

These are two critical points in a child's learning. By 4th grade, students need to have mastered basic reading skills in order to begin to learn other subjects. Reading is an essential skill in learning geography, history, science and mathematics. Students who are not able to read independently by the end of third grade have difficulty learning other subjects and are very likely to have academic difficulties. By 8th grade, students need to have mastered challenging mathematics to be prepared to take advanced mathematics courses necessary to be admitted to college and to be successful in the workplace.

3. How will the voluntary national tests improve the academic performance of students?

We test students in order to learn how they are doing and what we need to do to improve their performance. The national tests are part of a national campaign to energize local efforts for improving teaching and learning in reading and mathematics. This effort includes support from businesses, volunteer organizations, parent groups, community organizations, and educators. The test results can motivate students, teachers, and parents to examine what they can do better to help a child be able to read independently by 3rd grade or learn challenging mathematics in 8th grade. The voluntary national tests can encourage teachers, parents, and principals to raise the standard of instruction for all students.

4. What is the relationship of the voluntary national tests to NAEP?

NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) monitors the academic performance of students in the nation and has existed for over twenty-five years. The NAEP test is given to a national sample of students in a range of academic subjects (mathematics, reading, science, geography, history). The voluntary national tests will be individual student tests with results given to the student and the student's parents and teacher. The tests are designed from the frameworks of the NAEP assessments in 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics. These frameworks have been developed through a broad national consensus process. The voluntary national tests will provide a measure of student performance against national standards in reading and mathematics as well as against international standards in mathematics.

5. Is there public interest in the voluntary national tests?

A recent Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll found that an overwhelming 79% of Americans approved of national testing. Also, a Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll indicated that 77% supported "national standards for measuring the academic performance of schools" and 67% favored "using standardized national tests to measure the academic achievement of students." The voluntary national tests have been endorsed by many leading education groups including teachers, principals, state school officials and school boards. States and school districts with over 20 percent of the fourth and eighth graders in the nation have already committed to using the voluntary national tests.

6. Will funding be tied to state use of the national tests?

No state will be required to use these tests as a condition of receiving federal funding.

7. Will these tests lead to inappropriate and unfair comparisons?

The national tests will provide results of student performance in reading and mathematics against rigorous national standards. These are the kinds of test results that allow for meaningful comparisons. The results of the national tests will go to parents, teachers and students to help them understand how students are performing against rigorous national standards. We must stop perpetuating the cycle of low expectations that keeps so many young people from achieving their full potential. We should not be willing to tolerate low standards for any group of students. If we can break free from the tyranny of low expectations, we can help all students reach higher standards of performance. We should not presume that any student, no matter where he or she lives or goes to school, will do well or poorly on these tests. The tests can give all students a chance to measure themselves against demanding standards and then focus on the areas that need improvement.

8. Will the voluntary national tests lead to a national curriculum?

The President and Secretary of Education are opposed to a national curriculum. As a former Governor, the President believes that education is a state responsibility and a local function.

Providing a voluntary reading test in 4th grade and a voluntary mathematics test in 8th grade will not create a national curriculum. Parents, teachers, schools and states will decide what should be the curriculum in reading and mathematics and how reading and mathematics should be taught. The voluntary national tests will equip local districts with information and strengthen local education by focusing attention on the need to improve the performance of students in these two basic skills — reading and mathematics.

9. What is being done to ensure that the test is free of ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, cultural or regional bias?

Item development will follow a rigorous process of item writing, internal review, fairness panel review, and pilot testing to produce high quality items which are free of ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, cultural, or regional bias.

The following steps will be taken to avoid items that would disadvantage a group because of differences in culture or familiarity: 1) item writers will follow specific guidelines for avoiding various types of item bias, after which the items will undergo internal review by the test publishers; 2) an external fairness committee will review items. Members of this committee will represent diverse geographic, ethnic, and gender groups. Edits and revisions of items will be made following the fairness panel review; and 3) items will be pilot tested, or tried out, with a diverse sample of students. After pilot testing, statistical analyses will be performed to further determine whether items are biased.

10. What will the voluntary national tests provide that existing tests don't already provide?

The voluntary national tests will provide information about how individual students are doing in comparison to national standards for what all students should know and be able to do in the basic skill areas of fourth grade reading and eighth grade mathematics. Many existing tests provide information about how a student does compared to other students in the United States, but this doesn't tell parents whether their children know enough compared to standards that define what students should know. What's more, because the "norms" for these tests are not recalculated often enough, we have the so-called "Lake Wobegon effect" where almost all students come to be "above average." Thus, parents don't have an accurate picture of how their children are doing, even compared to other students.

Existing state tests often report students' scores against state standards, but parents don't know how those standards compare with the standards in other states. As a result, parents still wonder how well their children are really doing.

The voluntary national test in eighth grade mathematics will also provide information about how students score relative to students in other countries. No other test can tell parents, teachers, and students how an individual student compares with other students across the country and around the world.

11. Why is a bilingual version of the math test being offered, but the reading test is only being given in English?

The math test will be offered as a bilingual test (English on one page and Spanish on the other) because the purpose of the test is to assess students' math skills, not their English skills. There are many children at the 8th grade level who have limited English proficiency but who can learn advanced math and should be asked to show what math they know. We are providing a bilingual math test in Spanish and English because Spanish is the most common language other than English among students. The reading test will only be given in English because developing the

ability to read in English is a basic skill that every child has to have to succeed in American schools and society. A bilingual test would not measure a student's English competency.

12. Will non-public schools and home schoolers be able to participate?

Yes. Independent and private schools will be able to participate in the same way states and districts will. Non-public schools will have to show that they comply with non-discrimination statutes in enrollment and ensure that all 4th grade students and/or 8th grade students participate.

After the tests are administered each year, they will be available on the Internet, along with scoring guides and other materials as a tool for parents and teachers. Home schoolers may choose to offer the tests to their children and will be able to see how they perform compared to national and international standards. In states and districts which offer the tests, education agencies will continue to have whatever authority they have on their state requirements for standardized tests. Parents should contact their local district or state department of education to find out if the district or state is participating in the tests.

13. 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?

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, these 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 4th grade level and in mathematics at the 8th 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.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

06-Oct-1997 05:23pm

TO: (See Below)

FROM: Sara Napierala

SUBJECT: g and a w/ NAGB and edits

Attached is the updated version of the nat tests q/a I sent earlier. It has a NAGB question (14) and a few minor edits. Any other edits are welcome tomorrow too. Below is the added question (for White House people).

Sara

14. What role will the National Assessment Governing Board play in developing the voluntary national tests?

The Administration and the Senate have worked together to draft legislation to give the bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) the same responsibilities that they have currently with NAEP. This legislation is currently being negotiated in Conference Committee between the House and the Senate. Under this plan, NAGB will be responsible for making policy decisions, overseeing test development and for developing the guidelines for test administration and reporting results. This will include developing guidelines for including students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency in the tests and for testing accommodations to increase the participation of these students in the tests. In addition, NAGB will be responsible for making sure that there is no bias in the tests, and they will have the final authority for the items included in the tests.

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TEST DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION, AND OUTREACH

DEVELOPMENT

The Voluntary National Tests will be based on the framework of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly referred to as the nation's report card. The NAEP reading and math tests are based on widely accepted content standards developed by local teachers, reading and math specialists, parents and researchers that reflect a national consensus on what students should know and be able to do when they reach the 4th grade in reading and 8th grade in mathematics. Although the new tests will be based on NAEP, NAEP is an assessment of a random sampling of students which gives an indication of how states and the nation are achieving, whereas the voluntary tests will produce individual student scores -- critical information parents and teachers do not currently have through the NAEP program. The voluntary national tests will be linked to NAEP and, in the case of mathematics, linked to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, providing national and international comparisons. The Department supports the Senate bill that would authorize the bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board to set policy for the tests as they do for NAEP.

The U.S. Department of Education contracted with the Council of Chief State School Officers and MPR Inc., an educational consulting firm, to establish four committees to develop blueprints for the tests based on NAEP. The committees are the National Test Panel, Technical Advisory Group, Reading Committee, and Math Committee. The committee members are expert teachers, administrators, parents, policy makers, and business and community leaders. All of their meetings were open to the public, their reports and the meeting transcripts are available on the Internet.

The U.S. Department of Education has contracted with the American Institutes of Research to lead a group of education research firms and test publishers to develop the tests based on the guidelines created by the committees. The contractor has convened a set of advisory panels for reading and mathematics for test development. After 1999, new tests will be available each year, keeping the content of the tests current. Sample tests will be available in 1998 for students, parents, and teachers to help prepare for the first administration in 1999.

ADMINISTRATION

Test companies will be awarded contracts by the U.S. Department of Education to offer the tests to states, districts, and private schools. These companies will be responsible for printing the tests, distributing them to schools, training the test administrators, scoring the tests and reporting the results to states and districts. The companies may wish to offer the tests as part of their own testing packages.

After the tests are administered, the tests, answers, scoring guides and other supporting material will be released to parents, teachers, the education community, and the general public on the Internet.

The costs to administer, score, and report the results of the tests will be comparable to those for other tests that states and local districts use. Based on other comparable tests, we estimate this cost to be \$10 - \$12 per student. The President's 1999 budget will include funding to reimburse the testing companies that will work with states and school districts to administer the tests in 1999 and funding will possibly be included in subsequent years.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

A series of public hearings and meetings have been held to discuss strategies for improving reading and mathematics education for all children and how the tests will provide important new information to assist students, parents, and teachers meet this challenge.

The reading and math committees held public hearings on issues particular to each of the tests where the general public had the opportunity to testify or submit written testimony. Parents, teachers, administrators, as well as community and business leaders attended these hearings.

In addition to public meetings, other publications such as supplemental materials and sample tests will provide schools, teachers, parents and students the opportunity to participate in this challenge to help raise standards for all students.

For more information, please visit our web site at <http://www.ed.gov/nationaltests>.

October 16, 1997

Talking Points on Agreement on National Tests
November 7, 1997

- This is a win-win agreement -- a genuine bipartisan victory for high standards.
- The agreement allows continued, timely development of new national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, as called for by the President in his State of the Union Address. As provided for by the Senate, control of test policies and development will be transferred to the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB).
- At the same time, the National Academy of Sciences, in consultation with NGA, NCSL, and NAGB, will study how tests already developed by commercial publishers and states may be used to measure individual student performance against existing, challenging national content and performance standards, and against each other. In addition, the Academy will study the technical quality and other aspects of test item development, as well as issues of test bias and test use.
- The Academy will be asked to make an interim report by June 15, 1998 with a final report submitted by September 1. Further development of the national tests is not dependent on the findings of the NAS study. NAGB can go forward with test development activities leading up to pilot testing right now. Pilot testing is postponed until after September 30, 1998, but does not depend on the completion or findings of the National Academy study. This timeline represents a delay of a few months; but it's one we can live with.
- The agreement allows for test development in FY 98, and pilot testing after September 30. It drops the general prohibition on national tests that the Administration threatened to veto, and does not include any requirement for congressional authorization to proceed with national tests.
- As a result of this agreement, we are now on the road to high national standards, and to measuring whether these standards are being met. We will finally have high expectations for all our students and real accountability for all our schools.

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS AGREEMENT ALLOWS TEST DEVELOPMENT TO MOVE FORWARD

As a result of the national testing provisions in the FY 1998 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Bill enacted November 7, 1997, work to develop voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math will move forward under the direction of the bipartisan, independent National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB).

Tests to Be Developed by the National Assessment Governing Board). The legislation places the bipartisan, independent National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) in complete control of further work in developing the voluntary national tests. NAGB will review and modify, if necessary, the contract to develop the tests. It will also review, modify if necessary, and approve the test specifications.

Under NAGB's Control, Work Will Proceed in Key Areas of Test Development. The test development contractor will:

- Research the needs of students, parents and teachers. The test development contractor will conduct research on how to best present test questions and interview students, parents and teachers to gain understanding of and report test results for clarity and usefulness.
- Write the test items. The test development contractor is responsible for writing test items according to specifications for the voluntary national tests approved by the National Assessment Governing Board.
- Convene advisory committees. Advisory panels in reading and math will review test items and provide feedback on a range of issues such as test reporting, test use and accommodations. A technical advisory group will also be convened.
- Plan the pilot tests. The purposes of the pilot tests are to try-out test items and collect item statistics. The first pilot tests are scheduled to occur in the fall of 1998. Prior to the pilot's administration, the contractor is responsible for identifying the sample of schools and students needed, recruiting schools to participate, and training staff to administer the pilot.
- Prepare for the field tests. The purposes of the field tests are to collect data for equating the test forms and linking the voluntary national tests to the national standards of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and benchmarks from Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS). The first field tests will be conducted in the Spring of 1999. In preparation for the field test, the contractor is responsible for organizing a nationally representative sample of students, recruiting schools, and planning studies for linking the voluntary national tests to NAEP and TIMSS.

- Develop guidelines for accommodations, appropriate test use, and test reporting. Each of these guidelines will be created through a public input process and in accordance with nationally accepted standards.
- Create informational materials. Brochures and a web site will be created by the contractor to inform state education agencies and local school districts, as well as parents, teachers and students about the voluntary national tests.

National Academy of Sciences to Conduct Research Studies. The National Academy of Sciences will study the feasibility of comparing student achievement on commercial and state tests with each other and with NAEP. The Academy will also study with the technical quality, validity, reliability, design and racial, cultural, or gender bias of test items. Finally, the Academy will recommend appropriate safeguards to ensure that tests are not used in a discriminatory or inappropriate manner.

November 7, 1997

KEY POINTS FROM LABOR-HHS-EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE REPORT ON NATIONAL TESTING

The conferees and the Administration agree that it is important to have high, voluntary national 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 report the results of 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 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 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.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 7, 1997

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON EDUCATION STANDARDS

Legislation passed by the House of Representatives this evening provides an impressive victory for American education. It moves us down the road to high national standards and voluntary national tests in the basic skills, and it invests in providing our country with better schools and increased educational opportunities.

I am very pleased that we have reached an agreement on one of my top priorities for this year and for my Presidency: making sure that America's school children can master the basics and achieve higher academic standards. America's parents, teachers, and principals can now be sure that we are going to hold children's educational skills up to the same high standard whether they live in Michigan, Maine, or Montana.

The educational agenda I have established for the nation -- from high standards and testing to making a college education possible for every young American -- is designed to give our children the tools they need to succeed in a changing global economy. Today's agreement fulfills a critical part of that agenda, and I appreciate that politics indeed stopped at the schoolhouse door.

The Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill, which includes the agreement on national standards and tests, also helps meet our national commitment to expand educational opportunities for all students. It provides a \$1.5 billion increase in Pell grants to help an additional 210,000 young people attend college, and increases the maximum Pell grant to \$3,000, the highest level in history. Special education funding is increased by \$800 million, funding for technology for our schools is almost doubled, and there is \$7.4 billion to help our most disadvantaged students master the basic skills. Goals 2000 is funded at \$491 million, to continue to support school reform in every state, and funding for after-school programs is increased from \$1 million to \$40 million.

I am also pleased to see the House pass bipartisan charter school legislation to promote choice and accountability in the public schools and help achieve my goal of 3,000 charter schools.

Questions and Answers on Agreement on National Tests
November 7, 1997

Q: Earlier the Administration had indicated the President would veto this bill if it required further authorization from Congress to move forward with testing. But some suggest that this compromise basically kills the national test to clear the way for Fast Track. Has the President given up on a national test?

A: Absolutely not. The agreement allows us to proceed with development of the 4th and 8th grade national tests that the President has proposed. It also allows us to pilot test the items for these tests next fall. This is a delay of a few months, but it's one we can live with. At the same time, we will go forward with a National Academy of Sciences study of ways to link state tests to each other and to NAEP, an existing national sample test, that reflects high national standards. Both aspects of the agreement make progress toward a single goal: ensuring that all students, across the country, are measured by the same high standards.

Q: The legislation looks like a victory for test opponents. What did the Administration get out of this agreement?

A: This agreement is a solid victory for high standards. Under the compromise, the final appropriations bill drops the general prohibition on national tests contained in the House-passed bill, which the Administration threatened to veto, and allows us to proceed with development of the 4th grade reading and 8th grade math tests. The bill shifts control over test policies and development to the independent, bipartisan, National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), as the Administration had proposed. It provides \$16 million dollars to support the testing plan. And it allows for pilot testing of test items to begin next fall. At the same time, the bill provides for a potentially valuable study of ways to link state tests to each other and to NAEP, an existing national sample test, that reflects high national standards. This agreement puts us on the road to high national standards, and to measuring whether these standards are being met. We will finally have high expectations for all our students and real accountability for all our schools.

Q: Is further development of the national tests dependent on the findings of the National Academy of Sciences study? What is the timeline for this study?

A: The Academy will be asked to make an interim report by June 15, 1998 with a final report submitted by Sept. 1. Further development of the national tests is not contingent on the findings of the NAS study. NAGB can go forward with test development activities leading up to pilot testing right now. Pilot testing is postponed until after September 30, but does not depend on the completion or findings of the National Academy study.

Q: Does the compromise require further authorization to move beyond the pilot testing stage?

A: The agreement allows for test development in FY 98, and pilot testing after September 30. It is silent on the subject of further congressional action.

Q: The national tests were opposed in the House by members of the Black and Hispanic Caucus. How does the agreement address their concerns?

A: The agreement provides for the National Academy of Sciences and NAGB to study test items to ensure that they are free from racial, cultural, or gender bias. In addition, the Academy will recommend safeguards to ensure that tests are not used in a discriminatory or inappropriate manner.

Voluntary National Tests in Reading and Mathematics: A Strategy to Master the Basics and Reach High Standards

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 Bill Clinton
1997 State of the Union Address

STRONG SCHOOLS WITH CLEAR STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND DISCIPLINE ARE ESSENTIAL TO OUR CHILDREN AND SOCIETY. These standards are needed to help instill the skills and encouragement for hard work that our children need to succeed in school and in life. Toward that end we must establish meaningful standards for what students should be expected to learn and achieve in the basic subjects of reading and mathematics.

A CHALLENGE TO PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOOLS TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERY STUDENT MASTERS THE BASICS IN READING AND MATHEMATICS. Reading well by grade 4 and mastering mathematics -- including the foundations of algebra and geometry -- by grade 8 are the gateways for further learning and achievement. Research shows that students who fail to learn to read English well by the end of grade 3 are at greater risk of dropping out and facing diminished success in school and life. Students who fail to master the basics of mathematics by the end of grade 8 do not have the foundation to take tough mathematics and science courses in high school which in turn prepare them for college and better jobs.

While our students have been making progress in reading and mathematics, we are not yet where we need to be as a nation. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 40 percent of our 4th grade students do not reach the "basic" achievement level. In the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the U.S. 4th graders score above average in math and science. However, our 8th graders score below the international average in mathematics, and only 5 percent of U.S. eighth grade students score in the top 10 percent internationally.

RIGOROUS VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS IN 4TH GRADE READING AND 8TH GRADE MATHEMATICS. Parents need to know that students have mastered the basics no matter where they live or move in this country. And they have the right to know how well their children are doing compared with students in other schools, states, and countries. To help give parents this information, the U.S. Department of Education is prepared to offer every state and school district the opportunity to use voluntary national tests of 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics, beginning in 1999. These rigorous tests will provide parents, for the first time, scores for individual students, measured against widely accepted national and international standards of excellence. They will give states, local communities, teachers and parents the kind of accurate information they need to help students master basic and advanced skills and strengthen academic performance.

TESTS BASED ON WIDELY RECOGNIZED NATIONAL STANDARDS. The tests will be modeled on the NAEP in 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics. The NAEP tests are based on widely accepted standards developed by parents, teachers, reading and mathematics specialists, curriculum specialists, and researchers. The NAEP standards reflect a national consensus of what students should know and be able to do when they reach these crucial stages of learning. The voluntary national tests will be linked to NAEP and, in the case of mathematics, linked to TIMSS, so that scores can be compared to national and even international standards. As proposed by the

Department of Education, the Senate has voted to authorize the bipartisan, independent National Assessment Governing Board to set policy for the national tests as it does for NAEP, insuring the integrity of the new tests.

A NATIONAL EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE ODDS FOR STUDENTS. Schools and communities are already working hard at educational improvement; they are committed to parent involvement, getting technology into the classroom, and ensuring a trained and dedicated teacher in every classroom. The federal government provides funding to states and communities to support these efforts. But these efforts cannot be fully effective unless parents, schools and communities are aiming at clear, high standards of achievement. That is why these national tests are already spurring a renewed nation-wide effort to support school improvement and strengthen student achievement in these core subjects. Reading and literacy groups are coming together to improve reading. The mathematics and science community, engineers and business leaders are working to improve mathematics teaching and learning. To assist parents, teachers, principals and communities in using the tests effectively, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Science Foundation and others are developing a tool chest that includes information for parents and teachers on how to prepare to meet these high standards, how to use test results to improve education, and what high standards in reading and mathematics look like. As part of this effort, every year the entire test (along with answers, scoring guides, and other materials) will be released to the public and available on the Internet so that students, parents, and teachers can know what is expected for students to reach standards of excellence.

TOOLS FOR PARENTS; GUIDES FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES. The current NAEP is designed to assess how well a sample of students across the entire nation and individual states perform in reading and mathematics. Not all students participate in NAEP, and no parents know how their own children do on this test. In contrast, the voluntary national tests will provide students, parents, and teachers with meaningful scores to compare individual student performance to widely accepted national and international standards and to identify students and schools that need extra help. These standard measures of excellence will help parents hold schools accountable for improved performance, help teachers and principals improve curriculum and instruction, and give students a guide for charting their own progress.

The tests will be available for the first time in the spring of 1999 and updated each year. Individual test scores will *not* be collected by the federal government; state and local school districts will decide how to use the data. States and school districts will have the option to administer the tests as part of their local testing programs.

For more information, visit the voluntary national tests web site at <http://www.ed.gov/nationaltests/>

DELAYING THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS WOULD BRING BACK THE TYRANNY OF LOW EXPECTATIONS FOR MINORITY STUDENTS IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

When we don't expect or encourage our children to learn we indirectly encourage them to fail. When we set high standards and when we insist on them, there's no end to what our kids can do.

-President Clinton, July 25, 1997

- The Voluntary National Tests would make it clear that all children, wherever they live, whatever their color, and whatever their language background, can and should achieve to the same high standards as students throughout the nation. Any delay in these tests sends a terrible signal that we doubt whether our kids can achieve.
- Over the long run, the national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math will most benefit the kids in poor urban and rural areas who currently need the most help.
- Fifteen major urban school systems, including the three largest (New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago), as well as cities ranging from Atlanta and San Antonio, to El Paso, Philadelphia and Detroit, boldly pledged that their students will participate in the national tests beginning in 1999 and that they will work to prepare their students to excel on those tests.
- For the first time ever, parents, teachers and the public in these communities will know how well students perform compared to national standards in reading and math and to students in other cities and states throughout the nation, making it harder to shortchange any student when it comes to learning.
- The national tests can become a rallying point for local efforts to strengthen curriculum, provide training to teachers, increase parental and community involvement, and support the necessary investments at the local, state, and national levels to improve our schools.
- Educators and parents can use results of the tests to provide valuable help to low performing students, while communities can use the results to hold administrators and teachers accountable for poor aggregate performance.
- One year after instituting higher standards and tough tests, the School District of Philadelphia has demonstrated that this approach -- raising standards, measuring performance, and working to improve results -- works. On September 3, Philadelphia released results of its 1997 testing program, recording significant gains (in most cases, greater than a 5% increase in students performing at or above the Basic level) over the 1996 baseline in reading, math and science at the 4th, 8th and 11th grades. This is particularly impressive because over the same year there was a very large increase in the number of students taking the test, over 40% of whom were either special education students or students for whom English is not their first language -- students who many wrongly assume cannot learn to high standards.

CURRENT PARTICIPANTS IN THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

STATES

Alaska
Kentucky
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
North Carolina
West Virginia

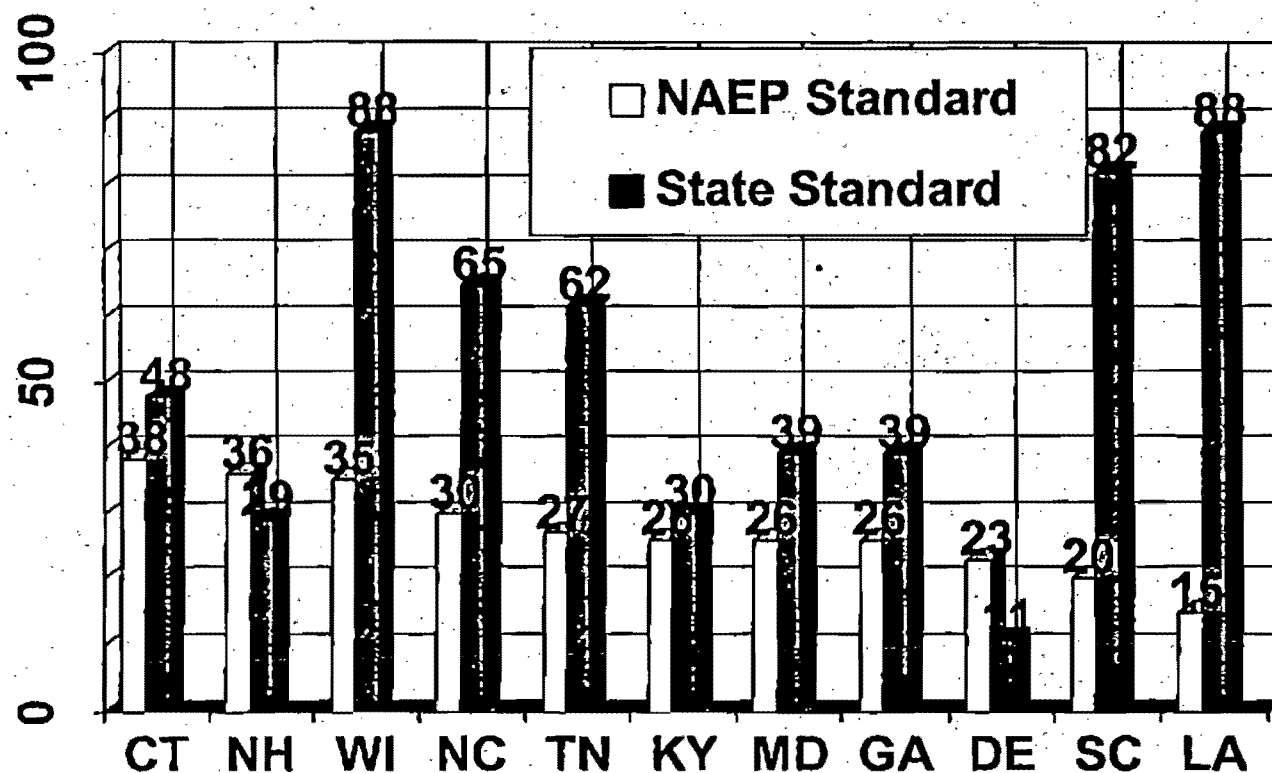
LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Atlanta, GA
Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale), FL
Chicago, IL
Cincinnati, OH
Detroit, MI
El Paso, TX
Fresno, CA
Houston, TX
Long Beach, CA
Los Angeles, CA
New York City, NY
Omaha, NE
Philadelphia, PA
San Antonio, TX
Seattle, WA

The Department of Defense schools will also participate.

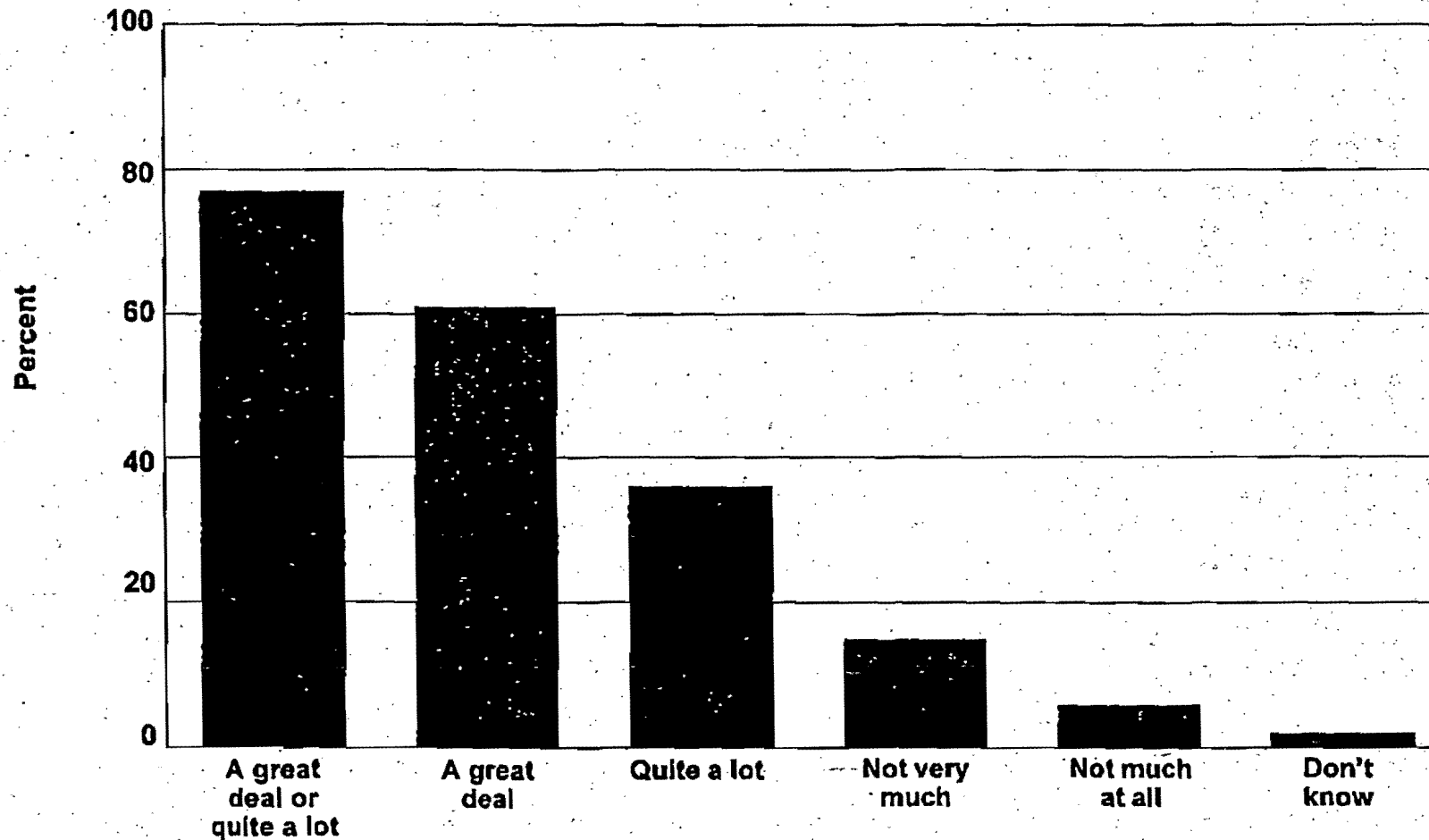
Together, these states and school districts represent 20% of all 4th and 8th graders.

NAEP MEASURES HIGH STANDARDS: State NAEP Scores for 4th Grade Reading Compared to States' Own Assessments



Source: US Department of Education, State departments of education, National Education Goals Panel

Establishing national standard for measuring the academic performance of the public schools



Source: Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll
August 26, 1997

KIDS SPEAK OUT IN FAVOR OF VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS IN READING AND MATH

CNN Newsroom and Worldview
September 8, 1997

Today, Tony Frassrand, Anchor of *CNN Newsroom*, interviewed 60 students and a teacher at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, VA. The following is what they had to say about the President's proposal for Voluntary National Tests in reading and mathematics:

Q: How would you feel about a test in the 4th grade to measure independent reading skills or in the 8th grade to test algebra skills?

- "I think it's a great idea because, in reality, it's for our own good, and if we don't pass it, then the teachers and educators can give us the help we need, so that we are literate." -Cat
- "Yes, we're testing to see if kids are ready to move on, because kids have graduated that haven't been able to read, and that's really sad. We need to be able to test to make sure kids after each year are learning appropriately, and learning what they should be learning." -Casey
- "If you have a national test, no one can slip through the cracks like they have before, and I agree with the testing theory." -Clark
- "In Alexandria, we have the Learning Passport Test, and supposedly you can't move on past 9th grade if you haven't passed it, but I know people who haven't and still moved on, so if there's going to be a test, then it needs to be enforced. I mean, they can't just let people slip through the cracks."
- "Personally, I think the tests are a good idea for something practical. However, I think that if we are going to enforce these tests, we have to get rid of some of the useless tests, which students were given today." -Adam
- "So many people are taking these tests, the Iowa test, and they're obviously not working if people are graduating without being able to read, and not knowing simple math. They're obviously not working." -Amanda

SUPPORT FOR THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

✓ **The American Public Supports High National Standards**

Parents deserve to know how their children are performing based on rigorous national standards no matter where they live in this country.

A recent Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll shows that 67% favor using standardized national tests to measure the achievement of students and 77% favor national standards for measuring the academic performance of our schools.

✓ **Educators Support Continued Development of Voluntary National Tests**

"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. 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."

Letter signed by the following:

American Federation of Teachers
Council for Chief State School Officers
National Education Association

Council for Exceptional Children
Council of the Great City Schools
National School Boards Association

National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of State Directors of Special Education

"For those states opting to participate in the program, it offers an unprecedented opportunity for individual students to compare their abilities with other students from across the nation...We believe the states should be afforded the opportunity to decide for themselves whether to take part in these national assessments."

Brenda Lilienthal Welburn, Executive Director of the National Association of State Boards of Education

"A voluntary national test would give teachers and parents the ability to measure their students and children against high national standards. Currently, 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."

Gerald D. Morris

Director of Legislation, American Federation of Teachers

✓ **Business Community Support for the Voluntary National Tests**

"The proposed standards and tests will help provide parents, students, educators and policy makers with the information they need to ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed in the 21st century world and workplace."

Edwin Lupberger, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee

"There is certainly a place for legitimate discussion over details. But these and other arguments should not weaken or overshadow our commitment to raising academic standards and assessing student performance. Without a national assessment, raising academic standards will be, at best, an amorphous goal."

Jim Orr, CEO, UNUM Corporation, Chairman of the National Alliance of Business

"The Alliance believes these voluntary tests could be used by state and local school districts to measure the progress of American students in these core subjects. The Alliance recently surveyed its members on this issue and an overwhelming number supported the initiative to develop the voluntary national tests."

National Alliance of Business

"As the CEO of a company that does business in every state in the union and 70 countries worldwide, voluntary national tests that give individual student scores make sense. Here's why. When prospective employees apply for a job, employers hold them to the same standard, no matter where they went to school. In our global economy where employers are competing on a worldwide basis, the quantitative and communications skills needed for a particular job are not unique to Delaware or Texas or California."

John A. Krol, Dupont President and CEO and
Chairman of the Business Roundtable Education Task Force

"President Clinton's national testing initiative offers a new opportunity to use widely accepted national benchmarks in reading and math against which states, school districts and parents can judge student performance."

Jim Barksdale, CEO and President, Netscape Communications, and
L. John Doerr, Partner in the firm of Kleiner, Perkins, Caulfield and Byers
on behalf of 240 technology industry leaders

✓ Editorial Support for the Voluntary National Tests

"Yes on Tests... The results of the new tests would be available for individual students, classes, schools and school districts, rather than expressed in broad national or regional terms. The idea is that, yes, they might then become instruments for change, but not dictated from above. Rather, parents and others would use them as a standard for comparison, and for demanding improvement on the ground, at the local level... The danger is not that the federal government is going to take over the nation's schools. The danger rather is that poor performance will continue to be tolerated and obscured."

The Washington Post

"Put Schools to the Test... American children won't notice, but the public schools they return to this fall lack something important: a reliable, uniform means of assessing how well they're doing their job. Erasing that lack is what President Clinton has in mind when he call for national tests... For the sake of America's students, the political and philosophical hurdles have to be cleared. Reliable national tests won't in themselves rebuild public education, but they're an important foundation stone."

The Christian Science Monitor

September 6, 1997

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

Concern: **The voluntary national test is just another test.**

Reality: The voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math will provide information to students, parents and teachers that no other tests provide. For the first time, families that move from community to community or state to state will have a consistent yardstick by which to measure how well their child is doing. The tests will show how students, and their schools, compare against challenging standards in 4th grade English reading and 8th grade math; the 8th grade math test will compare student achievement to international standards, as well.

Kids, along with their parents and teachers, will get reports showing what questions they got right, and which ones they got wrong. In addition, each year the voluntary national tests, complete with answers and explanatory materials, will be posted on the Internet shortly after they are administered. These features will make these tests uniquely useful for improving teaching and learning.

Concern: **The voluntary national tests will lead to a national curriculum.**

Reality: These tests will measure whether a child can read well and independently by the end of the 4th grade and master challenging mathematics, including the basics of algebra and geometry by the end of 8th grade. These tests are based on accepted standards that reflect widespread agreement on what students should know and be able to do. States and local communities will continue to determine their curricula and will use the national tests to focus attention on how to improve student achievement in the basics of reading and mathematics. How a child is taught and what curriculum is used will remain a local decision.

Concern: **States and local education agencies that do not participate will be denied other sources of federal funding for education.**

Reality: Absolutely not. No federal funding will be withheld from a state or local education agency based on its participation in the voluntary national tests.

Concern: **Federal bureaucrats are developing these tests.**

Reality: Based on the existing National Assessment of Educational Progress, a rigorous sample test used by over 40 states and commonly referred to as the Nation's Report Card, private companies and committees of classroom teachers, principals, business and community leaders, parents, and reading and math specialists from across the country are developing the voluntary national tests through contracts with the U.S. Department of Education. Meetings are open to the public and transcripts are available. In addition, the Clinton Administration supports the

Senate's proposal to have the bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board oversee this work and make all future policy decisions concerning the national tests.

Concern: **The voluntary national tests are just another way the federal government is trying to intrude in a local issue.**

Reality: The voluntary national tests will provide a tool, not an intrusion. They will simply empower individuals at the local level to improve learning for all students by providing accurate information on student and school performance on reading and math, compared to challenging national standards and international benchmarks.

The tests are voluntary, not mandatory.

Reading is reading and math is math no matter if you are in Connecticut or California. These tests will not require certain teaching methods, they will measure how students are performing on high national standards. Parents want to know how their kids and schools are performing, especially those families that move to a new community or state. The voluntary national tests will provide reliable information for families all over the country.

Concern: **Tests don't generate higher academic performance.**

Reality: The tests will tell school administrators, parents, and teachers how well students and schools are doing. They will be able to tell which schools and students need assistance and how to boost their performance.

Tests alone do not generate higher academic performance. But when teachers and students work hard to prepare for a challenging test, students learn more.

Evidence shows that raising expectations for students lifts student achievement. These tests are tied to high academic standards, and they will help generate high academic performance through focusing the efforts of schools and communities. Unlike many other tests, these tests will be designed so that teachers and students can prepare for them. Teachers and parents will have support materials that give examples of the types of knowledge and skills students should know and be able to do. The voluntary national tests will help promote a national focus on improving reading and mathematics skills.

Concern: **National tests are too controversial to implement without Congressional authorization.**

Reality: The Administration and Congress should act as partners in the effort to raise standards for all students and to provide parents and students with voluntary

national tests in the basics of reading and mathematics. None of us can do this alone. We should be working together to raise standards for our students, improve teaching and learning, and give our schools the tools they need to prepare our children for the future.

On September 11, the Senate showed overwhelming support for legislation to ask the bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to set policy for the voluntary national tests. This board already oversees the widely used National Assessment of Educational Progress (a representative sampling test that gives information on how the U.S. and over 40 states are doing at state and national levels, but provides no information for individual students or their teachers and families.) The Administration supports the Senate's proposal.

Concern: New tests can lead to inappropriate and unfair comparisons of schools and school districts.

Reality: These tests lead to exactly the right kinds of comparisons -- they tell parents and teachers how well students and schools do when measured against high standards of excellence that define what students should know and be able to do in the basics of reading and mathematics. We should welcome these comparisons, not fear them. The tests will give teachers and school leaders new tools to know where to focus research and attention.

We should not presume that any student, no matter where he or she lives or goes to school, will do poorly on these tests. We must stop perpetuating the cycle of low expectations that actually keeps many young people from achieving their full potential.

In July, 15 major urban school districts around the country pledged to participate in these tests -- not because these districts believe they will excel the first time around, but because they know that their students, when challenged and when provided with the proper support, can perform just as well as any other students can.

Concern: Instead of another test, more resources should be sent into the classroom.

Reality: The Administration and Congress have supported record investments in education to help states and communities raise standards, train teachers, improve basic skills, and promote the effective use of technology in the classroom. The voluntary national tests will aid us in better understanding where those resources are needed and how they can be wisely spent. They are an integral part of a comprehensive strategy to raise standards and improve education.

Concern: The federal government is already spending over \$500 million just to test students.

Reality: This figure is totally incorrect. Approximately 90% of the funds cited by Members of Congress is for the Goals 2000 program, which improves teaching and learning in local classrooms by helping states and school districts raise standards, train teachers, promote the effective use of technology and increase parental and community involvement. A very small part of this money supports state testing programs.

Concern: The voluntary national math test will be based on "fuzzy math."

Reality: The voluntary national math test will be based on tough, demanding standards which require a thorough understanding of basic and challenging math skills. The recently released Third International Math and Science Study results for our 4th graders demonstrates that our students measure up to international standards quite well in areas of basic computation. The area in which we do less well is in grades 5-8, when students should be moving beyond arithmetic and into geometry, algebra, and measurement.

The voluntary national math test will ask students to find the correct answer to each problem. Some questions will also ask students to show their work and justify their answers. Good math teaching encourages students to look at math problems from multiple perspectives and to understand the different methods that can be used to arrive at a correct conclusion.

Concern: The Department of Education is moving forward on test development.

Reality: On September 25, Secretary Riley announced his decision not to forward the voluntary national tests panel recommendations to the test contractor. The specifications will not be sent until Congress authorizes the National Assessment Governing Board as the independent bipartisan policy making body as proposed by the Senate. All work related to test and item development has been halted by the contractor. Prior to the Secretary's decision, letters were sent to districts regarding participation in the pilot test.

Concern: Only 7 states and 15 school districts have signed up and we hear some are pulling out. What kind of support do you really have?

Reality: The 7 states and 15 school districts represent about 20% of the 4th and 8th grade students in the United States. The voluntary national tests are strongly supported by the education community and the general public. For example, in a recent Wall Street Journal/ NBC News poll, 79% of Americans favored national testing.

Leaders of the business community, who hold themselves to high international standards, widely endorse this initiative as well.

DRAFT

HOW WILL THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS IMPROVE STUDENTS' EDUCATION?

☞ The voluntary national tests will help all schools to challenge students according to national standards in the basic subjects of 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics.

☞ By providing individual student scores based on national and international comparisons, parents and teachers will be more informed about what their children should know and be able to do in 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics.

☞ The voluntary national tests' questions are being written by some of the leading test publishing companies in the country in a joint effort. This collaboration will create a cutting-edge, world class assessment that will provide detailed information to parents and teachers like never before. After each test administration, the full tests will be available on the Internet, providing a usefulness never before offered through standardized tests.

Martin is in 7th grade in Seattle. If he wants to continue his education beyond high school and attend college, he will be required to take challenging mathematics courses beginning in 9th grade. Martin should already be learning challenging math so that he has the opportunity to choose these courses later. In the 8th grade, he will take the voluntary national test in math. How will this test help improve his education?

HOW WILL PARENTS BE ABLE TO USE THE NATIONAL TESTS TO HELP IMPROVE THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION?

☞ Knowing that college placement and employment competition are becoming more and more global, parents will be able to learn how their children are measuring up to rigorous national and international standards in 8th grade mathematics. With the information from their students' national test scores, they will be able to better monitor and participate in their child's education.

☞ Before school is out, families will receive in the mail a clear and understandable report that gives their child's individual answers, the correct answers, and unlike any other test--their child's achievement based on rigorous national, and in mathematics, international standards. Both students and parents will be sent letters explaining the usefulness of the reports along with possible questions families may want to ask of their schools to assist them in participating in their students' education.

Before Martin leaves the 8th grade, he and his parents will both receive a scoring report along with a letter explaining the information, and providing ideas for making his scores useful in improving his education and ensuring he is exposed to higher level math in high school.

☞ Soon after the voluntary national tests are administered, the full tests will be made public and placed on the Internet. This will allow parents and teachers alike to have the exact questions and the answers in the areas their students need assistance. Parents can utilize this information in their communication with the school and the child's future teachers in discussing his or her individual progress.

⇒ Unlike with other nation-wide assessments, teachers and parents will be able to receive voluntary national test scores within the same school year as when students take the tests. Parents will be able to discuss results with the teacher who just spent a year with their student and in the following year, parents will have clearer personal information and know better what to ask and expect for their children in high school.

⇒ The voluntary national tests will help motivate the community and business to rally around the education of our students. The business community, which holds itself to high international standards, strongly endorses the voluntary national tests. When businesses see clear information that helps them identify areas of need, they often respond by investing in the future--our students.

Martin may score in the 67% in his state, but on the national test, he will be able to challenge himself against national and international standards. His parents and teachers will see exactly what kind of skills all 8th graders should know and be able to do in mathematics. This information will ensure Martin has the opportunity to be exposed to the material he will need in order to choose higher level mathematics courses later.

DRAFT

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⇒ The voluntary national tests will help all schools to challenge students according to national standards in the basic subjects of 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics.

⇒ By providing individual student scores based on national and international comparisons, parents and teachers will be more informed about what their children should know and be able to do in 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics.

Maria is a 3rd grade student in Chicago. We know that she is far more likely to succeed in science, mathematics, history and language arts later if she is able to read well by the end of this school year. In 4th grade, Maria will take the voluntary national test. How will the voluntary national test improve her education?

⇒ The voluntary national tests' questions are being written by some of the leading test publishing companies in the country in a joint effort. This collaboration will create a cutting-edge, world class assessment that will provide detailed information to parents and teachers like never before. After each test administration, the full tests will be available on the Internet, providing a usefulness never before offered through standardized tests.

HOW WILL EDUCATORS BE ABLE TO USE THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS TO HELP IMPROVE EDUCATION?

⇒ The voluntary national tests will be released in full on the **Internet** after each administration allowing wide-spread use of the material in classrooms as well as a stronger understanding of test scoring for parents and teachers alike.

⇒ When receiving the reports at the school and at home, teachers and parents will see how their students did on each individual question, and from the Internet, everyone will have access to those exact questions. This will help parents and teachers lead informed discussions about ways to improve their children's skills in reading and mathematics.

⇒ **Supplemental materials and sample tests** will be available to all participating schools to give teachers ideas for incorporating challenging material into lesson plans and in preparation for students taking the voluntary national tests.

Maria's teacher will receive supplemental materials and sample test questions as resources to help the class work on some of the skills they will be tested on like understanding and interpreting content, reflecting on and responding to texts, and demonstrating a critical stance. Her 3rd grade teacher this year can also help Maria prepare by exposing her to some of the ideas and content she will

- ⇒ Unlike with other nation-wide assessments, teachers and parents will be able to receive voluntary national test scores within the same school year as when students take the tests, enabling teachers and schools to utilize the information in a variety of new ways:
 - ⇒ Teachers can incorporate the actual test questions into lesson plans after the scores have been returned. Focusing on areas in which their students need further assistance, teachers can bridge the gap between questions that students answered incorrectly and those the students fully understood.

 - ⇒ By seeing the areas in which students need improvement while school is still in session, the teacher can utilize the test reports as part of his/her self-assessment and in preparing semester overviews for the following school year.

- ⇒ School administrators and supervisors will be able to utilize the tests' information for their schools in planning professional development for faculty of all grades.

Maria's 4th grade class can review the test together after they receive their scores--a first in large-scale testing. Their teacher can use the exact test questions in lesson plans and explain the concepts students in the class tended to miss as well as those they collectively understood. At the end of the school year, 4th grade teachers can share national test information with faculty. While 3rd, 5th and even 1st and 2nd grade teachers join efforts, administrators may reevaluate resources and teacher training strategies.

NATIONAL TEST DOC	FILE NAME	AUDIENCE	LAST UPDATED
MAIN PUBS			
Fact sheet	ntfact.doc		9/22/97
Two pager	nt2pgh.doc		9/22/97 10/8
Publications index	ntpubs.doc		10/16/97
Q & A	ntqa.doc		in devel
Current Participants	ntcurpart.doc		8/29/97
Talking Points -- senior staff	nttkptss.doc		10/8/97
Talking Points	nttkpt.doc		10/16/97
Purpose	ntpurp.doc		9/2/97
Support w/press quotes	ntsuppr.doc		9/22/97
Table of Contents (ss packet)	nttblcnt.doc		9/22/97
GENERAL DOCS			
Improving Education	ntedu.doc		in devel
Resources to states	ntresrst.doc		9/15/97
Resources to cities	ntresrc.doc		7/25/97
Home School -- internal	nthmsch.doc		8/29/97
Key Arguments	ntkeyar.doc		9/2/97
Q & A -- cities	ntqacity.doc		7/24/97
NAGB members (S. 1061)	nagbmem.doc		9/12/97
CEO's Support	ntceo.doc		4/2/97
Reading/Math samples (Charlotte...)	ntrmsam.doc		5/23/97
States mtg summary of tasks (Judith's notes)	nt819sum.doc		8/19/97
Kids' Quotes CNN	ntkidsq.doc		9/8/97

Test Development & Admin.	nttdao.doc		10/16/97
Timss summary	timsssum.doc		
PRESS FILE			
Fact sheet	ntfact.prs	press	9/30/97
Purpose	ntpurp.prs	press	9/30/97
Current Participants	ntcurpar.prs	press	9/30/97
Support doc	ntsuppr.prs	press	9/30/97
HILL FILE			
Myths and Realities	ntmyths.doc		in devel
NAGB Members (S. 1061)	nagbmem.doc		9/12/97
Q & A -- hill	ntqah.doc		8/29/97
Talking Points -- hill	nttkpth.doc		9/2/97
Responses to Concerns	ntrescon.doc		9/2/97
Support w/Senators quotes	ntsuph.doc		9/5/97
NAGB FILE			
NAGB members (S. 1061)	nagbmem.doc		9/12/97
NAGBdefinition	ntnagb.doc		9/8/97