

2nd revised version--Thursday morning

NATIONAL TESTS: A GOOD IDEA THAT'S BEING DONE RIGHT

By Richard W. Riley

U. S. Secretary of Education

John Wooden, the great U. C. L. A. basketball coach, was once asked to describe the way he trained his teams. He said he told his players to be quick, but never to hurry.

I was reminded of these words of wisdom when I read Diane Ravitch's op-ed (August 26) asserting that the Clinton Administration is moving "hurriedly" to launch voluntary national tests.

While I applaud Ms. Ravitch's support for the tests, I don't think we're moving too fast. The tests are scheduled for the spring of 1999, about 2-1/3 years after President Clinton proposed them. That's certainly a reasonable amount of time to develop a 4-grade reading test and an 8th-grade math test. It takes about two years to prepare high-quality tests, evaluate them, and then actually administer them. We are moving deliberately enough to do the job right, but fast enough to get these tests into schools as soon as possible. These tests will help children to learn the basics, and our kids shouldn't have to wait for that.

Ms. Ravitch and I do agree on one important thing -- the entity overseeing the tests should be independent and bipartisan. That is why I went on national television two days before Ms. Ravitch's article appeared to say that the Administration will ask the Congress to expand the authority of the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to include setting test policy. *As Ms. Ravitch writes,* NAGB is by far the best way to assure independence and to make sure the tests will earn the confidence of parents, teachers, communities, states, and school districts. I hope the Congress will pass the legislation without delay.

we have wanted
~~Of course, we have been actively pursuing~~ bipartisan support for the tests *pursued*
~~all along.~~ The process that we have used duplicates the process that NAGB uses *from the beginning.*

to develop the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests, which are now used in almost every state. The voluntary national tests will use the same frameworks and performance standards as NAEP. For those who aren't familiar with such jargon, that means that the voluntary national tests will be challenging and hold students to high standards of learning. And just as NAGB does when it develops NAEP (sorry about the acronym overload), we asked the Chief State School Officers to appoint nonpartisan committees of teachers and other experts to design the test specifications.

In addition, our process has been inclusive and open. We have held many public hearings and put the transcripts on the Internet for all the world to see. I have also have testified before Congress at least four times, and other officials of the U. S. Department of Education have also testified. We have answered every question put to us, and we continue to reach out to state education leaders as well. Recently, representatives from 47 states attended a meeting on the tests which was covered by C-SPAN and other press representatives.

Process is important, but we should never lose sight of what's most important, and that's making sure that students are well grounded in reading and math. That will improve the odds of success for all children, and that's really what the President's proposal is all about. 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 -- something no other tests currently do.

The American people support the President's call for voluntary national standards. The Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, released on Tuesday, showed that two out of three Americans believe national tests will improve student achievement "a great deal or quite a lot."

With that kind of public support, it would be tragic if the Congress moved to

delay or kill national testing, as some members of Congress want to do. They would deny many states and school districts the right to even consider the option, thwarting the principle of local control.

It would be wrong to allow a good idea that can help our children learn to languish. ~~It is time to move. I am pleased that the contract to develop the tests has been awarded to an alliance that includes the nation's most respected test publishers and a bipartisan council on basic skills.~~

We're on the right track, and I welcome the involvement of every American in this effort. I hope that those who understand the importance of voluntary national tests will work together to make them a reality. We may have a disagreement along the way, but we shouldn't allow it to distract us from our common goal of making the future brighter for our kids.

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TEST DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION, AND OUTREACH

DEVELOPMENT

The Voluntary National Tests will be based on 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 student achievement which gives an indication of how states and districts 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 has proposed that Congress authorize the bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board to set policy for the tests as they do for NAEP.

The U.S. Department of Education has 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, the Technical Advisory Group, the Reading Committee, and the Math Committee. The committee members are expert teachers, administrators, parents, policy makers, and business and community leaders. All of their meetings are open to the public, and transcripts are available on the Internet.

The U.S. Department of Education has contracted with education research firms and test publishers to develop the tests and based on the guidelines created by the committees. 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.

CURRENT OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

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

In addition to open meetings, the reading and math committees are holding public hearings on issues particular to each of the tests where the general public has the opportunity to testify or submit written testimony. Parents, teachers, administrators, as well as community and business leaders have attended these hearings.

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

July 23, 1997

Riley

National Test Outreach List

House

Authorizers

(8) *Riggs
Castle
Greenwood

*Clay

*Miller

*Martinez

(1) Roemer
Payne

Approps

(2) *Porter
(3) Livingston

Stokes

*Hoyer

*DeLauro

Senate

Authorizers

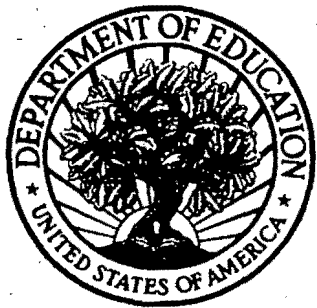
(4) Jeffords
Collins

(5) Harkin

Appropriators

(6) Specter
Craig

(7) Hollings
Inouye



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

Gary Phillips
10/8/97



Overall Information

- 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.
- The first administration of the tests will be in March, 1999.

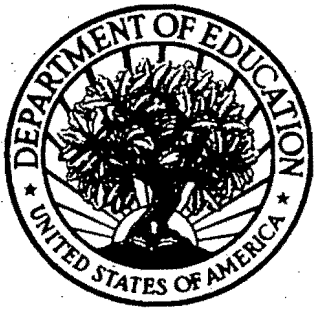
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Detailed Information

- Voluntary
- No individually identifiable data from the test administrations are given to the Federal Government
- Not Linked to Federal Funding
- Tests and scoring guide released to the Web every year
- Report in a metric easily understood by parents and teachers
- Tests will be consistent with Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (APA, AERA, NCME) and the Code of Fair Testing Practice
- Cost of test administration and scoring will be reimbursed by the Federal Government in 1999 (and possibly in future years)
- Inclusion criteria and appropriate accommodations will be required
- Guidelines for test reporting and use
- Sample tests in 1998
- Results will be reported within the same school year
- Ongoing research component
- Ongoing evaluation
- Advisory structure
- Developed in an open, public process
- Special booklet of extended constructed response items
- Supplementary materials

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Technical Information

- About 90 minutes of testing time (although the test will be essentially untimed)
- About half of the testing time will be spent on machine scorable items
- 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)
- Comparable forms from year to year
- Three year assessment cycle (see attached graph)

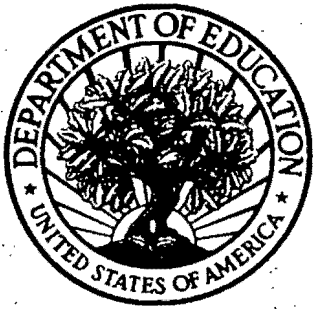
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Administration, Scoring, and Reporting of the Voluntary National Tests

- Contracts will be awarded to companies to make the tests available to states, districts, and private schools. Each company is responsible for:
 - Maintaining item security
 - Printing
 - Distribution and retrieval of materials
 - Training test coordinators (state or district)
 - Scoring
 - Producing reports (in English and several other languages) for parents and teachers, as well as producing school, district, and state reports
 - Following all guidelines produced by test development contractor
- Test development contractor is responsible for:
 - Developing test security procedures
 - Producing training manuals and materials
 - Producing scoring guides and other materials
 - Producing guidelines for test reporting and use
 - Producing guidelines for inclusion and accommodations for LEP and disabled students

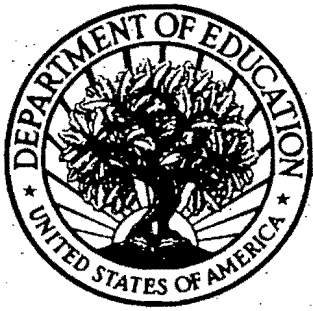
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Administration, Scoring, and Reporting the Voluntary National Tests (Continued)

- States, districts, and private schools are responsible for:
 - Training school test administrators
 - Test administration
 - Maintaining test security
 - Communicating score reports to parents, teachers, schools, and districts
 - Following guidelines for inclusion, accommodations, test reporting and test use
- Independent evaluation is responsible for:
 - Providing overall evaluation of Voluntary National Test
 - Evaluating test development, field testing, administration, scoring, reporting and test use
 - Producing annual report on the overall success of the Voluntary National Test and recommending improvements for the future
 - Providing quarterly reports on progress of test administration, scoring, and test use

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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)



Advisory Structure

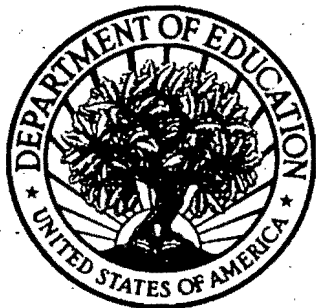
- Overall Policy Board (National Assessment Governing Board - Pending Congressional Authorization)
- Advice to Development Contractors
 - Technical Panel
 - Reading Panel
 - Math Panel
- Evaluation by the National Academy of Sciences



RFPs and Timelines for Voluntary National Tests in Reading and Mathematics

	1997	1998	1999	2000+
Item and test specifications	May - September			
Contract - Reading and Math development	August:			
- Evaluation	September			
- Printing, Scoring and Reporting		February		
Item writing	Sept. - Oct.	Jan-Feb	Jan-Feb	Jan-Feb
Item pilot	Nov.-Dec.	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				

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Voluntary National Tests Web Site Address and Phone Numbers

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

(888) - 944-5001 (Nationwide, Toll-Free)

(202) - 944-5451 (in Washington, D.C.)



Suggested Inclusion Criteria for the Voluntary National Test

(These are based on NAEP. They will be further developed by the contractor and approved by the Policy Board in an open, public process.)

- **Students with Disabilities**

A student identified as having a disability; that is, a student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or equivalent classification **should be included** in the assessment unless:

- The IEP team or equivalent group has determined that the student cannot participate in the test or similar assessments, **OR**
- The student's cognitive functioning is so severely impaired that she/he cannot participate, **OR**
- The student's IEP requires that the student be tested with accommodations that the test does not permit, and the student cannot demonstrate his/her knowledge of reading or mathematics without that accommodation.

- **Limited-English-Proficient Students**

A student who is identified as Limited English Proficient and who is a native speaker of a language other than English **should be included** in the test unless:

- The student has received language instruction primarily in English for less than three school years including the current year, **AND**
- The student cannot demonstrate his or her knowledge of reading in English even with an accommodation permitted by the test.

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Voluntary National Test: Suggested Accommodations

(These are based on NAEP. They will be further developed by the contractor and approved by the Policy Board in an open, public process.)

Reading Test

Students with Disabilities

- Accommodations specified in IEP
- Extended time and/or multiple testing sessions
- One-on-one testing
- Small-group sessions
- Scribe or use of computer
- Help with test directions (but not items)
- Large print or Braille
- Other, such as sign language translator, microphone worn by administrator, use of magnifying instrument

LEP Students

- Accommodations offered to student by school in usual test situations (e.g., frequent breaks, read instructions aloud in English, etc.)
- Extended time
- One-on-one testing
- Small-group sessions

Mathematics Test

Students with Disabilities

- Accommodations specified in IEP
- Extended time and/or multiple testing sessions
- One-on-one testing
- Small-group sessions
- Scribe or use of computer
- Help with test directions (but not items)
- Audiocassette English version
- Large print or Braille
- Other, such as sign language translator, microphone worn by administrator, use of magnifying instrument

LEP Students

- Accommodations offered to student by school in usual test situations (e.g., frequent breaks, bilingual dictionaries, read aloud in English, etc.)
- Bilingual Spanish-English version
- Extended time
- One-on-one testing
- Small-group sessions

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Development Contractors for the Voluntary National Tests

- American Institutes for Research (AIR)

Offices in Washington, DC, California, and Massachusetts

- AIR subcontractors:

- **Riverside Publishing** - Itasca, Illinois
 - Assists in developing reading test
- **Harcourt Brace** - San Antonio, TX
 - Assists in developing mathematics test
- **Westat, Inc.** - Rockville, MD
 - Conducts and designs the pilot and field tests
- **California Test Bureau (CTB)** - Monterey, CA AND
- **National Computer Systems (NCS)** Iowa City, IA
 - Scores the field test
- **Educational Testing Service (ETS)** - Princeton, NJ
 - Assists with data analysis, linking, and other technical issues
- **Council for Basic Education** - Washington, DC
 - Oversees and coordinates the Advisory Committees

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Comparing: Voluntary National Mathematics Test with NAEP and TIMSS

Content Framework	VNT (1999) Percentage		NAEP (1996) Percentage		TIMSS (1995) Percentage	
Numbers/Operations	25%		25%		34%	
Measurement	15%		15%		12%	
Geometry	20%		20%		15%	
Data Analysis/Statistics	15%		15%		14%	
Algebra/Functions	25%		25%		18%	
Proportionality	-		-		7%	
Item Types	#	%	#	%	#	%
Multiple Choice	21	48%	93	57%	125	83%
Gridded/Drawn	11	25%	-	-	-	-
Short Constructed Response	10	22%	62	38%	19	12%
Extended Constructed Response	2	5%	7	5%	7	5%
TOTAL	44	100%	162	100%	151	100%
Testing Time per Student	120		45		90	
Testing Time for Assessment	120		195		376	
Calculator Use	Permitted but not required on (?) items		Provided on 1/4 of items		Not permitted	
Accommodations	Provisions for disabled and LEP students, bilingual versions of the test		Provisions for disabled and LEP students, bilingual versions of the test		No accommodations	



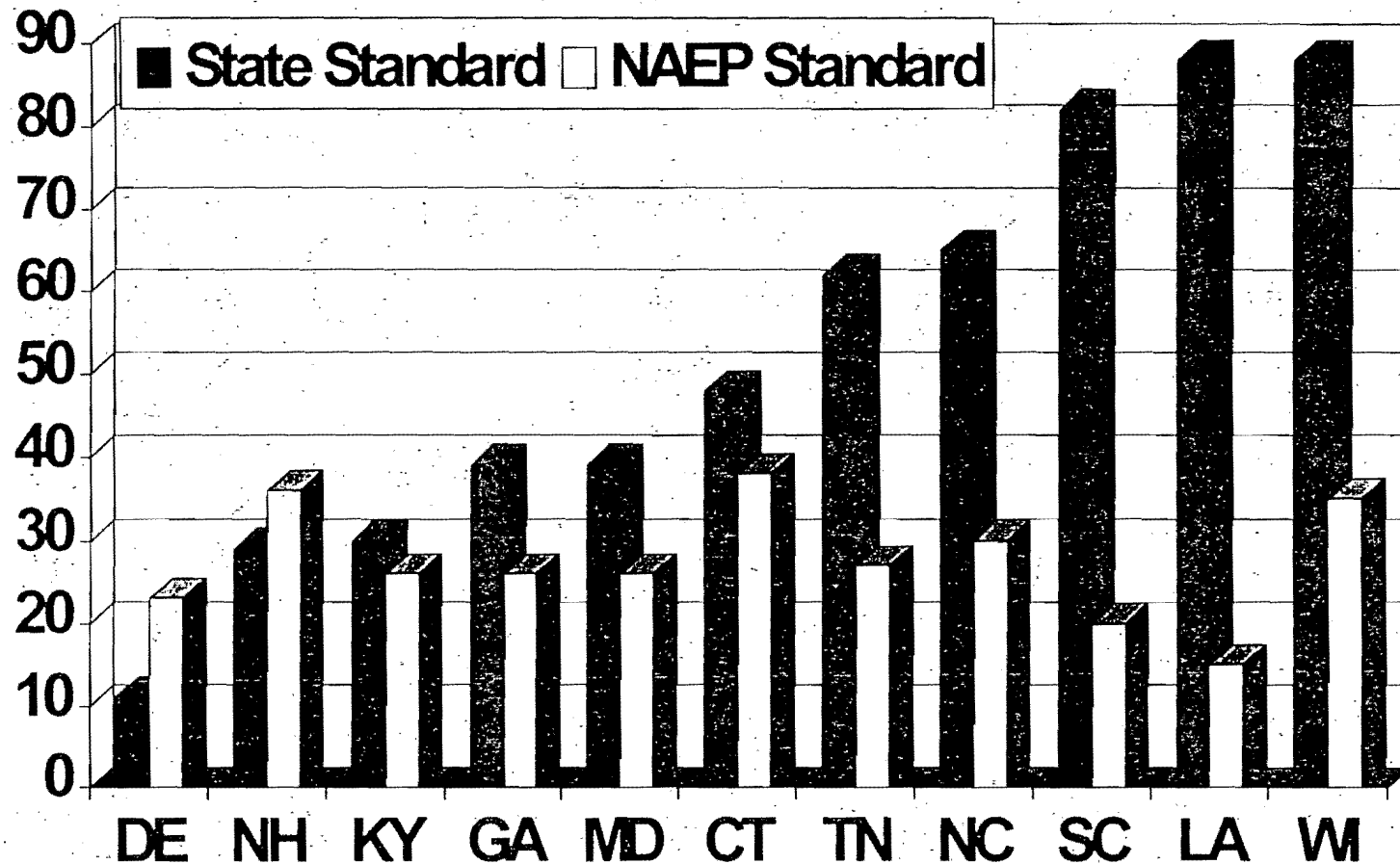
Comparing: Voluntary National Reading Test with NAEP

	VNT (1999)		NAEP (1998)	
Content Framework	Percentage		Percentage	
Narrative	55%		55%	
Expository	45%		45%	
Item Types	#	%	#	%
Multiple Choice	31	76%	36	44%
Short Constructed Response	8	20%	38	46%
Extended Constructed Response	2	4%	8	10%
TOTAL	41	100%	82	100%
Testing Time per Student	90		45	
Testing Time for Assessment	90		200	
Accommodations	Provisions for disabled and LEP students		Provisions for disabled and LEP students	

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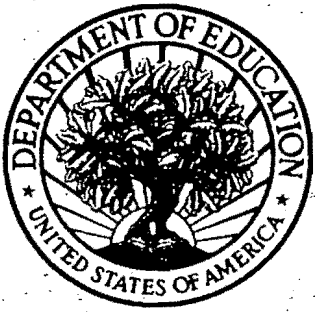


Percentage of Proficient Students in NAEP 4th Grade Reading Compared to States' Own Assessments

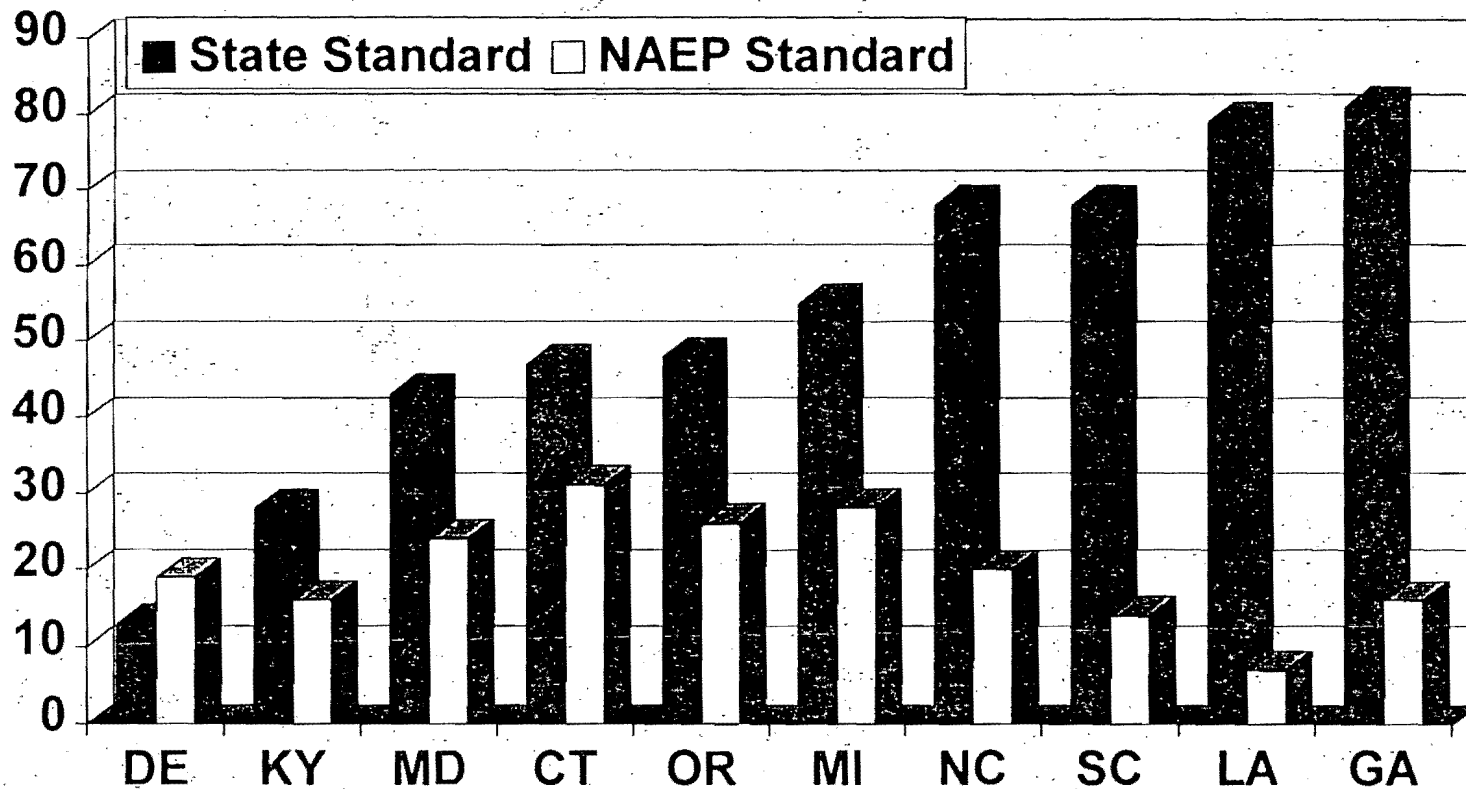


Source: U.S. Department of Education, State Departments of Education,
National Education Goals Panel

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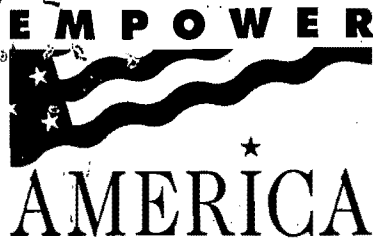
Percentage of Proficient Students in NAEP 8th Grade Mathematics Compared to States' Own Assessments



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

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

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10/8/97



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Below are excerpts from a September 8, 1997 memorandum sent by William J. Bennett to select United States Senators.

As you know, I have been (in principle) a strong supporter of voluntary national testing. However, I have real concerns about the specifics of the current Clinton proposal -- which, in my opinion, would do more harm than having no test at all. Let me state in the strongest possible terms that the current National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) proposal made by the White House is inadequate to prevent mischief in these tests and the Congress should not delay in fixing it. Waiting until 1998 and the "regular" National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reauthorization cycle will allow seriously flawed national tests to go forward without needed correction from a strengthened NAGB.

It is my strong impression that the Administration is willing to go quite a distance this week to accommodate a Congressional initiative concerning "governance" of the testing program. Indeed, I am told that the White House is awaiting a counter-proposal from Republicans and reform-minded Democrats. *Now is the time to make a solid counter-proposal* (it is also a chance to strengthen NAGB's independence vis-à-vis NAEP itself).

Where does the situation now stand? Apparently the Senate leadership has already agreed to accept an amendment from Senator Harkin which is, from my perspective, quite problematic (the Harkin amendment is simply the Administration's flawed proposal). If this agreement has, in fact, been irrevocably made, it seems to me that the best course of action is that in the forthcoming Senate-House conference committee, Republicans and reform-minded Democrats should insist that these important changes be made:

1. Give NAGB "policy direction" or "policy control" of all aspects of both NAEP and the national tests, not just policy guidance. Otherwise the Department of Education remains in control.
2. Give NAGB explicit authority to review and change the national test specifications, development contract and advisory committees that have already been launched by the Education Department. Otherwise, the bad decisions already made, and the contracts already awarded, will stay in place.

3. Charge NAGB with ensuring that the content and standards of national tests be the same as NAEP's and that the tests be "linked" to NAEP. Otherwise the public will not know whether the test results mean the same thing as NAEP results.

4. Make several key changes in the composition of NAGB itself so that it has greater bipartisanship and independence. (At present, just two of its 25 members need to be from the party out of power. Given the huge responsibility of national testing, and the need for bipartisan consensus, the current imbalance is simply wrong.)

5. Restore NAGB's pre-1994 authority to function as its own nominating committee, i.e. constraining the Secretary's appointees to people vetted by NAGB itself. (And perhaps stipulate that NAGB must consider candidates suggested by chairmen of the pertinent Congressional committees.) Otherwise, the Secretary will have a free hand to select whomever he wants -- as he does now.

6. Restore NAGB terms to 4 years (as was the case until 1994), with re-appointment permitted. (Today they last 3 years, which is a problem because it takes new members 1-2 years to get up to speed.)

Those are the essential statutory provisions.

Voluntary National Education Testing: Clinton Administration Proposed 2, Previous Administration Proposed 15

1997 - 2 Voluntary National Education Tests

President Clinton has proposed voluntary national testing for 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math. In those states that have chosen to participate in the voluntary national tests, parents will be able to measure their children's academic achievement and to make sure they have mastered these basics.

1991 - 15 Voluntary National Education Tests

President Bush proposed that students take 15 national tests through the course of their education. As part of its America 2000 Initiative, the Bush Administration put forward a plan to test students in three grades -- 4th, 8th and 12th grade. Students in each of these grades would be tested in each of five subjects: math, science, English, history and geography.

Former President George Bush:

"Working closely with the Governors, we will define new world-class standards for schools, teachers, and students in the five core subjects: math and science, English, history and geography. We will develop voluntary -- let me repeat it -- we will develop voluntary national tests for 4th, 8th, and 12th graders in the five core subjects. These American Achievement Tests will tell parents and educators, politicians, and employers just how well our schools are doing." [Public Papers of the Presidents, 4/18/91]

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

Mike -
These are from]
Neera Torden.
See what you
think.
- Bill

Congressman Goodling Hasn't Always Opposed National Education Tests to Measure Student Progress

1992: Goodling Supported National Education Testing

- Congressman Goodling was an **original co-sponsor** of the Bush Administration's central education initiative, "America 2000 Excellence in Education Act." [102 Bill Tracking H.R. 2460]. "Included in the 'America 2000' program were **voluntary national testing for fourth-, eighth- and 12th- graders...**" [CQ Almanac 1992, p.455]
- Congressman Goodling also **introduced** a substitute amendment to H.R. 4323, the Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Act, which was a Democratic education bill. One of the purposes of the amendment was "to establish a process in support of voluntary national education standards and a **national system of examinations.**" [138 Cong. Rec. H8074, 8/12/92]

This amendment would have specifically established a National Education Standards and Assessment Council **within the Department of Education.** [138 Cong. Rec. H8075, 8/12/92]

As introduced by Goodling, the legislation specified that the National Education Standards and Assessment Council would function as a "coordinating body to encourage a voluntary system of assessments for individual students consistent with the voluntary national standards; establish guidelines for the development and use of assessments to ensure that assessments are valid, reliable, and fair; develop criteria for assessments and the use of such assessments, to ensure that the assessments measure the world class standards and meet the guidelines...." [138 Cong. Rec. H8076, 8/12/92] [This amendment failed by a vote of 140 yeas to 267 nays. [138 Cong. Rec. H8089, 8/12/92]]

1997: Now Goodling Opposes Nation Education Testing

- Representative Goodling has introduced a House resolution and an amendment to a House appropriations bill to try to stop or delay the President's testing program. [The Washington Post, 8/19/97] His resolution calls on the Department of Education to stop planning for the test. The amendment to the Education Department's appropriation bill would cut off federal money for development of the tests until Congress specifically authorizes them. [AP Online, 8/24/97] He contends that the testing plan should be halted until congressional hearings are held, or until lawmakers explicitly vote to authorize it. [The Washington Post, 8/19/97]

Congressman Goodling recently said: "One of the many problems with the president's

national test proposal is that it comes at a time when we already have plenty of testing. American students are tested, tested and tested. We already know our students are not performing as well as they should be. We should help these students, not test them again." [The Times-Picayune, 8/24/97]

Congressman Goodling Initially Signaled Support for the Clinton Administration's Call for Two Voluntary National Education Tests

During his State of the Union Address, President Clinton challenged states to participate in voluntary national testing for 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math. Shortly thereafter, Congressman Goodling stated his support for the President's initiative:

Excerpt from The Washington Times, February 6, 1997:

"He'll back the president's push for national standards and for national reading and math tests, so long as nothing is mandatory, Mr. Goodling said.

'I'm not against the federal government getting experts together to say what we need to know in the core subjects,' he said. 'We have a role in helping to set standards.'"[The Washington Times, 2/6/97]

Republicans Support National Education Testing

Republican Governors Weld And Engler: Governor Engler, Republican of Michigan, and Governor Weld, Republican of Massachusetts, have agreed to have their schools take the national education tests proposed by President Clinton.

William Bennett, Former Education Secretary for President Reagan:

"I'm for national testing, voluntary national testing, because we need an independent audit. We need to know how our kids are doing, not just in the aggregate, but how the kids in this state are doing compared to the kids in that state..." [Fox News Sunday, 8/24/97 (www.foxnews.com)]

Note: Mr. Bennett would support the National Assessment Governing Board administering the test, rather than the Department of Education.

Former President George Bush:

"Working closely with the Governors, we will define new world-class standards for schools, teachers, and students in the five core subjects: math and science, English, history and geography. We will develop voluntary -- let me repeat it -- we will develop voluntary national tests for 4th, 8th, and 12th graders in the five core subjects. These American Achievement Tests will tell parents and educators, politicians, and employers just how well our schools are doing." [Public Papers of the Presidents, 4/18/91]

Lamar Alexander, Former Bush Administration Secretary Of Education:

Lamar Alexander's major education initiative as President Bush's Education Secretary was the creation of "America 2000." Included in the America 2000 program were "voluntary national testing for fourth-, eighth- and 12th-graders." [CQ Almanac, 1992 (p.455)]

Alexander: "And finally, I want to thank President Bush himself for putting a priority on this work. He talked in America 2000 about the importance of world-class standards in math, science, English, history, and geography. He talked about the idea of American achievement tests, a voluntary system of examinations so that parents and community leaders could know how their children and their schools are doing." [National Council on Education Standards and Testing News Conference, National Press Club, 1/24/92]

Representative Billy Tauzin, Republican Congressman :

"If the government is talking about setting standards and policy that should be worked out by parents and educators at home, I would agree that this is a mistake. But if all we are talking about is developing a test so we can see how well our fourth-graders and eighth-graders are doing nationally, I think that is something that is appropriate." [The Times-Picayune, 8/24/97]

Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander said that "one way or another - by act of Congress or interstate compact - we'll have the first-phase tests by 1993-94." [1991 Chicago Tribune, October 6, 1991]

He also said, Americans "urgently" need national tests "so that parents and communities can know where their own children and their schools stand in comparison with world-class standards in at least math, science, history, English, and geography." [Philadelphia Inquirer, 6/30/91; 1991 Daily Report Card, 7/1/91]

Alexander: "[W]e believe that we can have national standards about what children and adults ought to know and be able to do in math, English, science, history and geography. And that from those standards might be developed many tests which measure an individual child's progress toward those standards." [Federal News Service, Press Conference with Lamar Alexander, Secretary of Education, and Paul O'Neill, CEO, Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA), 4/22/91]

Reagan and Bush Education Officials Support National Testing:

Chester E. Finn Jr., former assistant secretary of education and head of the Office of Educational Research in the Reagan administration, and Diane Ravitch, who headed the same office in the Bush administration, support voluntary national tests, but are opposed to giving the Education Department oversight. Both believe the bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board, which sets policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or another independent organization, should oversee the new tests. [The Washington Times, August 19, 1997] Diane Ravitch has specifically said, "Yes, national testing is still a good idea, because our current patchwork of tests does not provide a common yardstick by which parents and educators can compare results. Some critics say that testing won't help children learn more, but testing based on high standards will give us valuable information about how we are doing." [Washington Post, 8/26/97]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 4, 1997

Contact: Johanna Schneider
(202) 872-1260

STATEMENT ON VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTING
BY JOHN A. KROL, PRESIDENT AND CEO, DUPONT COMPANY AND
CHAIRMAN OF THE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE
EDUCATION TASK FORCE

Washington, DC--In 1989, over 200 member companies in The Business Roundtable made a ten-year commitment to a state-by-state initiative to improve our K-12 education system. Over the course of the decade, states have made great strides in raising standards, assessing student performance on challenging tests and reforming state policies that affect student learning. However, a critical piece of information has been missing for parents -- how their own children measure up against national and international performance benchmarks. This was recognized by President Bush in his call for voluntary national testing.

New national tests that provide a national benchmark in fourth-grade reading and an international benchmark in eighth-grade mathematics for individual students could be in place by 1999. These national tests also could be killed by concerns about testing, governance struggles and partisan differences. There are important issues to be resolved but none are insurmountable. **In my own view, a national test must be free from even the appearance of partisan politics so that it can be a long-term barometer for student achievement. For this reason, the tests need independent oversight by a group outside the U.S. Department of Education, as recently agreed to by the Administration in response to concerns raised by Republicans. I urge the Administration and Congress to quickly work out any remaining differences that impede bipartisan support for voluntary national tests.**

No one in business believes that testing alone will improve our schools. But you also don't get what you don't measure. Successful companies continually assess performance -- both their own and their competitors. However, we don't do this just to record the data and file it away. We measure our strengths and weaknesses to make better-informed decisions and change direction if necessary.

Students already take a lot of tests. But parents often do not know whether their children are learning what they need to know to succeed or whether their children's test scores measure up to expectations in other communities, states or countries.

Good tests that are comparable across geographic boundaries are prerequisites to the actions needed to make dramatic improvements in our schools. Some schools obviously will need more help than others. What's needed to help students achieve higher academic performance will vary from place to place, but we must not shortchange students by lowering the standards based on where they reside.

States are beginning to set higher standards. I am particularly proud of DuPont's role in partnership with teachers to develop Delaware's science standards. Other states are equally proud of their own standards. But I also believe that Delaware needs an external measure to independently verify that we are indeed holding our students to a world class standard. That's the power of a national test that reports individual student scores.

The national test proposal endorsed by President Clinton has three compelling features that merit bipartisan support from Republicans and Democrats in Congress and the nation's Governors:

- First of all, it is voluntary. No state or district will be required to administer the tests. No federal strings will mandate use of the tests. Local control will be maintained.
- Second, two highly-regarded existing tests, now only given to a sample of students to measure state and national student achievement, will be adapted so that individual student scores can be reported. For the first time, parents and educators would know how their own children and students perform on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade mathematics. In math, there is an added advantage. The test would also be adapted from the math portion of the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) so that an individual American child's performance could be compared to children in 40 other countries. Results from tests given to a sample of students are too easy to dismiss as about someone else's kids. Individual student scores on these challenging tests will bring the message home.
- And third, the testing is limited to two basic subjects, reading and mathematics, at two critical junctures in a child's education, fourth grade and eighth grade. Of course, since people vehemently disagree on the best methods for teaching reading and math, the tests should be clear about the performance expected and leave it to local educators and parents to choose the methods they believe will best produce the desired results.

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.

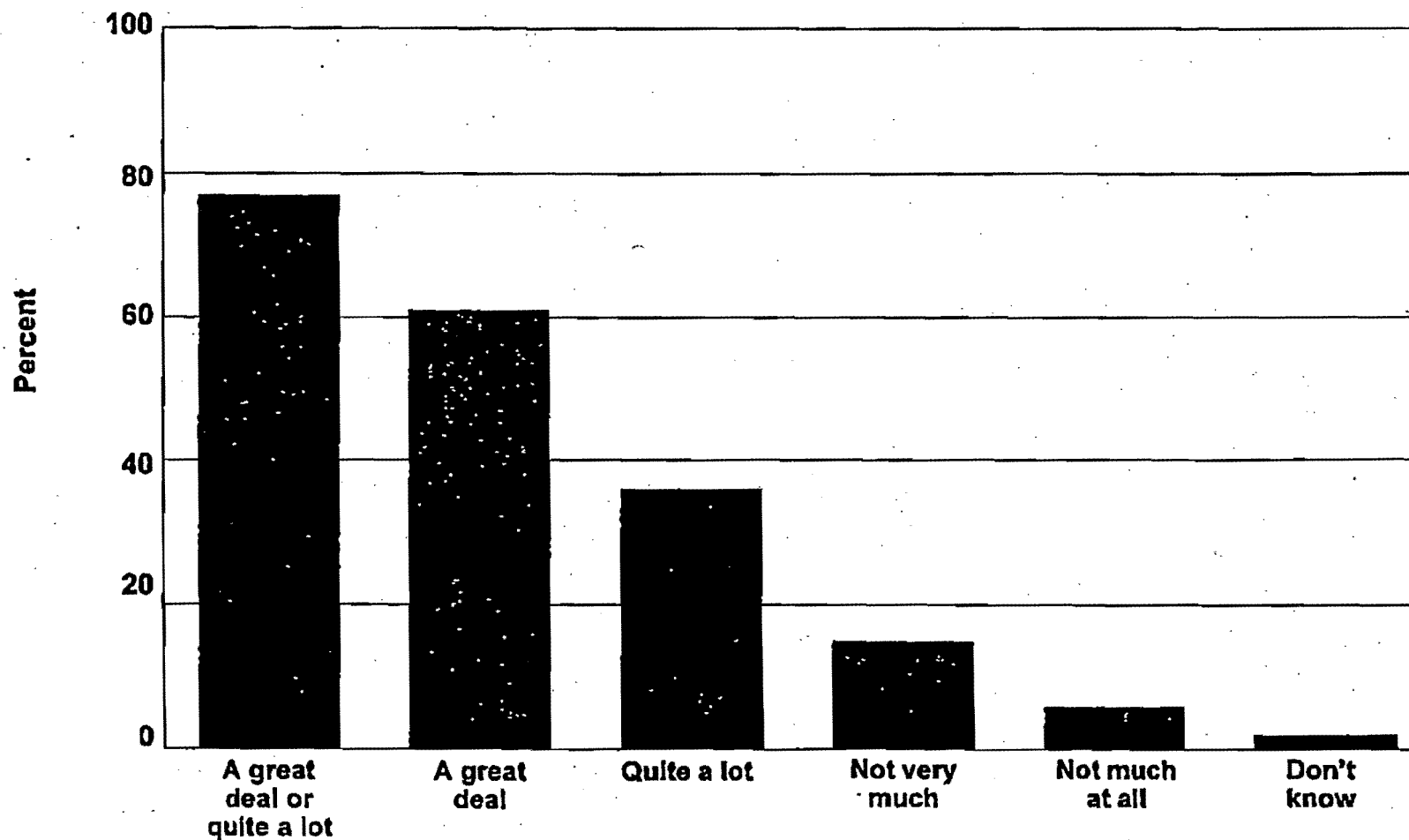
As a parent and grandparent, I believe we owe our children the kind of K-12 education that allows them to be successful in today's fast-paced world. Parents should be confident that their children are graduating from high school with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed at college or to obtain a good job.

Our schools serve many purposes, not the least of which is to instill the principles of citizenship in a democratic society. Education also prepares young people to succeed when they finish compulsory schooling to pursue further education and work. For business, improving the

education system's performance is more than a matter of good works; in our highly competitive global economy, it is a business necessity.

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

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



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

Talking Points for Mayors and Governors on the National Test

- I'm calling to talk to you about a vote that is expected next week, on the Labor-HHS Appropriations Bill, that will affect our participation in the President Clinton's voluntary national test.
- Bill Goodling is expected to offer an amendment to that bill that would stop all work on the development of these national tests in reading and math. **I'm calling to ask you to oppose that amendment.**
- Our city, along with 14 other cities throughout the nation, has signed up to participate in those tests when they become available in 1999. *[Our state, along with 6 other states, has signed up to participate in those tests when they become available in 1999. I know that many other Governors are seriously considering signing up as well.]* These tests are important to us, because they send a powerful signal to our students and our communities that we believe they can learn and meet high standards. Losing national standards and tests in the basics would be a setback to our own efforts.
- These tests are an integral part of our overall approach to raise standards for our students and hold our schools accountable. They will give parents accurate information about how well their children are doing. They support what we are already trying to do to help all of our students master the basic skills of reading and math. They will help us upgrade the curriculum, better train our teachers, and let parents know how they can help with their children's learning.
- The public strongly supports national standards and tests in the basics. Just earlier this week, Gallup released a poll showing that 77% of the respondents favor establishing national standards for measuring the academic performance of students, and 67% favor using standardized national tests.

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

A BIPARTISAN CALL FROM U.S. TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY LEADERS FOR HIGH NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS IN READING AND MATH

April 2, 1997

More than two hundred of America's technology industry leaders have joined today in a bipartisan call for national education standards — not federal government standards, but national standards. These should represent what all our students must know to succeed in the new knowledge economy of the 21st century. Every state and school must shape the curriculum to reflect these standards, and train teachers to lift students up to them.

To help schools meet the standards and measure their progress, we need an effort over the next two years to develop national tests of student achievement in reading and math. 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. The states have responsibility for setting challenging academic standards and for measuring student progress toward these standards. President Clinton's national testing initiative offers a new opportunity to use widely accepted national benchmarks in reading and math against which states, schools districts and parents can judge student performance.

Raising standards will not be easy, and some of our children will not be able to meet them at first. The point is not to put our children down, but to lift them up. Good tests will show us who needs help, what changes in teaching to make, and which schools need to improve. They can help us to end social promotion. For no child should move from grade school to junior high, or junior high to high school until he or she is ready.

Jim Barksdale
CEO & President
Netscape Communications

L. John Doerr
Partner
Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers

A BIPARTISAN CALL FROM U.S. TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY LEADERS FOR HIGH NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS IN READING AND MATH

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Paul Allaire	CEO	Xerox
Joseph Ambrosio	General Partner	Pirene Partners
Dr. Gilbert Amelio	CEO, Chairman	Apple Computer
Marc Andreessen	Co-Founder, Vice President of Technology	Netscape Communications
Vincente Anido, Jr.	President and CEO	Combichem, Inc.
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Sanjeev Chitre	CEO	Integrated Process Equipment Corp.
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April 2, 1997

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Charles Crocker
Anne Crossway
Peter Currie
A. Stephen Dahms
John Dean
Michael Dell
Jim Dezell
James Diller
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Henry Donaldson
Mark W. Dowley
Joe Durrett
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Howard Earhart
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PURPOSES FOR VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

- 1) To improve the odds of success for all students
- 2) Focus national attention on the need to improve the basic and advanced skills in reading and mathematics
 - a) importance of reading independently by end of 4th grade; learn to read and read to learn.
 - b) importance of learning challenging mathematics by 8th grade; know of the drop in the performance of students between 4th and 8th grade
- 3) Help standards come to life by providing teachers, parents, and students with examples of the kind of work expected of students in fourth grade reading and eighth grade mathematics
- 4) Through a national effort, help energize local efforts to improve teaching and learning in reading and mathematics to high standards through
 - a) Raise up the standard of instruction and curriculum for all students.
 - b) Stimulate greater use of high-quality materials to help teachers and parents prepare students
- 5) Provide students, parents, and teachers with accurate and reliable information about student performance measured against national standards. Parents have a right to know how well their children are doing.

PURPOSES FOR VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

- 1) To improve the odds of success for all students
- 2) Focus national attention on the need to improve the basic and advanced skills in reading and mathematics
 - a) importance of reading independently by end of 3rd grade; learn to read and read to learn.
 - b) importance of learning challenging mathematics by 8th grade; know of the drop in the performance of students between 4th and 8th grade
- 3) Help standards come to life by providing teachers, parents, and students with examples of the kind of work expected of students in fourth grade reading and eighth grade mathematics
- 4) Through a national effort, help energize local efforts to improve teaching and learning in reading and mathematics to high standards through
 - a) Raise up the standard of instruction and curriculum for all students.
 - b) Stimulate greater use of high-quality materials to help teachers and parents prepare students
- 5) Provide students, parents, and teachers with accurate and reliable information about student performance measured against national standards. Parents have a right to know how well their children are doing.

Key arguments

1) Public demand --

when I visit schools, parents, teachers, and students want to know how they measure up; they read about international comparisons in reading and mathematics; want to know how their students compare, especially important when students change school so frequently; voluntary national tests give them a tool to measure themselves against high standards; do not think that we should deny them this tool

2) Need for high standards

parents want their students to be challenged to meet high standards; realize the importance of schooling for the future of their children and the nation; skills demanded in the workplace have increased and are likely to increase more in the future; the voluntary national tests are demanding; they represent a high standard; we know that at the beginning that students will not do well on these tests because they are demanding; but we need to set high standards in the basic subjects of reading and mathematics to raise student performance;

3) Tests part of a public campaign

Public campaigns to raise the performance of our students in reading and mathematics; mobilize businesses, community organizations, parents, teachers, and others to become involved in reading and mathematics;

American Reads, mathematics challenge -- two initiatives to mobilize volunteers, parents, scientists and engineers to become involved in improving reading and mathematics

4) Tests in two critical subjects

Voluntary national tests are in two basic and critical subjects -- reading in 4th grade and mathematics in 8th grade. These are two critical transition points in a student's school career. Students who can not read independently by the end of 4th grade are likely to be poor students later. After 4th grade, we tend to stop teaching reading. Students are expected to be able to read independently to learn other subjects -- history, science, mathematics, geography. Those who can not read independently are at greater risk of school failure and potentially dropping out. 8th grade mathematics is also a critical time. Students who have not learned some algebra and geometry by the end of eighth grade are less likely to be able to take the kind of high school mathematics needed to be ready to enter college and do well in the job market.

5) Tests are not hidden

After the test is given, all of the items on the test will be made publicly available; all of the test items will be on the Web; parents, teachers and students can look at the items and see what is expected of students; can help teachers and parents in thinking about how to teach the basics of reading and mathematics; tests are to be developed by some of the outstanding test

companies

[releasing all of the items means that we will be developing a new test every year]

6) Tests build on NAEP

tests will use the NAEP frameworks which have been in use for some time and were developed through a national consensus process; over 40 states participate in NAEP and have found the results useful; the voluntary national tests are an "individualized NAEP"

[raises the role of NAGB]

RESPONSES TO ISSUES RAISED BY CONGRESSMAN GOODLING

1. Why do we need another test?

The world is changing. Today's students will be entering a highly competitive workforce that will demand greater knowledge and skills. The voluntary national tests will focus sustained national attention on the need to improve basic and advanced skills in reading in 4th grade and mathematics in 8th grade. These are two critical points in a child's learning, when they must have mastered basic reading skills to learn other subjects, and when they need to have mastered challenging mathematics to be prepared to take advanced mathematics courses necessary to be admitted college and to be successful in the workplace.

The tests will be a catalyst for mobilizing the efforts of parents, teachers, businesses, and communities in to help all students achieve to higher standards. An important feature of these tests is that they 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 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.

2. Tests don't generate higher academic performance.

Tests by themselves do not generate higher academic performance. But the reason we do test students is to learn how they are doing and what we need to do to improve their performance. The results from tests tied to rigorous standards can motivate students, teachers, and parents to examine what they can do better to help a child be able to read independently or to learn challenging mathematics.

3. Too controversial to act without Congressional authorization

We are interested in keeping everyone informed about the development of the voluntary national tests. I have been to Congress several times to testify about the test, including Congressman Goodling's committee. We are working closely with states, districts, educational organizations, and community groups to ensure that the Tests are developed through extensive collaboration. We have held numerous public meetings about the test and transcripts from these meetings are placed on the Department's home page. Last week we had leaders from 47 states at a conference on the test. The meeting was televised on C-SPAN and the press was present for the entire meeting. There is a growing interest in the Test. If states and local school districts want to use the test I do not see why the Congress would deny them the opportunity. I am always willing to work with members of Congress from both sides of the aisle.

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

We can all agree that making unfair comparisons of schools and school districts will get us nowhere. The teachers and schools working hard to improve education are not interested in making such comparisons, and we certainly are not either. The Department of Education will not publish the results from these tests. The results 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 this test. The test can give every student a chance to measure themselves against demanding standards and then focus on the areas that need improvement.

5. New national tests can lead to a national curriculum.

I am opposed to a national curriculum. I have testified before the Congress, including Mr. Goodling's Committee, that I am opposed to any such idea. As a former Governor, I believe that education is a state responsibility and a local

function. We have no interest in creating a national curriculum.

Providing a voluntary reading test in 4th grade and a voluntary mathematics test in 8th grade will not create a national curriculum. But it will strengthen local education by focusing attention on how to improve the performance of students in these two basic skills -- reading and mathematics.

6. Instead of another test, more resources should be sent into the classroom. Representative Goodling and I agree that more resources need to be sent into the classroom. This test will aid us in better understanding where those resources are needed and how they can be wisely spent. Our Administration has supported increased investment in helping states and communities raise standards, train teachers, improve basic skills, and promote the effective use of technology in the classroom.

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

The figure you are quoting is incorrect. Approximately 90% of that figure is money from GOALS 2000 that goes to states and local districts to use in improving education as they choose.

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 a 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. Every student will have their tests returned so the parents, teachers and students can see 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 college and to be successful in the workplace.

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

NAEP (National Assessment of Education 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 voluntary national 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.

4. 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.

5. Does the Department have the authority to develop voluntary national tests?

The Department has the authority to develop voluntary national tests but is asking Congress to give the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), which oversees NAEP, the authority to set policy for the voluntary national tests to assure the independence of the tests. NAGB is an independent bipartisan group established by Congress to set policy for NAEP. *We welcome a partnership with Congress in providing rigorous standards and providing measures to*

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

improve reading and learning in our schools

Public opinion polls show that almost two-thirds of the public support voluntary national tests. 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% of the fourth and eighth graders have already committed to using the voluntary national tests.

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 kind 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 this test. The test can give every student 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 strengthen local education by focusing attention on the need to improve the performance of students in these two basic skills -- reading and mathematics.

6. Instead of another test, shouldn't we send more resources should to the classroom?

More resources need to be sent into the classroom and this test will aid teachers and principals in better understanding where resources are needed and how they can be wisely spent. The Administration has supported increased investment in helping states and communities raise standards, train teachers, improve basic skills, and promote the effective use of technology in the classroom.

7. Doesn't the federal government spend over \$540 million to test students?

This figure is incorrect. Approximately 90% of that figure is money from GOALS 2000 that goes to states and local districts to use in improving education as they choose. The testing sponsored by the federal government, such as NAEP (National Assessment of Education Progress) and TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science Study), is conducted on a sample of students to learn how the Nation's students are performing and how well they compare to students in other countries. The voluntary national tests will provide similar information on the performance of an individual student.

8. 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 to improve 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.

9. What is being done to assure 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.

DRAFT

Question on NAGB's role in developing the voluntary national tests

1. Isn't too late for NAGB to play an important role in the development of the voluntary national tests?

No. The proposed legislative language will give NAGB a major role in the development of the voluntary national tests. NAGB will develop and approve, as appropriate, the test objectives and test specifications; guidelines for test administration, including guidelines for inclusion of, and accommodations for students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency; guidelines for reporting test results, including the use of performance levels; and guidelines for test use.

NAGB can review the test specifications that have been developed through a consensus process similar to the process NAGB uses. If necessary, modifications can be made in the test development contract.

~~2. Has the Department used a partisan process?~~

The process the Department has used in developing the voluntary national tests duplicates the process that NAGB uses to develop the National Assessments of Educational Progress. The voluntary national tests will use the same framework as NAEP and the test specifications were developed as NAGB develops their specifications. Like NAGB, we asked the Council of Chief State School Officers to appoint nonpartisan committees of teachers and other experts to design the test specifications. The request for proposals to develop the test was placed on the Internet for public comment. The contract for test development was awarded through a competitive process as is the case for the NAEP assessments.

456-5581

Mike Cohen

STATEMENT BY
SECRETARY RICHARD RILEY
REGARDING PROPOSED VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS
AND HOMESCHOOLING

I want to make very clear that, as proposed, the voluntary national tests in fourth grade reading and eighth grade mathematics skills are just that: voluntary. Decisions as to whether or not to participate would rest with states, local school districts and individual families. The amendment adopted by the Senate earlier today with Administration support clearly states that "use of the tests shall not be a condition for receiving any Federal funds."

With regard to children in private or parochial schools or those who are home-schooled, the Senate amendment specifically states that no State or local education agency may "require such individuals to take any test developed under this Act without the written consent of the student or individual."

As to decisions regarding individual students in public schools, decisions as to whether or not to participate would be a matter to be decided within the context of state law and local education agency policy. There is certainly no federal requirement that individual students participate.

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Mike -
This is from
Missy.
- Bill

September 22, 1997

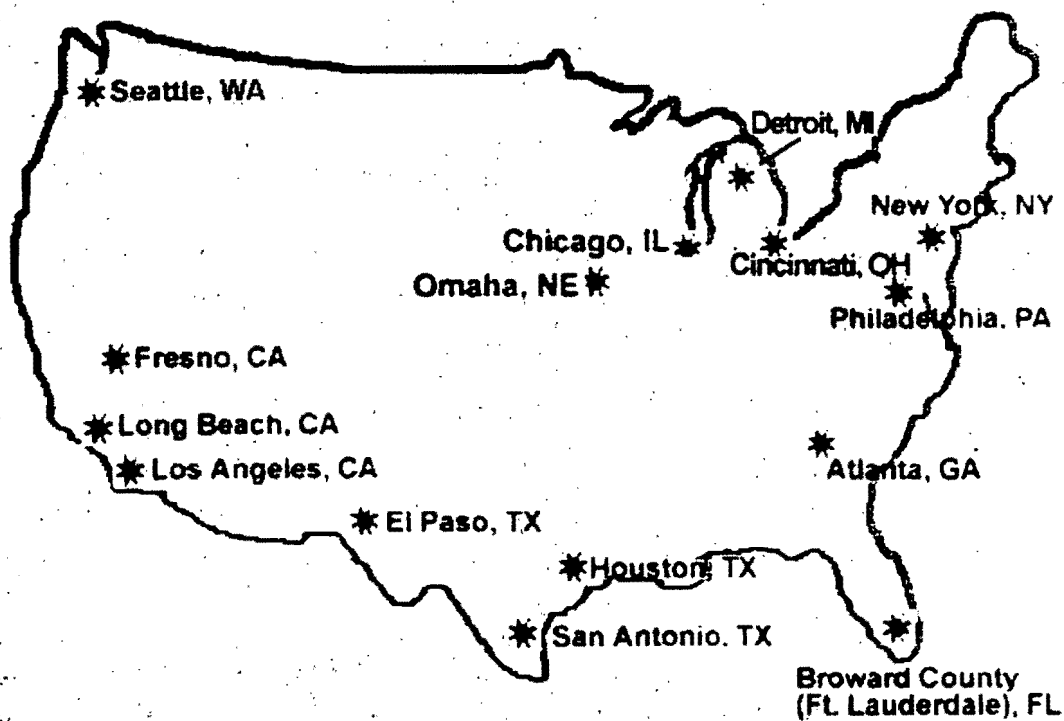
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FACT SHEET ON THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

- **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

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

**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

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.

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**FOR RELEASE
September 16, 1997**

**Contact: Erica Lepping, 401-2571
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**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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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 polling 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

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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

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

TALKING POINTS ON THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

Purpose of the Voluntary National Tests

- Not just another test
- Motivate changes and opportunities for children to learn to read well by end of 3rd grade and to learn to achieve challenging standards in 8th grade math
- Propel standards based reform - helping states and local districts move forward
- Mobilize the country around reading and math
- Test is a lever, a stimulus, something to capture people's attention
- Provides information on student performance against national standards, and for math, international standards
- Origin of tests was to support standards

Problems which led to the Voluntary National Tests

- Standards movement has hit a plateau; difficult to embed standards into the classroom
- Bringing the standards movement to life; how do we capture people's attention?

Solutions that the Voluntary National Tests will provide

- Mobilize the country
 - Parental involvement
 - Private sector - engineers, Pizza Hut, airlines, major league baseball
 - Ed programs and other government agencies' activities
 - Read*Write*Now!
 - Math Initiative (with NSF, NASA, OSTP)
- Show student work
 - Field test and other materials will show student work and the type of work we expect children to be able to do
 - After administration each year, the tests, along with scoring guides and other materials, will be available to parents, teachers, schools, etc.
- Timing is right
 - Press is reporting substantive education stories (e.g. TIMSS)
 - President Clinton and Secretary Riley are using the bully pulpit
 - Education is America's #1 priority

What is different about the Voluntary National Tests (VNT)

- Motivational factor: tests will motivate and mobilize communities to focus on helping kids master the basics and achieve high standards
- VNT provides an annual report of individual student proficiency
- NAEP - a sampling that by law cannot report individual scores
- Information will be available from state or local district for parents and/or teachers on an individual child which will empower them and ultimately lead to higher achievement
- Basic skills at pivotal times in a child's academic career - 4th grade reading; 8th grade math

07/02/97

HELPING CHILDREN READ WELL AND INDEPENDENTLY BY THE END OF 3RD GRADE

1. After-School Learning Opportunities

- *Read*Write*Now!*: Together with 60 reading and literacy groups, the Department of Education designed this summer tool kit in 1994 to help fight the "summer reading drop off." The program encourages children to read 30 minutes a day at least once or twice a week with an older reading partner, get a library card and use it, and learn one new vocabulary word a day. Local libraries, Title I schools and youth groups such as the Girl Scouts and Boys and Girls Club of America are helping sponsor 15 pilot sites for this summer program. These pilot sites in addition to Read*Write*Now efforts in libraries and other communities all over the country are expected to reach 1.5 million children. We are helping these sites by providing ongoing technical assistance and regional contacts from RIF, AMC Theaters, Title I, Corporation for National Service, and the Empowerment Zones.
- *Corporation for National Service*: National service grant programs that engage volunteer tutors in literacy efforts are working in hundreds of communities nationwide. This focus will continue to increase as all branches of national service -- AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America and the Senior Corps -- make childhood literacy a higher priority in their grant process.
- *Federal Work-Study (FWS)*: Colleges and universities throughout the nation will receive a 35 percent increase in Federal Work-Study funding July 1, 1997. President Clinton has challenged all colleges and universities to join The Honor Roll, which they do by pledging 50 percent of their FWS increase for tutoring preschool through elementary school children in reading. In exchange, Secretary Riley has waived the requirement for these colleges to match 25 percent of the funds for those FWS students who serve as reading tutors. The goal is to enlist at least 100,000 college students to help with reading instruction. As of June 16, 357 colleges have signed up, and we continue to actively recruit additional schools.

The Department of Education's Office of Student Financial Assistance has mailed every school that participates in the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program the *Expanding Federal Work-Study Community Service Opportunities Handbook*. The handbook will help institutions answer many of their technical questions, as well as provide examples of actual implementation plans developed by 20 institutions.

2. Materials

Some materials are already available for communities, schools, and families that want to learn about important developmental benchmarks, suggested activities, and other resources.

For Parents

- Lexile Framework (ready this summer)
- Checkpoints for Progress ("What Families and Communities Can Expect Children to Do in Reading and Writing" pre-school to 12th)
- Read*Write*Now! Basic Kit
- Ready!Set!Read Early Childhood Kit

For Teachers

- Lexile Framework
- Checkpoints for Progress (What Teachers and Learning Partners Can Expect Students to Do in Reading and Writing) K-12
- Ready!Set!Read Early Childhood Kit

Other tools we have now or will have soon:

- Simple Things To Do
- Just Add Kids
- The Partners Tutoring Program
- Examples/information about successful models for programs (National Academy of Sciences study in fall)
- International Reading Association (How to set up a reading consortium)

3. Ongoing Programs

The activities described here are being developed to build on existing, ongoing Department programs that contribute to helping children learn to read. While these programs are not targeted strictly to reading, they play a critical role in supporting the reading success of young children. Such programs include:

- *Improving America's School Act:* Title I, Even Start, and bilingual education under Title VII provide or support reading and readiness skills development services for millions of children in need of assistance. The Eisenhower Professional Development Program provides important professional development opportunities for teachers.
- *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.*
- *Other technical and research facilities, such as the OERI Early Childhood Reading Center.*

Planned Activities

1. Summer 1998 We are beginning plans to expand substantially existing Read*Write*Now! community coalitions for the summer of 1998, and to enlist other federal departments as partners.

2. Using Libraries as a Resource We are discussing launching a school-year national campaign with the American Library Association for all students to obtain library cards and guidance on library use. The American Library Association is exploring a development program for schools and classrooms.

3. Student Mentoring Scholastic has preliminary plans to include in all of their publications for the fall a campaign encouraging older students to tutor and mentor younger students. As with all other year-long themes for their publications, they would form an advisory committee of associations and organizations to support this effort in appropriate ways.

4. AIM The Office of Migrant Education in OESE is working with representatives from agribusiness to launch a partnership focusing on improving educational opportunities for migrant children and families. This partnership will be called AIM: Agriculture + Industry + Migrant Education = AIM for Success in School. The businesses are: Tyson, IBP, Excel/Cargill, Seneca Foods and Curtice-Burns. They will focus on NY, PA, AR, NE and KS.

5. Booksellers The American Booksellers Association has launched a campaign to encourage its membership to become involved in local reading coalitions or to help launch community coalitions if they do not exist. They are working with Scholastic to develop a kit that they will send to their membership later this summer or early in the fall. They are focusing on the summer of 1998 as a first step.

6. The Voluntary National Test By September 1, America Reads Challenge will have a written plan and time line for carrying out pre- and post-test activities specifically related to the voluntary national test, in addition to more general child and family literacy activities and materials. We are consulting with organizations and individuals, who are recognized as experts in early reading development, to identify materials and activities. We expect to produce, primarily under contract, a series of written materials, videos, and possibly software to benefit parents, teachers and community groups serving young children and their families. The subject matter would include:

- examples of what the test will look like (consistent with Department policy on what is appropriate for dissemination), analysis: explanation of items and of why these are important skills, and activities for each grade K-3.
- standards for pre-school programs.

Other items will be determined. We will maintain a sensitivity to children in groups identified as high risk: low income, children with disabilities, limited English proficient, homeless, Native Americans.

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HELPING STUDENTS MASTER CHALLENGING MATHEMATICS BY THE END OF 8TH GRADE

The voluntary national test in mathematics at the end of 8th grade is a focal point of a sustained effort to help ensure that by that point in their education, all students master challenging mathematics, including the fundamentals of algebra and geometry, and are prepared to pursue higher-level mathematics and science courses that are the gateway to college, citizenship, productive employment and lifelong learning.

The recent results of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) shows that U.S. students generally learn the basics of mathematics and score above the international average at the 4th grade. However, by 8th grade U.S. students score below the international average. One reason for this is our low expectations for our students. While our students tend to study arithmetic through 7th or 8th grade, in high-performing nations students in these grades move from mastering arithmetic to using it in complex problems and learning the foundations of algebra, geometry, measurement, probability and statistics.

The voluntary national test will supply all our citizens with readily identifiable, accessible, and concrete understandings of what students should know and what world-class performance looks like at the 8th grade. This effort focuses on the essential elements of helping students meet these standards, particularly in grades 4-8: (1) building public understanding of what challenging mathematics looks like in grades 5-8; (2) equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge to teach challenging mathematics effectively; (3) assisting communities in efforts to implement high-quality curricula and instructional materials; and (4) developing opportunities to engage volunteers in activities that build students' interest and achievement in mathematics. Activities will be carried out in collaboration with other federal agencies, education, mathematics and professional organizations, the business community, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and others.

- o **Interagency Working Group on Improving Mathematics Education co-chaired by the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation.** The working group is preparing a comprehensive Action Strategy that will include strategies for addressing each of the critical areas noted above and specific plans of federal agencies to implement those strategies. The action strategy will be released this summer.

While the Action Strategy now being developed will guide much of our work, some preliminary activities are already underway. These include:

- o **Learning from TIMSS.** TIMSS provides a wealth of information not only about student achievement but also about curriculum, teaching practices and other factors that affect U.S. performance in mathematics. We are developing a TIMSS Toolkit that will make this information easily accessible and usable for teachers, administrators and concerned citizens. To promote effective use of the Toolkit, this fall the Department,

the Eisenhower Consortia and NCTM will be holding a series of national and regional training sessions for master teachers, math supervisors, professional developers and others interested in using it. We are also sharing key information about TIMSS with school board members and others who might use it to spark local conversations about improving mathematics education.

- o Showing what high standards in mathematics by the end of 8th grade looks like.** The Department, in collaboration with NSF and major mathematics and education organizations, will develop a range of materials for students, families and educators that address the major areas of mathematics that students should master by this point in their education, the sorts of items they should be able to grapple with, and examples of student work. They will also include extended and interesting mathematics problems that students can enjoy doing outside the classroom.
- o Supporting effective teacher preparation and professional development.** To equip current teachers with the content knowledge and pedagogical skills they need to teach challenging mathematics, we plan an extensive strategy that includes creating high-quality professional development tools and large-scale teacher networks to support teachers' efforts to be mathematical thinkers. As a first step in this larger effort to support improved teacher preparation and professional development, we are developing guides that highlight promising practices and programs and strategies and tools for improving existing programs.
- o Identifying promising and exemplary curriculum.** As part of a larger effort to provide good information and support to assist teachers and communities in selecting and implementing high quality curriculum, the Department will develop a guide to exemplary and promising mathematics curricula and programs. Based on specific legislative authority, the Department has convened an expert panel to review materials and make recommendations.
- o Materials supplementing the voluntary national test that will help parents, teachers, schools and communities better use it to improve teaching and learning.** To assist communities in their efforts to prepare their students to meet high standards in mathematics, we will develop a guide on how to start a school and district review process and the resources that are available to support those efforts. Another critical activity will be the development of a set of materials that will assist teachers and districts on how to use the test results for instructional purposes.
- o Upgrading mathematics instruction through Title I, Eisenhower and other federal programs.** In addition to providing Title I schools with the materials and supports that are available to all schools, we are developing specific strategies to assist states and districts in using Title I and Eisenhower resources to help students reach high standards in mathematics. These strategies include: (1) a national conference on better coordination and use of Title I, NSF State and Local Systemic Initiatives, Eisenhower

Professional Development and other key programs; (2) developing and widely sharing through IASA conferences, newsletters and other means research-based methods for using Title I to improve mathematics instruction.