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001	Memorandum	No Child Left Behind Reauthorization - To: POTUS - From: Karl Zinsmeister	2	10/09/2007	P5;

COLLECTION TITLE:

Staff Secretary, White House Office of the

SERIES:

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FOLDER TITLE:

No Child Left Behind: A Timeline (2001 - 2008) [3]

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RESTRICTION CODES

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- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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2006

COPY
FROM ORM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 4, 2006

10/4/06

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: KARL ZINSMEISTER
FROM: SECRETARY MARGARET SPELLINGS
SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NCLB BRIEFING

PURPOSE

To brief you on the status of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and plans for the upcoming reauthorization of the law.

BACKGROUND

I will lead an overview of the status of some key issues in NCLB and will preview issues that may warrant further attention as the Administration plans for the reauthorization of NCLB next year. The meeting will kick off with a brief discussion of school safety in light of recent school shootings. You will then receive an overview of the following topics:

Achievement Overview

Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2002, State achievement scores have generally risen and achievement gaps have started to close. Recent studies on the implementation of the Reading First program show the program is having a significant positive effect on reading instruction. Yet, there is still much work to be done. Results across the Nation vary as states have implemented annual assessments in grades three through eight for the first time last year. In addition, large gaps are evident in many states between the percentage of students scoring proficient on state assessments and the percentage of students scoring proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). As we are several years into the implementation of NCLB, more schools are being identified for improvement, corrective action, and restructuring.

Supplemental Services/Choice Background and Data

Parents may choose to transfer their child to a higher performing school (after their child's current school has failed to make adequate yearly progress for two years) or, if the

family is low-income, have their child receive free tutoring from a Supplemental Educational Services (SES) provider the parents select from a state-approved list (after the current school has failed to make adequate yearly progress for three years). School districts are required to set aside 20% of their Title I funding to cover the costs of tutoring or transporting students to their "choice" schools.

Although the number of students receiving tutoring has increased, the participation rates for SES and school choice remain unacceptably low. Many school districts are not informing families of their choice and SES options in a timely and understandable manner as required by law. The process for families to select a new school or an SES provider is often complicated and confusing. In some districts, there are not enough high performing schools to meet the demand from families for school transfers and districts are not expanding public school choice capacity (through, for example, creation of new charter schools). Last year, the Department started several pilot programs to increase SES participation and is also beginning visits and enforcement efforts to ensure better implementation of the law.

High School Issues

High School reform has been an Administration priority for the past several years, and should be a key component of NCLB reauthorization. High schools lack the level of data that is now provided in elementary and middle school, and too many students are not challenged with rigorous coursework that will prepare them for college and the workforce, especially in math and science.

This year, the Department has been implementing two new student aid programs: Academic Competitiveness (AC) Grants and SMART Grants. The first year implementation of AC Grants, which go to Pell-eligible college freshman and sophomores who take a rigorous high school course of study, has demonstrated the lack of rigorous requirements across the nation. A small number of states are increasing graduation requirements and providing more opportunities for students to take challenging coursework, but many states have yet to embrace high school reform and high standards for high school graduates.

Next Steps on NCLB Reauthorization

NCLB is up for reauthorization in 2007. For the past several months, the Department has been working on its policy proposal for NCLB reauthorization. I believe the ultimate goal of reauthorization proposal should be to reinforce the goal of every child at or above grade level by 2014 and ensuring that every child is equipped to succeed in today's global economy.

There are several goals to achieve in a successful NCLB reauthorization: (1) Institutionalizing the accountability and assessment provisions of the law by reaffirming grade level performance in reading and math for every child by 2014. (2) Strengthening restructuring in persistently low-performing schools and providing more options,

including private school, for parents of students in the lowest-performing schools. (3) Expanding the principles of NCLB to high school through more accountability and rigor. (4) Rounding out the accountability system with other subjects (including science, which you called for earlier this year); raising the bar to promote boosting student achievement from grade-level proficiency, as established in the law, to advanced levels; and producing better data, including data on high school graduation rates. (5) Promoting an outcome-based definition of "highly effective teacher" that recognizes that effective teachers in the classroom are those who raise student achievement, especially in our highest-need schools.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
10/5/06

October 5, 2006

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

FROM: KARL ZINSMEISTER

SUBJECT: New DPC Priorities

Over the next two years, the DPC will continue to pursue many important existing priorities—immigration reform, health care innovations, competitiveness, legal reform, and so forth. The purpose of this memo is to sketch three possible *fresh* initiatives in domestic policy for your final 837 days in office, and seek your feedback. Once these proposals are fleshed out over the next few months, we will submit to you specific items for decisions that have been reviewed through the budget and White House policy processes.

1) REAUTHORIZE NCLB

Make reauthorization of NCLB one of the Administration's highest priorities in 2007; aiming to deepen and expand the program's accountability measures, including school choice mechanisms that will open escape hatches to students trapped in the worst schools.

Under NCLB, schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) are required to allow public school choice within their districts. But only 1 percent of the millions of eligible students exercise their transfer option. NCLB also stipulates that schools missing AYP for three consecutive years must offer Supplemental Educational Services (tutoring) to disadvantaged students. Yet just 19 percent of eligible children enroll.

In both cases, it is not a lack of demand but rather a variety of obstacles that limit participation. Schools are not adequately or sufficiently informing parents of their options. And in many of these public school districts there is no quality alternative.

NCLB reauthorization provides an opportunity to overcome these barriers and offer more children true options in schooling. Most dramatically, we're proposing to launch Opportunity Scholarships, the first true nationwide choice program.

Opportunity Scholarships would become available to children in our Nation's very worst schools—those that have failed to meet NCLB standards for six years in a row. These are the chronic failures, the worst of the worst, collectively about 1,000 schools with a half-million schoolchildren stuck in them.

We're working with the Department of Education on a proposal to make each of those children eligible for a fully portable scholarship of \$3,500-\$4,000. These could be used to enroll at a

different public school in the same district, at a public school in an adjoining district, or at a local private or parochial school. Students could also stay in their present school and use their scholarship for intensive, high-quality tutoring from a certified third party.

Supplemental Educational Services—NCLB's tutoring program is another place where DPC and the Education Department are mulling reforms. At present, poorly performing schools are required to set aside 20 percent of their Title I funds to provide tutoring (or transportation for students exercising their public school choice options). If they don't spend the money, however, the schools are allowed to keep it and redirect it to other purposes.

There is thus little incentive to offer the services intended, and many schools have dragged their feet in letting parents know they have alternatives. To realign incentives, DPC has suggested that ED explore the efficacy of a "use or lose" approach for those set-aside funds. If the required services aren't provided to a sufficient percentage of eligible students, the funding would be withdrawn. This policy would need to be constructed carefully lest it be portrayed as unfairly taking resources from low-performing school and so we're still vetting it for unintended consequences. Once the vetting process is complete, we will bring a more developed proposal on choice incentives to you for approval. We need to make sure this doesn't become overly punitive—Secretary Spellings and I recognize that the reauthorization needs to have the right mix of positive encouragements, flexibility, and negative sanctions for it to work. In any case, our goal will be to increase participation in NCLB's tutoring program to at least 50 percent of eligible students by 2010.

Charter school capacity is another priority that needs pursuing as we reauthorize NCLB. States should be encouraged to increase the stock of charter schools so children have wider public-school options. Fully 26 states have capped their number of charter schools, or limited enrollments. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools estimates that if existing charter schools were just allowed to expand to meet the demand of current waiting lists, student enrollments in alternative institutions would increase overnight by 20 percent. Federal incentives (in discretionary grant programs) that would encourage lifting these caps should be written into the law.

Reform of conventional public schools will remain critical, DPC and Ed agree, even as we "challenge the system with choice and charters," as Secretary Spellings puts it. Schools should both be offered new resources and expected to provide additional forms of accountability. Some of the ideas the Department is considering:

- Expand NCLB to high schools, and begin assessments of science in all schools.
- In the NCLB annual assessments, begin to test higher levels of subject mastery, not just bare grade-level minimums.
- Use student achievement outcomes to define what constitutes a "highly effective teacher," and encourage such teachers.
- Offer states incentives to raise the bar on their academic standards through such means as using the NAEP standards and assessments to improve less rigorous State assessments.
- Repeated failure to achieve AYP could be declared a cause for dissolving sclerotic union rules at inadequate schools (much as bankruptcy releases businesses from collective bargaining strictures).

Overall, the Education Department proposes to distribute \$2.1 billion of new spending for NCLB reauthorization as follows:

- \$1.1 billion for everything necessary to extend the NCLB apparatus to high schools
- a fresh \$500 million for Opportunity Scholarships (making a total of \$600 million)
- \$300 million as a sweetener for non-adequate school districts in the form of new spending to aid restructuring (we already spend \$200 million for restructuring, so this brings that pot to \$500 million)
- \$100 million for incentive grants to states and districts to encourage academic rigor in high school curricula
- \$100 million for miscellaneous initiatives

If we request a significant amount of new spending of NCLB reauthorization initiatives within our tight discretionary spending levels, it will force us to make several tough choices elsewhere in our discretionary budget. We will consider these choices, and the exact components of the NCLB reauthorization, in the coming months along with the rest of your FY 2008 Budget proposal.

2) LAUNCH AN "INTELLIGENT COMMUTING" INITIATIVE

Attack energy, environmental, and quality-of-life problems simultaneously via bold market-oriented and technology-based transportation reforms.

The Nation faces serious transportation problems today—growing commuter delays, air traffic overloads, trucking slowdowns—that are gathering into a logistics crisis in places. Congestion in our transportation system squanders billions of gallons of fuel annually, and billions of hours of human time.

This is as true in the air as on our roads. In the latest year, more than a quarter of all commercial flights were late or cancelled. The pressure on the system will worsen dramatically over the next couple of decades, as passenger enplanements double, and the number of aircraft in the skies soars. This week, the first of a new crop of microjets costing just a million and a half dollars will help double the number of blips on controller radar screens within ten years.

The only proven way to handle these congestion pressures is to think differently and reform boldly. The Administration is in a good position to propose new market mechanisms, technology upgrades, and fresh regulatory approaches that would reduce slowdowns in our air space and on our roads, and raise the efficiency of the transportation networks that are now so critical to our economy and society. In the process, fuel efficiency will improve, environmental quality will improve, personal and family time will be conserved, and workers will become more effective on the job.

DOT already has launched an initiative to encourage state and local leaders to pursue new private financing opportunities made available in last year's highway bill. Initial reaction has been positive: new projects are in the works and U.S. financial institutions have rapidly raised billions of dollars to invest in future projects. Experiments in the U.S., Europe, Canada, and other places have proven that demand pricing of overloaded roads can dramatically reduce traffic jams. Even small reductions in volume at critical periods can yield large improvements in traffic throughput. Your

advisers are considering a chapter on congestion pricing for inclusion in the next Economic Report of the President.

Going forward, DPC and the Department of Transportation are developing a raft of market-based reforms—including a far-reaching air-traffic restructuring, congestion pricing at airports, demand pricing on new lanes or new roads, more telecommuting, and regulatory and tax relief for home workers.

The ripest opportunity may be a modernization of the FAA, which is up for reauthorization in Congress next year. The agency will likely be undergoing dramatic alterations no matter what politicians might wish for, because its financing mechanism (the ticket tax) is broken, its workforce of post-PATCO hires will soon retire en masse, and it is about to undergo a once-in-a-lifetime technology shift from ground radars, radios, and human controllers to satellite tracking with much more automation. This presents a golden opportunity to work with the FAA and the aviation industry to fix some badly broken aspects of our air traffic system. We're also working on ways to use congestion pricing to reduce bottlenecks at the 39 U.S. airports rated as overloaded.

3) INITIATE A SECOND WAVE OF FAITH-BASED CHARITY

Launch new undertakings at the Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. Simultaneously lead it through a major accountability and research assessment in order to cement its success and permanence.

To this point, the focal work of our faith-based effort has been to ensure that religious service providers can qualify equally for federal grants. Great progress has been made in achieving this. Now it's time to launch a wider wave of undertakings:

- Link the OFBCI more closely to priorities in other parts of the Administration, for instance by using OFBCI to recruit inner-city parochial schools into the No Child Left Behind tutoring program.
- Interweave the OFBCI with voluntarism efforts by Freedom Corps and the Corporation for National and Community Service, to encourage people of faith to volunteer at secular charities, and inspire more secular volunteers to join in religious charitable work. Currently these efforts operate on separate tracks.
- Encourage expansion of state and local faith-based offices, and integrate them more fully with Federal counterparts.
- Look for means to support new charitable tax credits and other tax preferences for private giving. The advantage of tax preferences over direct Federal funding is that they shift authority to grassroots faith groups and the customers of charities, while avoiding excessive church-state entanglements.
- Likewise, build on last year's effort to identify promising niches where vouchers can be used to include faith-based groups among the choices offered to aid recipients, while avoiding Establishment Clause conflicts. Only a few pilot efforts may be possible, but that would still open up an important avenue of change.

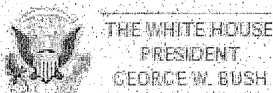

A recent GAO investigation criticized the faith-based office for a failure to evaluate the effectiveness of its services. A number of other critics have echoed this concern that the initiative

has not adequately demonstrated its ability to achieve hard, practical, and positive outcomes in the lives of clients.

This is not an unreasonable interest. One of the lessons of the first War on Poverty was that simply having our hearts in the right place is not enough. And one of the signatures of your Administration, as in your education reforms, has been an emphasis on assessment and accountability. To keep the faith-based initiative strong for years to come, we need to show that religiously inspired social work is effective.

Toward this end, the DPC proposes to lead a very specifically focused two-day "Expert Consensus" of the sort that U.N. ambassador John Bolton recently took part in to help set U.N. priorities. With funding from several prominent private foundations and participation by leading scholars to lend objectivity, we believe we can produce, by next spring, an expert assessment of the most promising avenues for faith-based social work.


We would use this review to breathe new vigor and discipline into the initiative, inject a dose of scientific certitude, and offer fresh direction and energy—as part of our effort to make certain this signature initiative flourishes beyond the close of this Administration.



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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
October 5, 2006

President Discusses NCLB Reauthorization at the Education Department

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C.

 [Fact Sheet: The No Child Left Behind Act: Challenging Students Through High Expectations](#)

 [In Focus: Education](#)

 [en Español](#)

10:03 A.M. EDT



VIDEO Multimedia

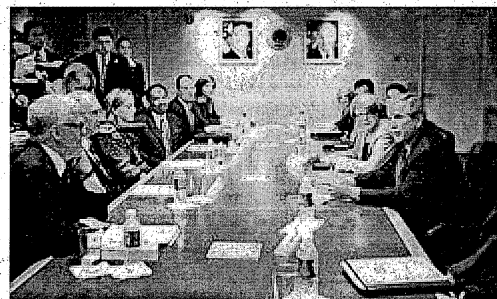
President's Remarks

 [view](#)

THE PRESIDENT: I want to thank Secretary Spellings and her fine team for welcoming me here to the Department of Education. I have just reassured the Secretary and the folks who work here that the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act is a priority of this administration. And the reason I say it's a priority is because this act is working. We strongly believe in setting high standards for all students and we strongly believe that in order to make sure those standards are met we must measure to determine whether or not the schools are functioning the way we expect them to function, and the way the parents expect them to function, and the way the taxpayers expect them to function.

No Child Left Behind is working and we've been strategizing here as to how to make sure we not only defend it during the reauthorization process, but how we strengthen the law.

And so I want to thank you all for your work. I particularly want to thank the teachers and principals who have taken the No Child Left Behind Act and have implemented it, and have seen the dramatic results that can be achieved by rigorous academics and strong curriculum and hard work in the classroom.




The most important function of government at home is to make sure that a child receives an excellent education, and that's particularly important in a world that is becoming more globalized. I'm optimistic we can achieve our objectives. I know this law is working and I look forward to working with Congress in the next legislative session to reauthorize and strengthen the No Child Left Behind Act.

Thank you.

END 10:05 A.M. EDT


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THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
October 5, 2006

Fact Sheet: The No Child Left Behind Act: Challenging Students Through High Expectations

- [President Discusses NCLB Reauthorization at the Education Department](#)
- [In Focus: Education](#)

The No Child Left Behind Act Is A Historic Law - It Is Working, And It Is Here To Stay. When he came to Washington, President Bush worked with Republicans and Democrats to pass the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and he was proud to sign it into law. Today, President Bush discussed the progress made under NCLB and areas where we can look to improve.

- **The Theory Behind No Child Left Behind Is Straightforward: The Federal Government Will Ask For Demonstrated Results On The Investment It Makes In Education.** Local schools will remain under local control, but instead of just sending checks from Washington and hoping for the best, we are measuring results and holding schools accountable for teaching every student to read, write, add, and subtract.
- **The No Child Left Behind Act Is Changing More Than The Law - It Is Changing A Culture.** We are leaving behind the days when schools shuffled children from grade to grade, especially minorities and children who do not speak English at home. We are making it clear that every child can learn, and every school must teach. There can be no compromise on the basic principles of NCLB: Every student must read, write, add, and subtract at grade level - that is not too much to ask.
- **We Have Come Too Far To Turn Back Now - Reauthorizing No Child Left Behind Is Critical.** If we were to lower standards and roll back accountability now, we would be abandoning children to the status quo that failed for decades, and the children hurt most would be the ones NCLB was designed to help - children in the inner cities, in rural America, and in special education.

The No Child Left Behind Act Is Working. The most recent national tests show encouraging results:

- In reading, 9-year-olds have made larger gains in the past five years than at any point in the previous 28 years;
- In math, 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds earned the highest scores in the history of the test; and
- In both reading and math, African American and Hispanic students are scoring higher, and are beginning to close the achievement gap with their white peers.

The No Child Left Behind Act Has Brought Good Progress - Yet We Still Have Much Work To Do

1. We Must Improve Teacher Quality. Bringing every student up to grade level requires a quality teacher in every classroom. President Bush worked with Congress to create a Teacher Incentive Fund that allows States and school districts to reward teachers who demonstrate results for their students and who make the tough decision to teach in the neediest schools.

- **President Bush Has Also Proposed A New Program To Encourage Math And Science Professionals To Bring Their Expertise Into The Classroom As Part-Time Teachers.** The President calls on Congress to fund this program.

2. We Must Improve Options For Parents. We must do more to help parents use their options when their children are trapped in struggling schools. We will work with school districts to provide parents with more timely

and useful information about their transfer options and, especially in big cities, to help more students take advantage of the free intensive tutoring offered under NCLB.


- **President Bush Proposed A Nationwide Opportunity Scholarships Program To Help More Students Escape Troubled Schools.** His proposal would allow 28,000 low-income children to transfer to a private or religious school of their choice. The President calls on Congress to create this program, so we can help more children attend a good school and turn around their lives.
- **This School Year, About 1,800 Low-Income Students Have Used Scholarships From The D.C. Opportunity Scholarships Program To Enroll At A School Of Their Choice.** Congress created this program in 2004 with strong support from the Administration and Mayor Anthony Williams of Washington, D.C.

3. We Must Improve Our High Schools. We need to bring the same high standards and accountability of NCLB to America's public high schools. The President calls on Congress to pass his proposed \$1.5 billion initiative to fund testing early in high school and to help teachers fix problems before it is too late, and his proposed program to train 70,000 teachers over five years to lead Advanced Placement classes in high school.

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COPY FROM ORM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 15, 2006

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

12/15/06

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: KARL ZINSMEISTER

FROM: SECRETARY MARGARET SPELLINGS

RE: No Child Left Behind Reauthorization

Purpose

To provide background for the December 15 policy time on the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), a Presidential priority.

Policy Background

The Department of Education (ED) and DPC have been working to develop a reauthorization proposal aimed at two goals: (1) Preserving NCLB's core principles; and (2) Proposing new initiatives that will improve and strengthen the law. Your advisors are in agreement on the policies laid out in sections I and II below, except for a question regarding private school choice, detailed at the end of this memo.

I. Preserving the Core Principles of NCLB

Key components of NCLB must be protected in reauthorization. These include:

- a) All students reading and doing math on grade level by 2014;
- b) Annual assessments and disaggregation of data;
- c) Qualified teachers in every classroom; and
- d) Timely information and options for parents.

Any changes to these key components will water down the law and undo the significant progress we have made over the past five years.

II. New Initiatives That Will Strengthen and Improve the Law

Reauthorization also presents the opportunity to build on the law's core principles. New policy proposals for reauthorization include:

Rewards for Progress and Flexibility for Innovation

- a) Allow for the measurement of individual student growth and/or deficiency.

- b) Give States the flexibility to differentiate among the various stages of school improvement by targeting interventions on the students and schools that need the most help.

Challenging Our Students and Preparing Them to Succeed

- c) Provide dedicated funding to high schools through the Title I program for reform activities and require assessments in two new grades or courses. One of these assessments must be aligned to college-level expectations.
- d) Authorize American Competitiveness Initiative programs (Math Now, Advanced Placement, and Adjunct Teacher Corps) in the reauthorization of NCLB.
- e) Require States to report proficiency rates for State and NAEP assessments on the same report card.

Helping Teachers Close the Achievement Gap

- f) Provide greater incentives for effective teachers and for teachers who teach in the neediest schools and get results by expanding the Teacher Incentive Fund. This program can be expanded by reallocating existing NCLB funding for Teacher Quality.

Strengthening Public Schools and Empowering Parents

- g) Strengthen restructuring in the accountability system, so that schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress for five straight years undertake real reform. These real reform options include: the option for superintendents to renegotiate teacher union contracts to be able to place the best teachers in the neediest schools; the option to create new charter schools, even within States that have reached their State charter school cap; and private school scholarships for students in the lowest-performing schools.
- h) Require school districts to use their entire allocation of federal funding for tutoring or public school choice or roll it over to the next year, instead of allowing those funds to revert back to the school district.
- i) Hasten the delivery of test scores to parents so they can make more informed decisions about choosing a public school or tutoring.
- j) Provide resources for School Improvement Grants to support real school reform.
- k) Match existing state tax credits some States have established for corporate donations to scholarship funds. (This proposal is pending as a part of tax discussions.)
- l) CEA urges that reimbursing parents for their time spent transporting children to an alternative school be explored as a way to encourage more use of the school choice option in poorly performing schools.

Private School Choice

NCLB has created an accountability and assessment system that now allows us to know which schools are chronically underperforming. We have a strong argument to make that students trapped in these schools deserve the opportunity to attend a different school of their choice. After starting at a higher number in ED's initial budget request, ED and

OMB have agreed to \$300 million in funding for scholarships at out-of-district public, private, or religious schools. This would allow \$3,000 scholarships for 200,000 students across the country, which is approximately 12% of the eligible low-income students in restructuring schools. (This \$3,000 scholarship includes the approximately \$1,500 existing Title I per-pupil allocation that would flow with the child.) Both ED and DPC are committed to including a robust choice program in the reauthorization proposal.

But there will ultimately be a strategic choice to make on whether you will demand that any reauthorization proposal must contain a private school choice experiment. Given the new landscape in Congress, ED and OLA believe it will be extremely difficult to get any private school choice proposal passed, since Republicans are not united on this issue and we do not have the votes for it to pass. DPC believes that reauthorization is far more likely to gain support from skeptical conservatives if it takes a stand on choice. But every veto-level requirement creates a higher risk of not getting a reauthorization bill passed during the last two years of your Administration. Eventually you may need to decide whether to threaten to veto any measure that fails to expand school choice options for parents and students.

2007



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
January 8, 2007

President Bush Marks Fifth Anniversary of No Child Left Behind

The Oval Office

[Fact Sheet: The No Child Left Behind Act: Five Years of Results for America's Children](#)

[en Español](#)



VIDEO Multimedia

President's Remarks

[view](#)

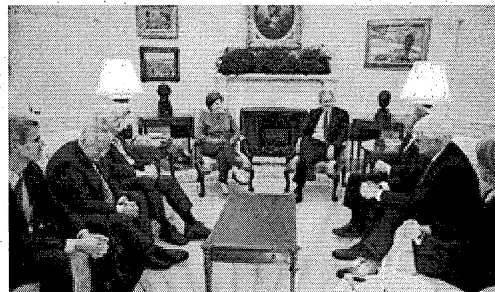
1:56 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Laura and I want to thank Senator Kennedy and Congressman George Miller and Congressman McKeon and Senator Enzi for joining us as we celebrate the fifth anniversary of No Child Left Behind and discuss our strategy to reauthorize this important piece of legislation.

I want to thank the members for joining us. I am proud of this piece of legislation. I think it's made an enormous difference, particularly in the lives of some of our poorer students. This country needs to get it right when it comes to public education, and the bill that I was honored to sign is an important first step toward making sure every child gets a good education in America.

And in our discussions today, we've all agreed to work together to address some of the major concerns that some people have on this piece of legislation, without weakening the essence of the bill, and get a piece of legislation done. We showed in the past that we can work together to get positive results, and I'm confident we can do so again.

Again, I appreciate the wisdom and the vision of the members who are here. I thank you for your steadfast and strong support for our public schools and the children in our public schools, and I'm looking forward to working with you to reauthorize No Child Left Behind.



Thank you all very much.

END 1:58 P.M. EST

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**MEETING WITH BICAMERAL AND
BIPARTISAN MEMBERS OF
CONGRESS ON THE FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY OF NCLB**

- NCLB is making a difference and raising student achievement for millions of children in schools nationwide.
- Test scores are up. Achievement gaps have significantly narrowed. Funding for elementary and secondary education over 40% higher in 2007 than in 2001.
- Committed to reauthorizing NCLB this year and building on our progress.
- Can make commonsense changes to the law, increase flexibility and help struggling schools improve.



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
January 23, 2007

President Bush Delivers State of the Union Address

United States Capitol
Washington, D.C.

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9:13 P.M. EST

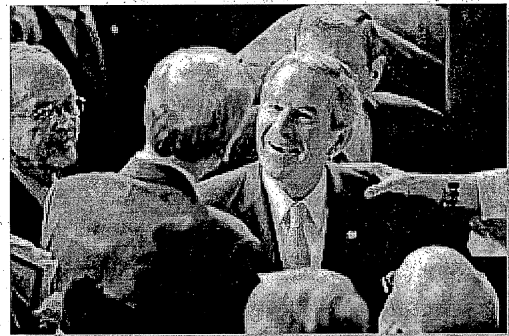
THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. And tonight, I have a high privilege and distinct honor of my own -- as the first President to begin the State of the Union message with these words: Madam Speaker. (Applause.)

In his day, the late Congressman Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr. from Baltimore, Maryland, saw Presidents Roosevelt and Truman at this rostrum. But nothing could compare with the sight of his only daughter, Nancy, presiding tonight as Speaker of the House of Representatives. (Applause.) Congratulations, Madam Speaker. (Applause.)

Two members of the House and Senate are not with us tonight, and we pray for the recovery and speedy return of Senator Tim Johnson and Congressman Charlie Norwood. (Applause.)

Madam Speaker, Vice President Cheney, members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens:

The rite of custom brings us together at a defining hour -- when decisions are hard and courage is needed. We enter the year 2007 with large endeavors underway, and others that are ours to begin. In all of this, much is asked of us. We must have the will to face difficult challenges and determined enemies -- and the wisdom to face them together.



Some in this chamber are new to the House and the Senate -- and I congratulate the Democrat majority. (Applause.) Congress has changed, but not our responsibilities. Each of us is guided by our own convictions -- and to these we must stay faithful. Yet we're all held to the same standards, and called to serve the same good purposes: To extend this nation's prosperity; to spend the people's money wisely; to solve problems, not leave them to future generations; to guard America against all evil; and to keep faith with those we have sent forth to defend us. (Applause.)

We're not the first to come here with a government divided and uncertainty in the air. Like many before us, we can work through our differences, and achieve big things for the American people. Our citizens don't much care which side of the aisle we sit on -- as long as we're willing to cross that aisle when there is work to be done. (Applause.) Our job is to make life better for our fellow Americans, and to help them to build a future of hope and opportunity -- and this is the business before us tonight.

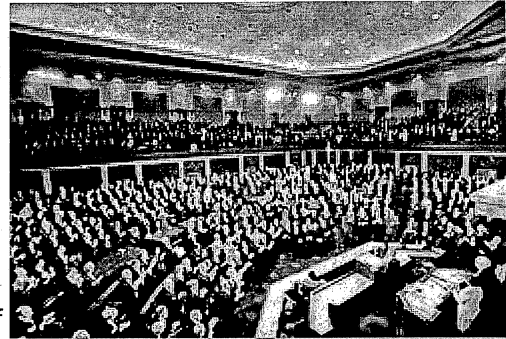
A future of hope and opportunity begins with a growing economy -- and that is what we have. We're now in the 41st month of uninterrupted job growth, in a recovery that has created 7.2 million new jobs -- so far. Unemployment is low, inflation is low, and wages are rising. This economy is on the move, and our job is to keep it that way, not with more government, but with more enterprise. (Applause.)

Next week, I'll deliver a full report on the state of our economy. Tonight, I want to discuss three economic reforms

that deserve to be priorities for this Congress:

First, we must balance the federal budget. (Applause.) We can do so without raising taxes. (Applause.) What we need to do is impose spending discipline in Washington, D.C. We set a goal of cutting the deficit in half by 2009, and met that goal three years ahead of schedule. (Applause.) Now let us take the next step. In the coming weeks, I will submit a budget that eliminates the federal deficit within the next five years. (Applause.) I ask you to make the same commitment. Together, we can restrain the spending appetite of the federal government, and we can balance the federal budget. (Applause.)

Next, there is the matter of earmarks. These special interest items are often slipped into bills at the last hour -- when not even C-SPAN is watching. (Laughter.) In 2005 alone, the number of earmarks grew to over 13,000 and totaled nearly \$18 billion. Even worse, over 90 percent of earmarks never make it to the floor of the House and Senate -- they are dropped into committee reports that are not even part of the bill that arrives on my desk. You didn't vote them into law. I didn't sign them into law. Yet, they're treated as if they have the force of law. The time has come to end this practice. So let us work together to reform the budget process, expose every earmark to the light of day and to a vote in Congress, and cut the number and cost of earmarks at least in half by the end of this session. (Applause.)



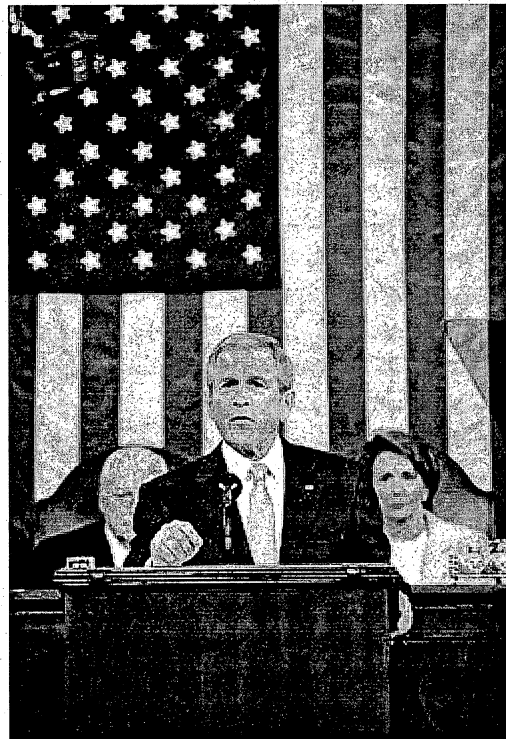
And, finally, to keep this economy strong we must take on the challenge of entitlements. Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid are commitments of conscience, and so it is our duty to keep them permanently sound. Yet, we're failing in that duty. And this failure will one day leave our children with three bad options: huge tax increases, huge deficits, or huge and immediate cuts in benefits. Everyone in this chamber knows this to be true -- yet somehow we have not found it in ourselves to act. So let us work together and do it now. With enough good sense and goodwill, you and I can fix Medicare and Medicaid -- and save Social Security. (Applause.)

Spreading opportunity and hope in America also requires public schools that give children the knowledge and character they need in life. Five years ago, we rose above partisan differences to pass the No Child Left Behind Act, preserving local control, raising standards, and holding those schools accountable for results. And because we acted, students are performing better in reading and math, and minority students are closing the achievement gap.

Now the task is to build on the success, without watering down standards, without taking control from local communities, and without backsliding and calling it reform. We can lift student achievement even higher by giving local leaders flexibility to turn around failing schools, and by giving families with children stuck in failing schools the right to choose someplace better. (Applause.) We must increase funds for students who struggle -- and make sure these children get the special help they need. (Applause.) And we can make sure our children are prepared for the jobs of the future and our country is more competitive by strengthening math and science skills. The No Child Left Behind Act has worked for America's children -- and I ask Congress to reauthorize this good law. (Applause.)

A future of hope and opportunity requires that all our citizens have affordable and available health care. (Applause.) When it comes to health-care, government has an obligation to care for the elderly, the disabled, and poor children. And we will meet those responsibilities. For all other Americans, private health insurance is the best way to meet their needs. (Applause.) But many Americans cannot afford a health insurance policy.

And so tonight, I propose two new initiatives to help more Americans afford their own insurance. First, I propose a standard tax deduction for health insurance that will be like the standard tax deduction for



dependents. Families with health insurance will pay no income on payroll tax -- or payroll taxes on \$15,000 of their income. Single Americans with health insurance will pay no income or payroll taxes on \$7,500 of their income. With this reform, more than 100 million men, women, and children who are now covered by employer-provided insurance will benefit from lower tax bills. At the same time, this reform will level the playing field for those who do not get health insurance through their job. For Americans who now purchase health insurance on their own, this proposal would mean a substantial tax savings -- \$4,500 for a family of four making \$60,000 a year. And for the millions of other Americans who have no health insurance at all, this deduction would help put a basic private health insurance plan within their reach. Changing the tax code is a vital and necessary step to making health care affordable for more Americans. (Applause.)

My second proposal is to help the states that are coming up with innovative ways to cover the uninsured. States that make basic private health insurance available to all their citizens should receive federal funds to help them provide this coverage to the poor and the sick. I have asked the Secretary of Health and Human Services to work with Congress to take existing federal funds and use them to create "Affordable Choices" grants. These grants would give our nation's governors more money and more flexibility to get private health insurance to those most in need.



There are many other ways that Congress can help. We need to expand Health Savings Accounts. (Applause.) We need to help small businesses through Association Health Plans. (Applause.) We need to reduce costs and medical errors with better information technology. (Applause.) We will encourage price transparency. And to protect good doctors from junk lawsuits, we passing medical liability reform. (Applause.) In all we do, we must remember that the best health care decisions are made not by government and insurance companies, but by patients and their doctors. (Applause.)

Extending hope and opportunity in our country requires an immigration system worthy of America -- with laws that are fair and borders that are secure. When laws and borders are routinely violated, this harms the interests of our country. To secure our border, we're doubling the size of the Border Patrol, and funding new infrastructure and technology.

Yet even with all these steps, we cannot fully secure the border unless we take pressure off the border -- and that requires a temporary worker program. We should establish a legal and orderly path for foreign workers to enter our country to work on a temporary basis. As a result, they won't have to try to sneak in, and that will leave Border Agents free to chase down drug smugglers and criminals and terrorists. (Applause.) We'll enforce our immigration laws at the work site and give employers the tools to verify the legal status of their workers, so there's no excuse left for violating the law. (Applause.)

We need to uphold the great tradition of the melting pot that welcomes and assimilates new arrivals. (Applause.) We need to resolve the status of the illegal immigrants who are already in our country without animosity and without amnesty. (Applause.) Convictions run deep in this Capitol when it comes to immigration. Let us have a serious, civil, and conclusive debate, so that you can pass, and I can sign, comprehensive immigration reform into law. (Applause.)



Extending hope and opportunity depends on a stable supply of energy that keeps America's economy running and America's environment clean. For too long our nation has been dependent on foreign oil. And this dependence leaves us more vulnerable to hostile regimes, and to terrorists -- who could cause huge disruptions of oil shipments, and raise the price of oil, and do great harm to our economy.

It's in our vital interest to diversify America's energy supply -- the way forward is through technology. We must continue changing the way America generates electric power, by even greater use of clean coal technology, solar and wind energy, and clean, safe nuclear power. (Applause.) We need to press on with battery research for plug-in and hybrid vehicles, and expand the use of clean diesel vehicles and biodiesel fuel. (Applause.) We must continue investing in new methods of producing ethanol -- (applause) -- using everything from wood chips to

grasses, to agricultural wastes.

We made a lot of progress, thanks to good policies here in Washington and the strong response of the market. And now even more dramatic advances are within reach. Tonight, I ask Congress to join me in pursuing a great goal. Let us build on the work we've done and reduce gasoline usage in the United States by 20 percent in the next 10 years. (Applause.) When we do that we will have cut our total imports by the equivalent of three-quarters of all the oil we now import from the Middle East.

To reach this goal, we must increase the supply of alternative fuels, by setting a mandatory fuels standard to require 35 billion gallons of renewable and alternative fuels in 2017 -- and that is nearly five times the current target. (Applause.) At the same time, we need to reform and modernize fuel economy standards for cars the way we did for light trucks -- and conserve up to 8.5 billion more gallons of gasoline by 2017.

Achieving these ambitious goals will dramatically reduce our dependence on foreign oil, but it's not going to eliminate it. And so as we continue to diversify our fuel supply, we must step up domestic oil production in environmentally sensitive ways. (Applause.) And to further protect America against severe disruptions to our oil supply, I ask Congress to double the current capacity of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. (Applause.)



America is on the verge of technological breakthroughs that will enable us to live our lives less dependent on oil. And these technologies will help us be better stewards of the environment, and they will help us to confront the serious challenge of global climate change. (Applause.)

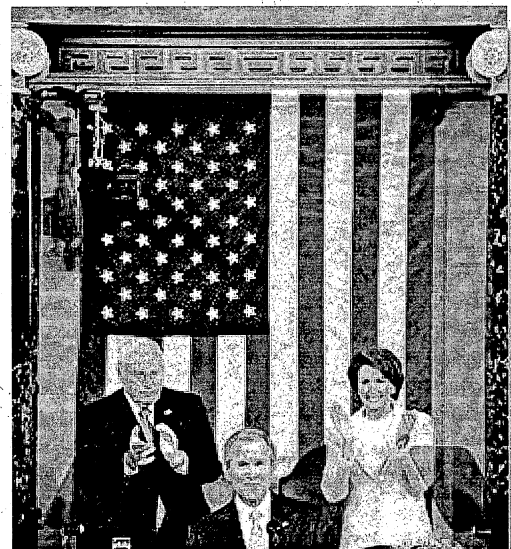
A future of hope and opportunity requires a fair, impartial system of justice. The lives of our citizens across our nation are affected by the outcome of cases pending in our federal courts. We have a shared obligation to ensure that the federal courts have enough judges to hear those cases and deliver timely rulings. As President, I have a duty to nominate qualified men and women to vacancies on the federal bench. And the United States Senate has a duty, as well, to give those nominees a fair hearing, and a prompt up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. (Applause.)

For all of us in this room, there is no higher responsibility than to protect the people of this country from danger. Five years have come and gone since we saw the scenes and felt the sorrow that the terrorists can cause. We've had time to take stock of our situation. We've added many critical protections to guard the homeland. We know with certainty that the horrors of that September morning were just a glimpse of what the terrorists intend for us -- unless we stop them.

With the distance of time, we find ourselves debating the causes of conflict and the course we have followed. Such debates are essential when a great democracy faces great questions. Yet one question has surely been settled: that to win the war on terror we must take the fight to the enemy. (Applause.)

From the start, America and our allies have protected our people by staying on the offense. The enemy knows that the days of comfortable sanctuary, easy movement, steady financing, and free flowing communications are long over. For the terrorists, life since 9/11 has never been the same.

Our success in this war is often measured by the things that did not happen. We cannot know the full extent of the attacks that we and our allies have prevented, but here is some of what we do know: We stopped an al Qaeda plot to fly a hijacked airplane into the tallest building on the West Coast. We broke up a Southeast Asian terror



cell grooming operatives for attacks inside the United States. We uncovered an al Qaeda cell developing anthrax to be used in attacks against America. And just last August, British authorities uncovered a plot to blow up passenger planes bound for America over the Atlantic Ocean. For each life saved, we owe a debt of gratitude to the brave public servants who devote their lives to finding the terrorists and stopping them. (Applause.)

Every success against the terrorists is a reminder of the shoreless ambitions of this enemy. The evil that inspired and rejoiced in 9/11 is still at work in the world. And so long as that's the case, America is still a nation at war.

In the mind of the terrorist, this war began well before September the 11th, and will not end until their radical vision is fulfilled. And these past five years have given us a much clearer view of the nature of this enemy. Al Qaeda and its followers are Sunni extremists, possessed by hatred and commanded by a harsh and narrow ideology. Take almost any principle of civilization, and their goal is the opposite. They preach with threats, instruct with bullets and bombs, and promise paradise for the murder of the innocent.

Our enemies are quite explicit about their intentions. They want to overthrow moderate governments, and establish safe havens from which to plan and carry out new attacks on our country. By killing and terrorizing Americans, they want to force our country to retreat from the world and abandon the cause of liberty. They would then be free to impose their will and spread their totalitarian ideology. Listen to this warning from the late terrorist Zarqawi: "We will sacrifice our blood and bodies to put an end to your dreams, and what is coming is even worse." Osama bin Laden declared: "Death is better than living on this Earth with the unbelievers among us."

These men are not given to idle words, and they are just one camp in the Islamist radical movement. In recent times, it has also become clear that we face an escalating danger from Shia extremists who are just as hostile to America, and are also determined to dominate the Middle East. Many are known to take direction from the regime in Iran, which is funding and arming terrorists like Hezbollah -- a group second only to al Qaeda in the American lives it has taken.



The Shia and Sunni extremists are different faces of the same totalitarian threat. Whatever slogans they chant, when they slaughter the innocent they have the same wicked purposes. They want to kill Americans, kill democracy in the Middle East, and gain the weapons to kill on an even more horrific scale.

In the sixth year since our nation was attacked, I wish I could report to you that the dangers had ended. They have not. And so it remains the policy of this government to use every lawful and proper tool of intelligence, diplomacy, law enforcement, and military action to do our duty, to find these enemies, and to protect the American people. (Applause.)

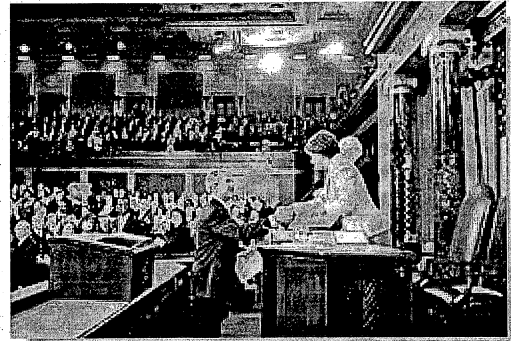
This war is more than a clash of arms -- it is a decisive ideological struggle, and the security of our nation is in the balance. To prevail, we must remove the conditions that inspire blind hatred, and drove 19 men to get onto airplanes and to come and kill us. What every terrorist fears most is human freedom

-- societies where men and women make their own choices, answer to their own conscience, and live by their hopes instead of their resentments. Free people are not drawn to violent and malignant ideologies -- and most will choose a better way when they're given a chance. So we advance our own security interests by helping moderates and reformers and brave voices for democracy. The great question of our day is whether America will help men and women in the Middle East to build free societies and share in the rights of all humanity. And I say, for the sake of our own security, we must. (Applause.)

In the last two years, we've seen the desire for liberty in the broader Middle East -- and we have been sobered by the enemy's fierce reaction. In 2005, the world watched as the citizens of Lebanon raised the banner of the Cedar Revolution, they drove out the Syrian occupiers and chose new leaders in free elections. In 2005, the people of Afghanistan defied the terrorists and elected a democratic legislature. And in 2005, the Iraqi people held three national elections, choosing a transitional government, adopting the most progressive, democratic constitution in the Arab world, and then electing a government under that constitution. Despite endless threats from the killers in

their midst, nearly 12 million Iraqi citizens came out to vote in a show of hope and solidarity that we should never forget. (Applause.)

A thinking enemy watched all of these scenes, adjusted their tactics, and in 2006 they struck back. In Lebanon, assassins took the life of Pierre Gemayel, a prominent participant in the Cedar Revolution. Hezbollah terrorists, with support from Syria and Iran, sowed conflict in the region and are seeking to undermine Lebanon's legitimately elected government. In Afghanistan, Taliban and al Qaeda fighters tried to regain power by regrouping and engaging Afghan and NATO forces. In Iraq, al Qaeda and other Sunni extremists blew up one of the most sacred places in Shia Islam -- the Golden Mosque of Samarra. This atrocity, directed at a Muslim house of prayer, was designed to provoke retaliation from Iraqi Shia -- and it succeeded. Radical Shia elements, some of whom receive support from Iran, formed death squads. The result was a tragic escalation of sectarian rage and reprisal that continues to this day.



This is not the fight we entered in Iraq, but it is the fight we're in. Every one of us wishes this war were over and won. Yet it would not be like us to leave our promises unkept, our friends abandoned, and our own security at risk. (Applause.) Ladies and gentlemen: On this day, at this hour, it is still within our power to shape the outcome of this battle. Let us find our resolve, and turn events toward victory. (Applause.)

We're carrying out a new strategy in Iraq -- a plan that demands more from Iraq's elected government, and gives our forces in Iraq the reinforcements they need to complete their mission. Our goal is a democratic Iraq that upholds the rule of law, respects the rights of its people, provides them security, and is an ally in the war on terror.

In order to make progress toward this goal, the Iraqi government must stop the sectarian violence in its capital. But the Iraqis are not yet ready to do this on their own. So we're deploying reinforcements of more than 20,000 additional soldiers and Marines to Iraq. The vast majority will go to Baghdad, where they will help Iraqi forces to clear and secure neighborhoods, and serve as advisers embedded in Iraqi Army units. With Iraqis in the lead, our forces will help secure the city by chasing down the terrorists, insurgents, and the roaming death squads. And in Anbar Province, where al Qaeda terrorists have gathered and local forces have begun showing a willingness to fight them, we're sending an additional 4,000 United States Marines, with orders to find the terrorists and clear them out. (Applause.) We didn't drive al Qaeda out of their safe haven in Afghanistan only to let them set up a new safe haven in a free Iraq.

The people of Iraq want to live in peace, and now it's time for their government to act. Iraq's leaders know that our commitment is not open-ended. They have promised to deploy more of their own troops to secure Baghdad -- and they must do so. They pledged that they will confront violent radicals of any faction or political party -- and they need to follow through, and lift needless restrictions on Iraqi and coalition forces, so these troops can achieve their mission of bringing security to all of the people of Baghdad. Iraq's leaders have committed themselves to a series of benchmarks -- to achieve reconciliation, to share oil revenues among all of Iraq's citizens, to put the wealth of Iraq into the rebuilding of Iraq, to allow more Iraqis to re-enter their nation's civic life, to hold local elections, and to take responsibility for security in every Iraqi province. But for all of this to happen, Baghdad must be secure. And our plan will help the Iraqi government take back its capital and make good on its commitments.

My fellow citizens, our military commanders and I have carefully weighed the options. We discussed every possible approach. In the end, I chose this course of action because it provides the best chance for success. Many in this chamber understand that America must not fail in Iraq, because you understand that the consequences of failure would be grievous and far-reaching.

If American forces step back before Baghdad is secure, the Iraqi government would be overrun by extremists on all sides. We could expect an epic battle between Shia extremists backed by Iran, and Sunni extremists aided by al Qaeda and supporters of the old regime. A contagion of violence could spill out across the country -- and in time, the entire region could be drawn into the conflict.

For America, this is a nightmare scenario. For the enemy, this is the objective. Chaos is the greatest ally -- their greatest ally in this struggle. And out of chaos in Iraq would emerge an emboldened enemy with new safe havens, new recruits, new resources, and an even greater determination to harm America. To allow this to happen would

be to ignore the lessons of September the 11th and invite tragedy. Ladies and gentlemen, nothing is more important at this moment in our history than for America to succeed in the Middle East, to succeed in Iraq and to spare the American people from this danger. (Applause.)

This is where matters stand tonight, in the here and now. I have spoken with many of you in person. I respect you and the arguments you've made. We went into this largely united, in our assumptions and in our convictions. And whatever you voted for, you did not vote for failure. Our country is pursuing a new strategy in Iraq, and I ask you to give it a chance to work. And I ask you to support our troops in the field, and those on their way. (Applause.)

The war on terror we fight today is a generational struggle that will continue long after you and I have turned our duties over to others. And that's why it's important to work together so our nation can see this great effort through. Both parties and both branches should work in close consultation. It's why I propose to establish a special advisory council on the war on terror, made up of leaders in Congress from both political parties. We will share ideas for how to position America to meet every challenge that confronts us. We'll show our enemies abroad that we are united in the goal of victory.

And one of the first steps we can take together is to add to the ranks of our military so that the American Armed Forces are ready for all the challenges ahead. (Applause.) Tonight I ask the Congress to authorize an increase in the size of our active Army and Marine Corps by 92,000 in the next five years. (Applause.) A second task we can take on together is to design and establish a volunteer Civilian Reserve Corps. Such a corps would function much like our military reserve. It would ease the burden on the Armed Forces by allowing us to hire civilians with critical skills to serve on missions abroad when America needs them. It would give people across America who do not wear the uniform a chance to serve in the defining struggle of our time.

Americans can have confidence in the outcome of this struggle because we're not in this struggle alone. We have a diplomatic strategy that is rallying the world to join in the fight against extremism. In Iraq, multinational forces are operating under a mandate from the United Nations. We're working with Jordan and Saudi Arabia and Egypt and the Gulf States to increase support for Iraq's government.

The United Nations has imposed sanctions on Iran, and made it clear that the world will not allow the regime in Tehran to acquire nuclear weapons. (Applause.) With the other members of the Quartet -- the U.N., the European Union, and Russia -- we're pursuing diplomacy to help bring peace to the Holy Land, and pursuing the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel in peace and security. (Applause.) In Afghanistan, NATO has taken the lead in turning back the Taliban and al Qaeda offensive -- the first time the Alliance has deployed forces outside the North Atlantic area. Together with our partners in China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea, we're pursuing intensive diplomacy to achieve a Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons. (Applause.)

We will continue to speak out for the cause of freedom in places like Cuba, Belarus, and Burma -- and continue to awaken the conscience of the world to save the people of Darfur. (Applause.)

American foreign policy is more than a matter of war and diplomacy. Our work in the world is also based on a timeless truth: To whom much is given, much is required. We hear the call to take on the challenges of hunger and poverty and disease -- and that is precisely what America is doing. We must continue to fight HIV/AIDS, especially on the continent of Africa. (Applause.) Because you funded our Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the number of people receiving life-saving drugs has grown from 50,000 to more than 800,000 in three short years. I ask you to continue funding our efforts to fight HIV/AIDS. I ask you to provide \$1.2 billion over five years so we can combat malaria in 15 African countries. (Applause.)

I ask that you fund the Millennium Challenge Account, so that American aid reaches the people who need it, in nations where democracy is on the rise and corruption is in retreat. And let us continue to support the expanded trade and debt relief that are the best hope for lifting lives and eliminating poverty. (Applause.)

When America serves others in this way, we show the strength and generosity of our country. These deeds reflect the character of our people. The greatest strength we have is the heroic kindness, courage, and self-sacrifice of the American people. You see this spirit often if you know where to look -- and tonight we need only look above to the gallery.

Dikembe Mutombo grew up in Africa, amid great poverty and disease. He came to Georgetown University on a scholarship to study medicine -- but Coach John Thompson got a look at Dikembe and had a different idea. (Laughter.) Dikembe became a star in the NBA, and a citizen of the United States. But he never forgot the land of his birth, or the duty to share his blessings with others. He built a brand new hospital in his old hometown. A friend has said of this good-hearted man: "Mutombo believes that God has given him this opportunity to do great things." And we are proud to call this son of the Congo a citizen of the United States of America. (Applause.)

After her daughter was born, Julie Aigner-Clark searched for ways to share her love of music and art with her child. So she borrowed some equipment, and began filming children's videos in her basement. The Baby Einstein Company was born, and in just five years her business grew to more than \$20 million in sales. In November 2001, Julie sold Baby Einstein to the Walt Disney Company, and with her help Baby Einstein has grown into a \$200 million business. Julie represents the great enterprising spirit of America. And she is using her success to help others -- producing child safety videos with John Walsh of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Julie says of her new project: "I believe it's the most important thing that I have ever done. I believe that children have the right to live in a world that is safe." And so tonight, we are pleased to welcome this talented business entrepreneur and generous social entrepreneur -- Julie Aigner-Clark. (Applause.)

Three weeks ago, Wesley Autrey was waiting at a Harlem subway station with his two little girls, when he saw a man fall into the path of a train. With seconds to act, Wesley jumped onto the tracks, pulled the man into the space between the rails, and held him as the train passed right above their heads. He insists he's not a hero. He says: "We got guys and girls overseas dying for us to have our freedoms. We have got to show each other some love." There is something wonderful about a country that produces a brave and humble man like Wesley Autrey. (Applause.)

Tommy Rieman was a teenager pumping gas in Independence, Kentucky, when he enlisted in the United States Army. In December 2003, he was on a reconnaissance mission in Iraq when his team came under heavy enemy fire. From his Humvee, Sergeant Rieman returned fire; he used his body as a shield to protect his gunner. He was shot in the chest and arm, and received shrapnel wounds to his legs -- yet he refused medical attention, and stayed in the fight. He helped to repel a second attack, firing grenades at the enemy's position. For his exceptional courage, Sergeant Rieman was awarded the Silver Star. And like so many other Americans who have volunteered to defend us, he has earned the respect and the gratitude of our entire country. (Applause.)


In such courage and compassion, ladies and gentlemen, we see the spirit and character of America -- and these qualities are not in short supply. This is a decent and honorable country -- and resilient, too. We've been through a lot together. We've met challenges and faced dangers, and we know that more lie ahead. Yet we can go forward with confidence -- because the State of our Union is strong, our cause in the world is right, and tonight that cause goes on. God bless. (Applause.)

See you next year. Thank you for your prayers.

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Building On Results: A Blueprint For Strengthening NCLB

2007 State of the Union Policy Initiatives
In Focus: Education

Tonight, President Bush Will Discuss His Priorities For The Reauthorization Of The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). In 2001, President Bush worked with Republicans and Democrats to pass NCLB with overwhelming support, and he was proud to sign it into law in 2002. President Bush is committed to reauthorizing NCLB this year and building on the good progress that has been made. Strengthening and reauthorizing NCLB is critical – if we were to lower standards and roll back accountability now, we would be leaving children to the former status quo that failed them for decades.

- **NCLB Is Raising Student Achievement For Millions Of Children In Schools Nationwide.** Because of NCLB, every State and the District of Columbia now hold schools accountable for results by testing every child and evaluating students by student group. Minority students are closing the achievement gap, and student achievement is rising – more reading progress was made by 9-year-olds in five years than in the previous 28 years combined, and reading and math scores for 9-year-olds and fourth-graders have reached all-time highs.
- **Reauthorization Offers An Opportunity To Make Some Common-Sense Changes To Strengthen NCLB And Increase Flexibility, But We Must Preserve NCLB's Core Principles:**
 - All students must be able to read and do math at grade level or above by 2014.
 - We must have higher expectations and demand greater accountability in order to improve the academic achievement of every student and to close the achievement gap using annual assessments and disaggregated data.
 - We must have effective teachers in core academic subjects in every classroom.
 - We must provide timely information and real options – including intensive tutoring and choice for children in consistently underperforming schools – for all parents with children in failing schools so they can make the best decisions for their children.
- **The President's Proposals To Strengthen NCLB Further The Goals Of His American Competitiveness Initiative.** Math and science skills are critical for success in college and the workplace. Our students must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to compete in the global economy.

We Must Strengthen NCLB To Increase Flexibility And Help Struggling Schools Improve

1. We Must Encourage Higher Academic Standards And Further Increase The Quality Of Available Information On Student Performance.

- **We Will Maintain Annual Academic Assessments And Accountability.** States must continue to report student assessment results to parents and hold schools accountable for improving the performance of all students. The disaggregation of achievement results and required 95 percent participation rate must continue to ensure that schools cannot hide failure to teach every child.
- **We Will Promote High State Academic Standards.** To support greater transparency, we will require States to report the proficiency rates of both State and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests on the same public report card. Further, the Education Department will support cross-State comparisons by providing a platform for States and the general public to analyze and compare standards across the Nation.

2. We Must Strengthen Our Public Schools With Incentives For School Reform And Empower Parents With Options For Students To Receive After-School Tutoring And Attend Higher-Performing Schools.

- **We Will Target Resources To Help Struggling Schools Improve With School Improvement Grants.** School Improvement Grants will support implementation of schools' restructuring plans and will support States' efforts to closely monitor and review those plans for each restructured school and to provide technical assistance to turn around low-performing schools.
- **We Will Give States And Districts More Tools And Flexibility To Turn Struggling Schools Around.** To make the accountability provisions of NCLB more meaningful, States will have more flexibility to precisely focus their technical assistance and interventions and direct resources to schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.
- **We Will Strengthen School Restructuring.** Schools subject to restructuring for chronic underperformance will be required either to make substantial changes in staff or to reconstitute the schools' governance structure.
- **We Will Require Persistently Underperforming Schools To Offer "Promise Scholarships."** These scholarships will enable low-income students to transfer to private schools or out-of-district public schools, or receive intensive tutoring. Federal funds will follow the students to their new schools.
- **We Will Offer Competitive Grants Through The "Opportunity Scholarships Program" To Help Communities Expand School Choice Options For Low-Income Parents And Students.** Similar to the Washington, D.C., choice program that the Federal government has funded since 2004, families would be able to send their children to a private school through a locally designed scholarship program. They could also seek intensive tutoring.
- **We Will Increase The Availability Of High-Quality Charter Schools, Which Provide Important Options For Parents.** Charters will also have a greater degree of flexibility to use their grants in executing planning and startup activities.
- **We Will Expand Access To Tutoring.** We will ensure that districts notify parents whose children are eligible for tutoring and require school districts to make full use of the Federal funds set aside for tutoring and other school choice activities.
- **We Will Help Parents Get The Information They Need In Time To Make Informed Decisions About Their Children's School Choice Options.** We will strengthen enforcement mechanisms to ensure parents receive proper and timely notice of their tutoring and choice options, and school districts will be allowed to use Federal funds to conduct high-quality parent outreach campaigns.

3. We Must Help Teachers Close The Achievement Gap Through Incentives For Effective Teachers And Research-Based Instructional Tools.

- **We Will Expand The Teacher Incentive Fund.** The Teacher Incentive Fund supports State and local efforts to reward teachers who raise student achievement and work in needy schools.
- **We Will Retain The Successful Reading First Program And Expand The Striving Readers Program To Ensure Students Have The Literacy Skills They Need To Make Academic Progress.** Reading First is the largest, most focused, and most successful early reading initiative ever undertaken in this country. To date, more than 5,600 schools in 1,600 districts nationwide have participated in this program. The Striving Readers Program funds targeted, intensive intervention and quality literacy instruction in school curricula for grades 6-12.

4. We Must Incorporate The Education Components Of The American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI) Into NCLB, Thereby Raising The Rigor Of Our Nation's High Schools And Ensuring That Our Students Are Prepared For Success In The Competitive Global Economy.


- **We Will Strengthen The Teaching Of Math In Elementary And Middle Schools By Implementing The Math Now Program Based On The Recommendations Of The National Math Panel, Both Key Components Of The ACI.** This program will provide resources to help teachers use scientifically proven practices, including those soon to be recommended by the National Math Panel, so that students enter high school ready to take advanced coursework.
- **We Will Increase Academic Rigor, As Outlined In The ACI, By Training More Teachers And Making Rigorous Advanced Placement Classes Available To More Low-Income Students.**
- **Academic Competitiveness Grants Will Be Used To Provide Further Incentives For Students To Complete A Rigorous High School Program Of Study.** The program provides additional grant aid to low-income first- and second-year college students who complete a rigorous program of study in high school.
- **We Will Encourage Talented Professionals, Especially In The Fields Of Math And Science, To Share Their Expertise In The Classroom Through The Adjunct Teacher Corps Proposed In ACI.** Competitive grants will be provided for school districts to engage in partnerships with public and private organizations to take advantage of the expertise in their communities.
- **We Will Encourage A Greater Focus On Science By Including Student Achievement Results In Science In Accountability Decisions.** States will add science to their assessment systems at three grade levels by 2008. The reauthorized law will incorporate an expectation that all students achieve proficiency in science by the 2019-20 school year.
- **We Will Commit Significant New Resources To Help High Schools Ensure Their Students Meet High Standards And Graduate On Time.** To ensure that high schools have the resources to help low-income students, there will be a substantial increase in funds for Title I high school students. Districts will be required to give their high schools at least 90 percent of the high schools' proportionate share of the new funds. A corresponding funding increase will ensure that elementary schools' Title I programs are not negatively affected.

5. We Must Measure Individual Student Progress And Focus Interventions On Students Who Have Not Reached Grade Level.

- **We Will Allow High-Quality Growth Models To Give Schools Credit For Improvement From Year-To-Year And Provide Another Way To Show Whether Achievement Gaps Are Closing.** States with well-established assessments and robust data systems may use growth models in their overall accountability system. Growth models allow States to measure individual students' progress over time.

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Reading First Achievement Data Demonstrate Dramatic Improvements in Reading Proficiency of America's Neediest Children

State-by-state data confirm that the scientifically based reading program is working

FOR RELEASE:

April 19, 2007

Contact: Rebecca Neale
Katherine McLane
(202) 401-1576

MORE RESOURCES

Fact sheet

State data

Washington, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Education today released new state-by-state data on the effectiveness of Reading First, indicating that students who receive instruction through the program achieve strong gains in reading proficiency. Another measure of the program's success since its launch in 2002, the state-by-state data demonstrate that Reading First is working to help our nation's neediest kindergarten through third-grade students significantly improve their reading skills.

"These results are yet another confirmation that Reading First is working on behalf of our children," said Deputy Assistant Secretary Amanda Farris, who oversees the program office responsible for the implementation of Reading First. "Reading First students and teachers are demonstrating tremendous progress in a remarkably short period of time. We rarely see this kind of success from a federal education program."

The state-reported data presented today reveal that students in Reading First schools largely demonstrated impressive gains in reading fluency and comprehension. Students enrolled in the program were assessed beginning in the 2003-2004 school year. Achievement data highlights include:

- In Reading First schools, the percentage of 1st graders meeting or exceeding proficiency on Reading First fluency outcome measures increased by 14 percentage points (43% to 57%) from 2004 to 2006.
- In Reading First schools, the percentage of 3rd graders meeting or exceeding proficiency on Reading First fluency outcome measures increased by 7 percentage points (36% to 43%) from 2004 to 2006.
- On average, the 26 States with baseline data increased the percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency on fluency outcome measures by 16% for 1st graders, 14% for 2nd graders, and 15% for 3rd graders.
- On average, the 26 States with baseline data increased the percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency on comprehension outcome measures by 15% for 1st graders, 6% for 2nd graders, and 12% for 3rd graders.

The data released today reinforce the positive indicators from the Reading First Implementation Evaluation interim report released in July 2006. According to the interim report, Reading First students receive on average 100 extra minutes per week of proven, research-based instruction from teachers, tutors and reading coaches. Moreover, the interim report found that Reading First staff received significantly more professional development than did Title I staff, and teachers in Reading First schools spent more time on reading instruction than teachers in non-Reading First

Title I schools. Additionally, the Office of Management and Budget's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review of Reading First gave the program an "Effective" rating.

Established as part of the landmark No Child Left Behind Act signed into law by President Bush in 2002, Reading First supports high-quality research-based early reading instructional tools and assessments to help teachers improve student achievement. The program aligns with the goals of No Child Left Behind by providing resources to help children build a solid reading foundation and prepare them to read on grade-level by the end of the third grade.

Reading First is the largest federal reading initiative ever undertaken in the United States. As of the 2005/2006 school year, more than 5,600 schools in 1,600 districts nationwide have participated in Reading First. The program has served approximately 1.8 million students, and more than 100,000 teachers have benefited from its professional development.

For more information on the Reading First program, please visit:
<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/methods/reading/readingfirst.html>

Reading First achievement data are available at:

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/performance.html>

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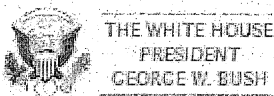
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




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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
June 25, 2007

President Bush Congratulates Presidential Scholars, Discusses No Child Left Behind Reauthorization

East Room

 [Fact Sheet: No Child Left Behind: Keeping a Historic Commitment to Our Children](#)  [Video \(Windows\)](#)

 [In Focus: Education](#)

 [Presidential Remarks](#)

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3:13 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Welcome to the White House. It's a neat occasion to be able to welcome the 2007 Presidential Scholars. We're glad you're here, I congratulate you on the fine honor, and of course, we wish you all the very best.

The Presidential Scholars program started in 1964. I was a senior in high school -- I didn't make it. (Laughter.) I know all of you worked hard to reach this day. Your families are proud of your effort, and we welcome your family members here. Your teachers are proud of your effort, and we welcome your teachers. And our entire nation is proud to call you Presidential Scholar. (Applause.)

I'm sorry Laura is not here, she would have loved to have welcomed you. She is off to Africa. And she's there to make sure that people on that continent understand that ours is a nation with a good heart -- after all, we're leading the fight against HIV/AIDS and malaria on that continent. And so she is spreading the goodwill of the American taxpayer by representing our country. In my judgment, there's no finer representative than Laura Bush. (Applause.)



Madam Secretary, thank you for joining us. We're proud you're here -- the Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings. I thank the members of Congress who have joined us: Senator Lieberman, Congressman Buck McKeon, Congressman Dale Kildee, and Congressman Mike Castle. I'm honored you took time, and so are the Presidential Scholars, they're proud you're here. (Applause.)

I want to thank the members of the Presidential Scholars Commission for picking such a fine group of people, and the Presidential Scholars probably want to thank you, as well. (Laughter.) This is a program that honors high school seniors for exceptional academic and artistic achievements. Past winners have gone on to win the Pulitzer Prize, succeed at the highest levels of business, work here at the White House.

This afternoon we honor a new class of promising young men and women. Your fellow scholars have pursued groundbreaking research, written scholarly papers, and performed at Carnegie Hall. Many of you have also reached out to those in need, and have given your time for causes greater than any individual need. And for that we thank you.

Caterina Yuan shared her passion for service with her classmates at Palo Alto High School in California. She's run food drives, raised thousands of dollars for humanitarian efforts in Africa, and helped organize a school-wide day of service. She's a scholar, but she's also a humanitarian.

Erin Jaeger, from Keene, New Hampshire, helped bring hope and comfort to those living in poverty and hardship. She made three trips to El Salvador to build houses and visit orphanages. Charlie Bridge from Belmont,

Massachusetts has given back to his community through teaching. He's tutored disadvantaged middle school students, and he plans to continue this important work this summer.

One person not here today is Max Weaver. He's busy preparing for an engagement at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. In a few days he's going to begin an intensive basic training regime that cadets like to call "the Beast." We wish him luck and we thank him and all the other brave men and women who have volunteered to serve in the United States Armed Forces. (Applause.)



The reason I bring these examples up is that no matter what you do later in life, I encourage you to use your talents to help other people. The true strength of America is the fact that we've got people of good heart and good soul reaching out to people in need. And I thank you for being leaders and setting a good example.

As we celebrate your accomplishments, we also need to honor those who helped you reach this day. You know, I always say that the first teacher of a child is a mom or a dad. For the moms and dads here, congratulations on doing your job. (Applause.) And I thank the teachers who are here, as well. There's no more noble profession than being a teacher. And I suspect the reason we're honoring Presidential Scholars -- or these Presidential Scholars -- is because you and their parents set high standards, set a high bar of expectations.

You know, part of the problem we've had in our school system is for too often and too long that bar wasn't set high enough; that we had too many students who were victims of low expectations. I used to call it the "soft bigotry of low expectations." Schools just shuffled kids from grade to grade, as if the child couldn't learn to read and write and add and subtract. We never measured; we never had any idea how the child was doing until it was too late. And that was unsatisfactory for the United States of America, it's unsatisfactory for the President, it's unsatisfactory for the future.

And that's why when we came to Washington, we worked with Democrats and Republicans to pass what's called the No Child Left Behind Act. The philosophy behind the law is straightforward. It says the federal government should expect results in return for the money it spends. That's not too much to ask, I don't think. If you believe a child can learn to read, then you ought to expect a child to read. That's what you ought to expect. And the only way to determine that is to measure.

I'm sure some of your classmates would say you don't like to take a test. Well, I didn't either. (Laughter.) But that's too bad, because the only way to determine whether a child is reading at grade level is to have accountability in our school systems. And that's the basic strategy of No Child Left Behind. It says, here's some money; we expect you to teach; we want to measure to determine if you are teaching; we look forward to patting you on the back; but if you're not teaching a child the basics, then we expect you to change, before it is too late.

Measuring results helps teachers spot problems. In other words, you can't solve a problem until you diagnose it. It gives teachers tools and schools tools; the key tool necessary to determine whether or not a curriculum needs to change, or whether or not a child needs to get special attention.

Measuring results gives parents key information about how their child's school is doing. You know, it's amazing how many parents will say, the school my child goes to is doing just fine. That's what everybody hopes and that's what everybody assumes, until scores get posted. It's amazing what happens when you hold people to account. It certainly gets a parent's attention when they find out that their child's school isn't doing as good as the neighborhood's school is, for example, or school next door.

No Child Left Behind is working. In other words, we're making good progress. During the most recent five-year period on record, nine-year-olds made more progress in reading than in the previous 28 years combined. (Applause.) You can't say that unless you measure. You can't stand in front of the taxpayers and say, your money is being well spent because we're measuring; we know, we're measuring. Before, it was just -- you were just guessing. Now, thanks to No Child Left Behind, there is accountability that's important to be able to report progress to the American people.

Speaking about progress, the Non-Partisan Center on Education Policy found that many states have seen reading and math test scores increase since we've passed No Child Left Behind. The study found that minority and low-income students are making some of the biggest gains. And that's positive and important news for the American people.

We had an achievement gap in our country and that's not right to have an achievement gap in America. And this achievement gap is becoming closed thanks to hard work by teachers, but also thanks to the fact that we're measuring and correcting problems early, before they're too late.

The No Child Left Behind Act is working and Congress needs to re-authorize this good piece of legislation. Re-authorizing No Child is one of the top priorities of my administration and I know it's a top priority in members of Congress. Buck McKeon is going to be handling the re-authorization on the Republican side in the House of Representatives. And he is determined to work with people in both sides of the aisle to help to get this job done. We made a historic commitment and I believe we have a moral obligation to keep it.

Our ability to compete in the 21st century depends upon educating children just like the ones standing behind me. Whether we like or not, we're in a global world. And if the world needs engineers or scientists, and those scientists are being educated in China and India, and not being educated in the United States, the jobs of the 21st century are likely to go there. And so we better make sure that we have a strategy aimed at making sure that we have high expectations and good results for every child in the United States, if we expect to remain competitive.

As Presidential Scholars, you leave your high school with confidence in your ability, and you've got a great foundation for success. We want to make sure that same confidence is instilled in every single child that's getting out of high school. And so what can we do? First, we can make sure No Child Left Behind gets reauthorized. You cannot compete in a global world unless you're certain that we're achieving certain standards. We want every child reading at grade level by the 3rd grade. And the only way you know whether that's the case is you measure.

And by the way, inherent in No Child Left Behind is a novel idea that said if a child needs extra help, there's going to be money available to help that child. That's how you make sure that you use the accountability system to achieve results, achieve expectations.

But we need to do more. Our high schools need to have accountability. We want to make sure that same rigor that we've applied in the elementary and middle schools are applied to our high schools. If we want to be competitive, the high school diploma has to mean something. We want to make sure that we expand advance placement. I bet most kids here took AP courses, and AP is a great way to raise standards and raise expectations. And we've got to help teachers learn how to teach AP courses as part of our strategy.

We want to make sure that we have a rigorous course of study available for all our kids. We want to make sure we strengthen math and science. And that's why I proposed a program to encourage 30,000 math and science professionals to become part-time teachers. I remember we went to a school in Maryland, Margaret, and there was two guys there that were making science look cool. I can't do that. Most parents aren't able to do that. (Laughter.) But it's amazing what a scientist can do.

And why do we need that? Why do we need 30,000 math and science professionals to go into classrooms to stimulate interest? Because we can't be a competitive nation without more scientists and more mathematicians. Because in order for us to make sure the best jobs are in America requires us having mathematicians and scientists and engineers and physicists. And the best way to stimulate that interest is from people who actually know what they're talking about.

We want to make sure that we work with Congress to have extra funding for under-performing schools. I told you if you measure, we've got extra money for the children -- we've also got extra money for under-performing schools. And those schools need flexibility. In other words, we've got to trust local folks to make the right decisions for local schools. So Margaret is going to work with the school districts and with the Congress to make sure they've got flexibility to use the resources where they're most needed, to tailor reforms to the specific needs of individual schools.

In other words, people say, well, you can't be for No Child Left Behind, it's the federal government telling you what to do. Quite the opposite. The federal government has said, we believe in local control of schools, you reform

them, you fix them. We're just going to insist that you measure, in return for the billions we spend on your behalf.

I proposed an interesting idea that I hope Congress passes, and that is creating a teacher incentive fund, of nearly \$200 million for the next year as the beginning -- as a down payment to encourage teachers to teach in districts where they need a little extra help; reward teachers who will go into these school districts that need high expectations. We need people to walk in and say, the status quo is unacceptable, people who show that educational entrepreneurship necessary to make sure every single child gets a good education. And I hope Congress works on that with us.

When schools fail to make progress, No Child Left Behind needs to give parents different options. In other words, you cannot tolerate a system where a child is stuck in a school which will not teach and will not change. There has to be a consequence. We've got remedies in the bill that say we're going to help schools effect their programs, but ultimately a parent must be given the ability to transfer their child out to another public school or free tutoring for their children. In other words, there has to be a consequence in order to make sure that there's effectiveness when it comes to reform -- schools that need to be reformed.

I strongly believe that parents are the front lines of the decision-making and should be empowered -- empowered through information and empowered through different options available through the public school system.

We did something else interesting, and I look forward to working with Congress on this -- and I must confess, it's slightly controversial -- and that is, is that we promoted the first federally funded opportunity scholarship program here in Washington, D.C. It basically said to low-income parents that here's some money to help you send your child to a private school or a parochial school, your choice. In other words, it said, if you're tired of being in a system that simply hasn't met expectations, that there ought to be something different, and that I believe that -- I think it's the role of government to help low-income parents have different options.

The program is working. It's over-subscribed. I mean, there are thousands of families that have been helped through this Washington, D.C. program, which ought to say to policymakers, there's a huge demand for something better. People are sick of mediocrity in the status quo. Obviously, it hasn't happened with these kids, for which we're grateful. But there's still too many schools that just aren't meeting expectations. And so I look forward to working to see if we can't expand this kind of program.

The reason I've asked to speak to you is because I want people to understand how important this No Child Left Behind Act is to America and its future. And we will talk about ways to make the law better. I know some members and senators have got concerns about the law, and we're more than willing to talk about flexibility. But there is no compromise when it comes to setting high standards and measurement. You cannot compromise away the principle of saying, we expect good results, and we're going to measure to determine whether or not we've achieved those results. And when you've achieved the results that we, a society, expect, we'll give you the big embrace. (Applause.)

But if not, for the sake of the country, for the sake of kids who deserve better, we expect you to change. That's what we're going to say, loud and clear and often. And it's working; the program is working.

I want to thank Margaret for working hard with members of Congress. She's engaged, as you know -- she's probably wearing you out, Buck. (Laughter.) And Dale. But that's good. She's up there working. Laura is all involved, too. She's met with a lot of members of Congress, and she'll stay involved, as will I. This is a very important piece of legislation. We want every child in America to be a Presidential Scholar. We want every child in this country to realize the great potential of America by starting them off with a good, sound education that lets them realize their dreams.

Ours is a fabulous country. We've got kids standing up here who not only are scholars, but have volunteered to help a neighbor in need. We've got people volunteering to help protect this country. And the thing we've got to do as policymakers is to make sure that we continue to advance America by giving people the tools necessary to realize the great promise of America.

Thanks for coming. God bless you all, and God bless our country. (Applause.)

END 3:30 P.M. EDT

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THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
June 25, 2007

Fact Sheet: No Child Left Behind: Keeping a Historic Commitment to Our Children

President Bush Calls On Congress To Reauthorize No Child Left Behind This Year

[President Bush Congratulates Presidential Scholars, Discusses No Child Left Behind Reauthorization](#)

[In Focus: Education](#)

[White House News](#)

"Our ability to compete in the 21st century depends upon educating [our] children... As Presidential Scholars, you leave your high school with confidence in your ability, and you've got a great foundation for success. We want to make sure that same confidence is instilled in every single child that's getting out of high school. And so what can we do? First, we can make sure No Child Left Behind gets reauthorized."

– President George W. Bush, 6/25/07

Today, President Bush Congratulated The 2007 Presidential Scholars And Called On Congress To Reauthorize The No Child Left Behind Act This Year. The United States Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964 to recognize and honor some of our Nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. At least one young man and one young woman are selected from each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. families abroad.

1. **Reauthorizing No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Is One Of The President's Top Priorities For This Year.** America's ability to compete in the 21st century depends on helping every child achieve high standards. To meet this challenge, we must raise the bar and strengthen No Child Left Behind.

No Child Left Behind Is Working

During The Most Recent Five Year Period On Record, The National Assessment Of Educational Progress Shows Nine-Year-Olds Made More Progress In Reading Than They Did In The Previous 28 Years Combined.

The Non-Partisan Center For Education Policy Found That Many States Have Seen Reading And Math Test Scores Increase Since NCLB Was Passed. The study also found that minority and low-income students are making some of the biggest gains – and as a result, the achievement gap is beginning to close.

NCLB Must Be Strengthened To Ensure Our Children Are Prepared For The Challenges Of The 21st Century

1. **Strengthening NCLB Will Ensure That All Children Graduate High School Ready For College And The Global Economy.** We will improve our high schools by increasing accountability for results, expanding access to Advanced Placement courses, and encouraging all students to complete a rigorous course of study.
 - o **Strengthening Math And Science Instruction Will Be An Important Part Of This Effort.** The President has proposed a new Adjunct Teacher Corps to encourage 30,000 math and science

professionals to bring real-life experience to the classroom as part-time teachers, and he calls on Congress to fund this important program.

2. **Strengthening NCLB Will Better Help Struggling Schools.** The President's FY 2008 Budget will increase Federal support for underperforming schools by more than \$400 million – to a total of more than \$1 billion next year.
 - o **The President Has Also Proposed Increasing Our Investment In The Teacher Incentive Fund To Nearly \$200 Million Next Year.** This fund rewards teachers who teach in low-income schools and help their students achieve great results.
3. **Strengthening NCLB Will Empower Parents With More Choices.** When schools fail to make progress, No Child Left Behind gives parents real options: They can enroll their children in free tutoring or transfer them to a better-performing public school. The Administration is committed to helping more parents take advantage of these options by working to increase the availability of free tutoring and expand school choice options.
 - o **The President Has Also Proposed "Opportunity Scholarships" To Assist Communities That Want To Provide Additional Scholarships For Low-Income Students To Attend Private Or Religious Schools.** Since 2004, the Federal government has funded a similar program in Washington, DC, and the President believes low-income students outside our Nation's capital should have the same opportunities.

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Key Policy Letters Signed by the Education Secretary or Deputy Secretary

September 5, 2007

September 5, 2007

Honorable George Miller
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I write to express my appreciation for your work to date on reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and to provide the Department of Education's general comments on the August 28 "Miller-McKeon discussion draft" of Title I of NCLB, as posted on the Committee's Web site. I am encouraged that reauthorization is moving ahead and look forward to working with you throughout the legislative process to achieve a final bill that meets our shared goals.

At the outset, I am pleased that two of the bright-line principles of NCLB would remain in place: every child performing at or above grade level in reading and math by 2014; and annual assessments and disaggregation of data by subgroups. I also appreciate that the discussion draft incorporates some of the specific policy concepts proposed by the Administration to build on the reforms made by NCLB, including growth models, increased rigor and accountability in high school, and differentiated consequences, which allow States to prioritize schools in improvement based on the specific needs of the school and its students.

While these aspects of the draft bill establish a solid basis for further discussion, I am deeply troubled that the draft would decrease information and options for students and parents - a key bright-line principle of NCLB. I have outlined this and other serious concerns with the discussion draft below.

Complexity and Transparency

The overall approach to holding schools and school districts accountable for improved academic achievement is far more complex than current law, which will make it more difficult for parents to clearly understand if their children are learning and if their schools are doing a good job.

The increased complexity would make it far more difficult to provide a clear picture of progress. As the person who oversees and works with States on their data and accountability systems, I have grave reservations about the capacity and capability of States and districts to administer the complex level of accountability that is proposed in the discussion draft. We could easily lose simple transparency about whether schools are teaching students to read and do math on grade level, and obscure what's actually going on in schools under this new approach. Ultimately, we run the risk of creating a very confusing and burdensome process for all who play a part in educating our children, including parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members, and other public

officials. I am also concerned that some of the bill's provisions would be burdensome and costly for States and districts to implement, such as required school district audits of student mobility and additional reporting requirements.

Accountability

While I agree that the Act should provide some additional flexibility in measuring student progress on reading and math assessments, the draft bill would make it too easy for many low-performing schools to escape needed intervention and improvement. As a consequence, parents and the rest of the community would be led to believe that the current achievement gap is acceptable. The discussion draft would provide several additional methods by which a school could demonstrate that it is making adequate yearly progress (AYP), the basic element of NCLB's accountability system - even if student performance in reading and math falls short. With the inclusion of nonacademic indicators in determinations of student progress in reading and math, student proficiency scores in those subjects would no longer be accurate reflections of their basic reading and math ability. Proficiency in these core areas forms the gateway to learning in other subjects. Finally, the pervasive inclusion of statistical adjustments and other data manipulations creates a greater potential for masking students' and schools' true performance. The fact that fewer than half of African-American and Hispanic fourth graders have fundamental reading skills, as defined by the Nation's Report Card, makes it a moral imperative to continue to close the achievement gap, and to refuse to accept any approach that threatens to turn back the clock on accountability.

School Improvement and Parental Options

Although I am pleased with the general concept of recognizing that schools that fail to make AYP across the board should be required to implement more serious interventions than those that narrowly miss making AYP, I am concerned that, under the language in the draft, a low-performing school might never be held accountable for real change or be required to provide real options for parents. Our reading of the draft allows a school to become worse over time and actually start over in the interventions and assistance timeline.

While I support increased accountability in the provision of supplemental educational services, I am extremely concerned that the draft bill would significantly restrict the opportunities for children in schools that fail to make AYP to obtain free tutoring to help increase their academic proficiency, whether by limiting the situations in which those students would have the right to tutoring or by reducing the amount of funds available to pay for tutoring. The opportunity to obtain this aid should be expanded, as proposed by the Administration, not curtailed, in order to meet the goal of having all students on grade level by 2014. I am likewise concerned that the bill restricts public school choice options and does not include additional private school options for low-income students as proposed by the Administration.

Students with Disabilities and with Limited English Proficiency

The changes to the accountability system for students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency will exclude more students and allow them to be held to lower standards, even though these two groups have made some of the most significant progress under NCLB. For example, in order to ensure that tests given to limited English proficient (LEP) students actually measure their knowledge of the particular subject matter, instead of their knowledge of the English language, current law permits States to test LEP students in their native language for up to three years, and for an additional two years on a case-by-case basis. For those States that administer native language assessments, the discussion draft would extend the three-year provision to permit five years of testing in the native language (while retaining the additional two years on a case-by-case basis). That's simply too long; this would allow a third-grade student to reach the tenth grade

before ever being tested in English. States and school districts need to be held accountable for ensuring that LEP students learn English and should be given incentives to accelerate, not slow down, the learning of English, especially when approximately two-thirds of LEP students are born in the United States. Similarly, I am concerned that an increase in the number of students with disabilities who are allowed to take alternate or modified assessments could lead to ignoring those students' academic progress.

High Schools

I am pleased to see movement toward providing a clearer picture of high school accountability, which is critical to our Nation's competitiveness. While the Administration supports increasing high school rigor and accountability, we believe this can be best achieved by expanding the existing Title I program rather than creating a costly new high school program. The Administration supports reforming Title I so that more funds flow to high schools, and provides significant new funds in Title I to do so.

I am also concerned that the bill provides incentives for States and districts to use a five-year graduation rate for accountability for all students. It should instead use the commonsense four-year period for most students, as specified in the National Governors Association's graduation rate compact, which all 50 Governors have affirmed.

Moving Forward


The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is working. Test scores are rising and achievement gaps are narrowing. For the last forty years, the federal role in education has focused on leveling the playing field for our neediest students, and I am concerned that this draft walks away from that commitment. As we work to strengthen and renew NCLB this year, we must increase the law's flexibility, but not remove its power and sense of urgency entirely. Thanks to this law, we're finally shining a bright light on every child's achievement. We don't always like what we see, but instead of obscuring what the law has uncovered, we must focus on the hard work ahead. Now is the time to build on the progress we have seen and the many lessons we have learned to target resources, improve policy, and enhance competitiveness. I look forward to working with you in this vital effort.

Sincerely,

/s/

Margaret Spellings

(Note: An identical letter was sent to Honorable Dale E. Kildee, Honorable Michael N. Castle, and Honorable Howard "Buck" McKeon)


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Last Modified: 09/06/2007




THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
September 25, 2007

Statement by the President on 2007 Nation's Report Card

 [In Focus: Education](#)

 [White House News](#)

Earlier today, the 2007 Nation's Report Card, also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, was released. The news is outstanding. Eighth graders achieved their highest scores ever in math, while fourth graders set records in both reading and math. African-American and Hispanic students posted all-time highs in a number of categories, which represents progress toward closing the achievement gap.

These scores confirm that No Child Left Behind is working and producing positive results for students across the country. Since No Child Left Behind became law in 2002, the states have been setting standards and holding schools accountable for ensuring that every child can read and do math at grade level. We are successfully challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations and continuing to make significant progress in reforming our schools.


As we commemorate the integration 50 years ago of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, we are reminded of the sacrifices students and their families have made in pursuit of a better education. Today's results demonstrate America's progress in making their dreams a reality, but we have more work to do. Now is not the time to turn back the clock on educational accountability and real options for parents, which No Child Left Behind provides.

The successes detailed in the Nation's Report Card highlight the importance of reauthorizing No Child Left Behind. I have proposed a number of ways to improve the law, by increasing flexibility, helping struggling schools, and empowering parents with more choices. I look forward to continuing to work with lawmakers of both parties to strengthen this important law.

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Return to this article at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/09/20070925-1.html>

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THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release
September 26, 2007

Fact Sheet: 2007 Nation's Report Card Shows Minority Students Posting All-Time Highs

No Child Left Behind Is Helping Students Achieve Record Success

[In Focus: Education](#)

[President Bush Discusses No Child Left Behind Reauthorization](#)

[White House News](#)

Today, President and Mrs. Bush and Education Secretary Margaret Spellings met with New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Chancellor of Education Joel Klein to discuss how **No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is producing positive results for students across the country and record high scores for minority students.** Yesterday, the latest results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), or Nation's Report Card, were released. The Report Card shows record results for our Nation's students in reading and math. Scores are improving and achievement gaps are beginning to close.

- **Chancellor Klein is strongly supportive of NCLB, calling it "one of the great bipartisan compromises in education" and praising its "focus on accountability."** With the support of Mayor Bloomberg, he's made tough decisions that are getting great results in closing the achievement gap and raising achievement for New York City students.
- **As the positive results from our Nation's Report Card show, children can learn when standards are set high and results are measured.**
- **The President calls on Congress to reauthorize NCLB and give our teachers, parents, and children the educational tools they need.** Now is not the time to water down standards, or roll back accountability and options for parents.

The Hard Work Being Done By Teachers, Parents, And Children Under NCLB Is Paying Off

The Nation's Report Card shows across-the-board improvement in 4th and 8th grade reading and math.

- In reading, scores for 4th graders were the highest they have ever been.
- In math, scores for 4th and 8th graders were the highest on record.

African-American and Hispanic students are making significant progress, posting all-time highs in a number of categories.

- In 4th grade reading, the achievement gap between white and African-American students is at an all-time low.
- In math, 4th and 8th grade African-American students achieved their highest scores to date.
- In 4th grade reading and in 4th and 8th grade math, Hispanic students set new achievement records. In reading, Hispanic 8th graders matched their previous all-time high.

Our Nation's Report Card: Holding Schools Accountable For Results

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. It is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics and overseen by a bipartisan, independent Governing Board composed of educators, public officials, business leaders, and members of the general public. Under NCLB, all states participate in the Nation's Report Card by being tested in reading and math every two years.

Yesterday, the latest NAEP results of 4th and 8th grade students in reading and in math were released, on a national and state-by-state basis. These results may be viewed at: <http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>.

To Continue This Progress, Congress Needs To Reauthorize And Strengthen NCLB

Reauthorizing NCLB is one of the President's top priorities. Our Nation has made a historic commitment to America's children, and we have a moral obligation to keep it.

The President calls on Congress to send him a bipartisan reauthorization bill that maintains the law's "bright line" principles by:

- Holding schools accountable for teaching every child to read and do math at grade level by 2014.
- Measuring results every year, with all students, to help teachers spot problems early enough to fix them, and to give parents information about how their child's school is doing compared to others.
- Providing timely information and schooling options for parents, and providing support for schools to improve.


The President has sent Congress several proposals to help strengthen NCLB:

1. **We need to increase flexibility for states and districts to help them turn around struggling schools.** The President has proposed to let states and districts tailor interventions to each school, and to measure individual students' achievement growth over time.
2. **We need to empower parents with more choices.** The President has proposed Promise Scholarships to allow eligible students to transfer out of low-performing schools to private or out-of-district public schools, or receive intensive tutoring. The President has also proposed a nationwide "Opportunity Scholarships Program" to assist communities that want to provide additional scholarships for low-income students to attend private schools.
3. **We need to increase support for struggling students and underperforming schools.** The President has proposed helping more students take advantage of NCLB's free tutoring by ensuring that districts notify parents when their children are eligible, and by requiring school districts to use the full Federal funds set aside for tutoring and school choice. The President's FY 2008 Budget will increase Federal support for underperforming schools by more than \$400 million – to a total of more than \$1 billion next year.
4. **We need to reward our best teachers and encourage good instructors to take jobs in underperforming schools.** The President has proposed increasing our investment in the Teacher Incentive Fund to nearly \$200 million next year. This fund rewards teachers for success in raising student achievement in low-income schools.
5. **We need to make sure our children graduate prepared for the jobs of the 21st century.** The President has proposed increasing accountability in our high schools, expanding access to Advanced Placement courses, and strengthening math and science education. His Adjunct Teacher Corps would allow 30,000 math and science professionals to bring real-life experience to the classroom as part-time teachers.

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Memorandum	No Child Left Behind Reauthorization - To: POTUS - From: Karl Zinsmeister	2	10/09/2007	P5;

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Staff Secretary, White House Office of the

SERIES:

Von Der Heydt, Thomas (Tommy) - Bush Record Policy Memos

FOLDER TITLE:

No Child Left Behind: A Timeline (2001 - 2008) [3]

FRC ID:

13894

OA Num.:

14457

NARA Num.:

14246

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

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- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advise between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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
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

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
For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
October 9, 2007

Statement by the President on No Child Left Behind Reauthorization


Rose Garden

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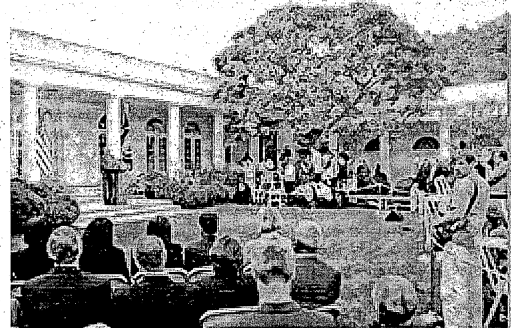
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2:13 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank Secretary Spellings for joining me here. And I appreciate you all -- the leaders of the civil rights community and advocates for minority and disadvantaged students for joining us as well.

We just had a meaningful discussion about our joint commitment to closing an achievement gap that exists in America. We discussed why reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind Act is vital in ensuring that we have a hopeful America. We don't necessarily agree on every issue, but we do agree that education is a basic civil right, and that a good education is important for America.

We agree that our nation has reached a defining moment in our struggle to secure a good education for every child. And we've come a long way since the days when children were simply shuffled through the schools, just moved grade to grade, whether or not they were learning. See, we believe every child can learn. We don't accept a system that simply shuffles children through the schools. We believe in setting high standards. And we believe that by setting high standards we encourage greater results for every child. And now the question is whether or not we will finish the job to ensure that every American child receives a high education -- high-quality education.

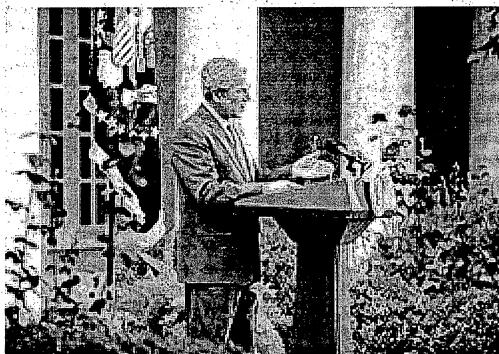


Our nation made an historic commitment nearly six years ago when Republicans and Democrats came together to pass the No Child Left Behind Act. The philosophy of the law is this: The federal government will invest in education, and in return, we seek results. Instead of just hoping for the best, we've asked states to set clear standards, and hold schools accountable for teaching every child to read and do math at grade level. That doesn't seem like too much to ask. In return for taxpayers' money, we expect schools and school districts and state to measure, to show us whether or not a child can read at grade level, or do math at a grade level.

And the key to getting good results is measuring. Measuring results helps teachers catch problems early, so children who need help -- extra help can get that help. In other words, you can't determine whether a child needs extra help unless you measure. One of the key components of No Child Left Behind it says if a child is falling behind, we will provide supplemental services to help that child catch up. Measuring results empowers parents with valuable information about schools, so they can push for change if it's needed. Measuring results means schools are working to close the achievement gap, instead of looking the other way when a student is struggling or falling behind.

No Child Left Behind is helping replace a culture of low expectations with a commitment to high achievement for all. And the hard work being done by principals, teachers, parents and students across our country is producing results. Last month, we learned that 4th graders earned the highest math and reading scores in the history of our Nation's Report Card -- and that's good news. I'm able to report that because we actually measure now in the schools.

We learned that 8th-graders set record highs for math scores. We also learned that scores for minority and poor students, and students with disabilities, are reaching all-time highs in a number of areas. As a result, the achievement gap is beginning to narrow, and the promise of America is expanding for children of all backgrounds. In short, No Child Left Behind is working for all kinds of children in all kinds of schools in every part of the country.

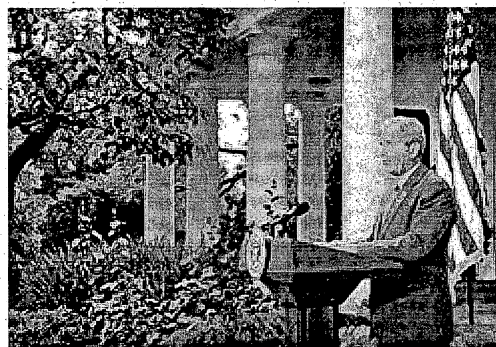


There is more work to be done. So long as there is an achievement gap, we have work to do. Our goal is to have every child reading and doing math at grade level by 2014. That seems reasonable to me. Seems like a reasonable thing to ask, is to have every child reading at grade level by 2014, or being able to do math at grade level by 2014. So now is the time not to roll back the accountability or water down standards.

It's reasonable to set an important goal such as that because as the global economy becomes more competitive, a good education will become even more important for getting a good job. Unfortunately, nearly half of African American and Hispanic students still do not graduate from high school on time. We need to raise the bar for our high schools, as well as for our junior highs and elementary schools. We need to give all our children the skills they need to compete. So I'm going to work with Congress to reauthorize and strengthen the No Child Left Behind Act this year.

My administration has offered several proposals to strengthen this law. By giving local leaders more flexibility and resources, we can help them turn around troubled schools. By giving families with children stuck in low-performing schools the opportunity to choose someplace better, we can raise student achievement. At the same time, we need to increase access to tutoring programs for students who struggle -- and make sure these children get the special help they need. We need to reward good teachers who improve student achievement in low-income schools. We need to make sure that our country is more competitive and that our children can take advantage of the best jobs this new century has to offer -- by expanding access to advanced placement courses and strengthening math and science education.

As we move forward, we will continue to welcome new ideas. And I appreciate the ideas I heard today. Yet there can be no compromise on the basic principle: Every child must learn to read and do math at, or above, grade level. And there can be no compromise on the need to hold schools accountable to making sure we achieve that goal. I call on members of Congress to come together to pass bipartisan legislation that will help us achieve this goal. By working together, we can raise standards even higher, expand opportunity for all Americans of all backgrounds, and build a future where no child is left behind.



Thank you very much. Thank you all for being here. (Applause.)

END 2:21 P.M. EDT

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Secretary Spellings Invites Eligible States to Submit Innovative Models for Expanded Growth Model Pilot

FOR RELEASE:
December 7, 2007

Contact: Chad Colby or Elaine Quesinberry
(202) 401-1576

Washington, D.C. — U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings today announced that she is opening the growth model pilot to all eligible states saying, "our work on reauthorization has shown broad bipartisan support for growth models and now, many states have improved data systems so they can track individual student growth over time."

"A growth model is a way for states that are raising achievement and following the bright-line principles of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) to strengthen accountability," Secretary Spellings said. "I believe that extending the growth model pilot for the 2007-2008 school year will promote two important goals. It will allow states another effective way of measuring adequate yearly progress (AYP) by measuring individual student growth over time, and it will continue to expand the flexibility available to states under *No Child Left Behind*."

The growth model pilot was established by Secretary Spellings in November 2005 and was included in the President's NCLB reauthorization blueprint earlier this year. Nine states currently have approved growth model proposals: North Carolina, Tennessee, Delaware, Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Ohio, Alaska and Arizona.


Any state that would like to take part should submit their growth model proposals to the U.S. Department of Education no later than February 1, 2008. A rigorous peer review process-similar to that used for the past two years-will ensure that the selection process is fair and transparent for all participating states. The Department will conduct an initial review of each proposal to ensure that the growth model meets the seven core principles and that the state is making progress in the required areas.

- Ensure that all students are proficient by 2014 and set annual state goals to ensure that the achievement gap is closing for all groups of students identified in the law;
- Set expectations for annual achievement based upon meeting grade-level proficiency, not based on student background or characteristics;
- Hold schools accountable for student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics separately;
- Ensure that all students in tested grades are included in the assessment and accountability system, hold schools and districts accountable for the performance of each student subgroup, and include all schools and districts;
- Include assessments that produce comparable results from grade to grade and year to year in grades three through eight and high school, in both reading/language arts and

mathematics; that have been operational for more than one year and have received Full Approval or Full Approval with Recommendations before the state determines AYP based on 2007-2008 assessment results

- Track student progress as part of the state data system; and
- Include student participation rates and student achievement on a separate academic indicator in the state accountability system.

If there are any questions, the Department will contact the state by February 15 and ask for a response by March 14. Proposals that meet the requirements will be sent to a group of peer reviewers who will meet during the week of April 14-18. States that meet the qualifications to participate in the growth model pilot will be notified in May.

The peer reviewers will review each proposal based on the Peer Review Guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education as a road map for developing the models. The peer review panel will be announced prior to the February 1 deadline.  Word (136K).


For more information on the Growth Model Pilot, please visit:
<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/growthmodel/proficiency.html>.

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NCLB: Act II

The latest news on the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act.

David J. Hoff has been reporting on the biggest issues in K-12 education for more than 10 years for *Education Week*. He primarily reports now on the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act.

« As NCLB Stalls, Local Officials Stew | Main | Six Questions About NCLB's Future »

NCLB Might Be Unfunded Mandate, Appeals Court Rules

President Bush stopped in at a Chicago Elementary school to tout the success of NCLB on the day before its 6th anniversary. Usually that would be the biggest education story of the day.

Not today.

While Bush was flying to Chicago, three judges on the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals outdid him. In a **decision** that could dramatically shift the NCLB landscape, the judges ruled, 2-1, saying the lawsuit shouldn't have been dismissed and suggesting they may rule in the plaintiffs' favor if the case comes back to them.

For the short term, the suit is in the hands of a federal judge in Detroit and the implementation of the law probably won't change much. In the long term, a decision declaring many of NCLB's rules as unfunded mandates could restrict the federal government's power to enforce NCLB's testing and accountability rules.

The decision is a significant victory for the National Education Association, which organized the lawsuit. It also puts a damper on President Bush's celebration of NCLB's 6th anniversary in Chicago.

EXTRA LINKS

You can read about this at edweek.org's brand **new blog on school law**. The blog's author, Mark Walsh, is talking to legal experts and promises to offer a better analysis that I've given here.

- Polls
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Here are the president's comments after visiting Horace Greeley Elementary School and here is Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings' briefing on Air Force One. Neither mentions the lawsuit.

And below are a bunch of stories from *Education Week's* archives. The links chronicle the lawsuit, starting with NEA President Reg Weaver's 2003 speech in which he called NCLB "the granddaddy of all underfunded federal mandates:"

- NEA Takes Stand Against Bush Education Law**
- NEA Seeks Allies to Bring Lawsuit on ESEA Funding**
- NEA Files 'No Child Left Behind' Lawsuit**
- NCLB Cases Face Hurdles in the Courts**
- U.S. Asks Court to Throw Out NEA Lawsuit Over NCLB Suit Challenging NCLB Costs Is Dismissed**

Posted by David J. Hoff, edweek.org on January 7, 2008 11:49 AM | [Permalink](#)

TrackBack

TrackBack URL for this entry:
<http://blogs.edweek.org/cgi-bin/mt-tb.cgi/2939.1413314132>

Comments

How are we as parents supposed to trust the educational system? When teachers are fixing tests to make their students pass exams due to the "No Child Left Behind" mandate. This is ridiculous. Check out [dailycents.com](http://blogs.dailycents.com/?p=819) at <http://blogs.dailycents.com/?p=819>

Posted by: sally | **January 19, 2008 3:03 PM**

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U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings Announces No Child Left Behind "Differentiated Accountability" Pilot

Program Will Invite Up To Ten States To Create More Nuanced Ways Of Evaluating Underperforming Schools

FOR RELEASE:

March 18, 2008

Contact: Samara Yudof or
Elissa Leonard
(202) 401-1576

MORE RESOURCES

Fact sheet

**Letter and peer
review guidance**

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings today announced a new pilot program under *No Child Left Behind* aimed at helping states differentiate between underperforming schools in need of dramatic interventions and those that are closer to meeting the goals of *No Child Left Behind*. The Secretary announced the new pilot program to an audience of education stakeholders in Saint Paul, Minn. She was joined by Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty, U.S. Senator Norm Coleman and Gene Wilhoit, executive director, Council of Chief State School Officers. To access additional information about the Differentiated Accountability pilot program, please see the [fact sheet](#).

Following are the Secretary's remarks as prepared:

Thank you, Governor Pawlenty, for introducing me. You and Minnesota Education Commissioner Alice Seagren deserve a lot of credit for holding schools accountable for every student's achievement. You're also leaders in preparing your students well in math and science. Students and families are lucky to have you on their side.

I would like to thank Senator Norm Coleman, Gene Wilhoit of the Council of Chief State School Officers, South Dakota Education Secretary Rick Melmer and the educators, policymakers and superintendents who have joined us today.

I was reading the newspaper this morning, thinking about facts and figures and strategies, as many of us seem to be doing lately.

How many superdelegate votes will it take to win the nomination? How many percentage points ahead - or behind - is your favorite candidate today?

With March Madness on the horizon, how many wins and losses will you have in your brackets? And as Spring training heats up, what's your team's record, and your favorite player's batting average?

What about your child's chances of graduating from high school on time, compared to a friend's in the next town over? Or, how about your child's chances compared to a student of another race or income level?

Sometimes, using data to measure progress and diagnose problems is challenging. But as

policymakers and educators here in Minnesota and across our country will tell you, it's also key to lasting improvement.

Thanks to No Child Left Behind, we have collected a wealth of information about where schools are falling short, where students' needs are not being met, and where more rigor is needed. We've built an appetite for change, and we've done a good job of framing the problem. The next step is to use this knowledge to customize our efforts to improve.

Since becoming Secretary, I've worked with states and districts to make No Child Left Behind more flexible and responsive, while retaining core accountability, and I want to thank **Gene Wilhoit** for his support and partnership in this important effort.

Upon taking office, I immediately pledged to address three issues that educators were raising: measuring individual student growth over time, improving assessment and instruction for students with limited English skills and addressing the needs of special education students. Together, we have made progress on all three issues.

First, measuring student growth. Once states had developed the framework to take a snapshot of student skills each year, as the law requires, I invited them to join me in combining those static measurements to demonstrate progress over time. After the early pioneers proved that this method was viable, I recently invited all eligible states to adopt this more sophisticated measurement system, also known as the growth model or value-added approach.

In addition, I have partnered with states to develop better ways to measure progress for students with limited English skills and those with disabilities. Since my department released a draft framework last Fall to help improve assessments for English language learners, six states have volunteered to use it to help refine the way we assess these students' skills.

And in the coming weeks, seven states are scheduled to have peers review their assessments for students with disabilities. I'm confident that this process will help educators nationwide learn more about helping these children acquire grade-level knowledge, as we know they can. As always, we must share insights learned in the field to drive improvement nationwide.

Everywhere I go, I'm continuing our national conversation about how to strengthen and improve the law. This year alone, I've visited 17 states, meeting with 9 governors and 14 state education chiefs. I've met with members of Congress, testified before state legislatures, spoken at school assemblies, and held roundtables with business leaders, superintendents, parents, and community leaders.

Educators and policymakers agree: We must make sure educators have the best ways to chart student progress over time, the flexibility to improve struggling schools and more accurate ways to measure graduation rates. We must make sure that students who need extra help can get it.

As I've said before, I will continue working with members of Congress to address these changes legislatively. But students and teachers need help now. Therefore I am moving forward, as the President charged.

One thing we know for sure is that we must take dramatic action to improve our lowest-performing schools. We also know that not all struggling schools are alike, and that many states have identified a wide range of schools for improvement. That's why today, I'm announcing a new pilot that will help states improve underperforming schools. This

"differentiated accountability" program will invite up to 10 states to create more nuanced ways of distinguishing between schools in need of dramatic intervention, and those that are closer to meeting goals.

In keeping with previous efforts, we will give preference to states that have been pioneers for reform-as Maryland, North Dakota, Louisiana, and South Dakota have been leaders on accountability, and Massachusetts has been a leader on standards. We will also prioritize applications from states that have identified many schools for improvement.

The goal is to help educators act now to help schools in every stage of improvement. We can't afford to let struggling students continue to slide downhill.

This is not one-sided flexibility. To be eligible, states must commit to taking serious action. They must have approved assessment systems to measure student achievement. They must publish timely, transparent information about educational progress and challenges, as well as options for parents. And they must commit to building their capacity for reform, and focusing their most significant actions around their lowest-performing schools, such as the so-called "dropout factories" that produce up to half of high school dropouts. By evaluating participants annually, my department will help identify proven methods for others to follow.

Even if your state is not currently eligible, I encourage you to continue working to strengthen your accountability system, and to set challenging goals for students and schools. While some states are ready now, others will need more time before they're ready to advance to the next stage of reform. But no matter what level you're at now, my department will continue working to help you improve.

I encourage potential applicants to think creatively about how to choose which schools will receive intensive help, as well as what types of intervention to provide.

For example, they may send their most experienced and effective teachers to work in the neediest schools - and reward them for doing harder work. They may decide to close some of the lowest performing schools. They may want to partner with the nonprofit and private sectors to develop new approaches.

Senator Coleman, I know you agree that just as educators test new theories, so must legislators. And this is a great opportunity to help inform the Congress of our best work around how to strengthen and improve NCLB. Just as we've done before, we must continue drawing on our national dialogue to help practices and policies evolve hand in hand.

This effort will require hard work and our best thinking. My department will continue to help in every way we can.

Towards this end, we are reaching out to the experts to help guide efforts to achieve long-term reform.

Our new National Technical Advisory Council will help shape how we put accountability into practice on a day-to-day level, including how we evaluate the performance of schools and districts.

An education policy working group will bring together officials from different areas and levels of government-along with education stakeholders and researchers-to look at the big picture of education policy. I look forward to working with them to support further innovation without watering down accountability.

Industries from medicine to commerce, from finance to entertainment, have leveraged data and accountability to improve efficiency and effectiveness, as well as customer service, satisfaction, and quality of life. Together, we can support the same transformation in education.

Of course, we will only achieve this goal if we continue facing our problems head on, instead of rejecting data and measurement because they can cause discomfort.

Going forward, I will continue to partner with those who embrace accountability. And in situations where policies favor the needs of adults over the needs of students, I will continue to side with the kids. I will use every authority at my disposal to strengthen their advantage, and I know you will, too.

After all, don't our children deserve to benefit from the same spirit of possibility and innovation that has made our country great?

We already have so much customization in our lives. Our computers are built to order, our eyeglasses are ready in an hour and every time I go online to buy a book, a window pops up that tells me if I like this one, then here are 5 more I should try.

If you're working on your golf swing or your tennis game, your instruction is tailored to you. Why shouldn't we do the same in education-an area that's far more critical to our long-term success as a nation?

As technology and innovation transform the way we live, work, and play, schools must become flexible and agile enough to meet employers'-and students'-changing needs. And that means tailoring instruction and using time and resources in different ways-so that every child gets the extra help they need when they need it...as well as the rigorous coursework they need and deserve.


Those with whom I have labored in the education policy arena know that if you challenge the status quo and are willing to roll up our sleeves and work for a better system, positive change takes hold. Not just in one life, but in the whole community. Together, we can ensure that today's students, and future generations, have access to an education that opens wide the doors of opportunity.


Thank you. I would be happy to answer your questions.

###

[Top](#)

[» Back to March 2008](#)

 [Print](#)

 [Close Window](#)

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Print

Close
Window

Spellings Highlights Writing Gains Made on the Nation's Report Card under No Child Left Behind

Spellings Encouraged by Students' Improved Writing Skills

FOR RELEASE:

April 3, 2008

Contact: Samara Yudof
or Elissa Leonard
(202) 401-1576

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings today highlighted the results of *The Nation's Report Card™: Writing 2007*. Secretary Spellings commended educators and students for the significant progress made under No Child Left Behind.

"Just as we have seen with the 2007 reading and math results, student achievement in writing is on the rise," said Secretary Spellings. "Colleges and businesses have made clear that stronger writing skills must be taught in our schools, and these scores show the accountability demanded by No Child Left Behind is producing results."

Spellings noted that average writing scores for both eighth and twelfth graders were higher in 2007 than in previous assessments in 2002 and 1998. The average writing score for eighth-graders in 2007 was 3 points higher than in 2002 and six points higher than in 1998. The average writing score for twelfth-graders in 2007 was five points higher than in 2002 and 3 points higher than in 1998.

"Writing scores for 8th- and 12th-graders are at historic highs. Lower and middle performing students improved, and we are seeing continuing closure of racial, ethnic and gender gaps," said Spellings. "We have more work to do to ensure all groups make gains, but this report assures us that the indicators are moving in the right direction."

More than 165,000 eighth- and twelfth-graders representing a diverse population, in 45 states and the Department of Defense Schools, participated in the 2007 Nation's Report Card on writing. The report shows gains for minority students and male students are helping to narrow some education gaps. At grade eight, a six-point increase in the average score for black students from 2002 to 2007 contributed to a smaller gap between these students and their white peers. At grade twelve, an eight-point increase in the males' writing score since 2002, narrowed the male-female gap. Secretary Spellings noted that she would like to see more closure in the gap between Hispanic and white students' scores, but she was encouraged that the average score for Hispanic eighth-graders was higher in 2007 than in both previous assessments.

"In this global economy, the ability to write well, whether it is for narrative, informative or persuasive purposes, is a skill required to succeed in many of our nation's high-growth industries," Spellings said. "At a time when our student population is becoming more diverse, I am pleased to see evidence that educators and students are rising to the challenge."

Secretary Spellings also noted positive signs in some improved scores in urban districts. Eighth grade scores improved in three of the four school districts that participated in both the 2002 and

2007 Trial Urban District Assessments. Atlanta, Chicago and Los Angeles saw improved scores, and Houston showed no significant change. In fact, Atlanta and Los Angeles' gains were greater than those of the State of Georgia and the State of California, respectively.


"While I am pleased by some of these initial indicators from urban districts, I am not yet satisfied," said Spellings. "We still have more work to do to ensure every child is doing their best work, not just in writing, but in math and reading as well. Fortunately, we now have a system of accountability and an appetite for change has built around the nation."

The full NAEP reports are available at <http://nationsreportcard.gov/>.

###

[Top](#)

[Back to April 2008](#)

 [Print](#)

 [Close Window](#)

Last Modified: 04/04/2008

4

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 15, 2008

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
4/16/08

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: KARL ZINSMEISTER

SUBJECT: NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB) ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Because its requirements remain in place so long as Congress appropriates funding, No Child Left Behind does not have to be reauthorized this year. In December 2007, you and your advisors agreed that if Congress failed to reauthorize before March, then the Department of Education should act this year to refine the law through new pilots and regulations. It is now clear that reauthorization is not going to happen this year, so the Administration is acting. Your advisors and the Secretary have developed a set of actions that address areas of consensus for improving NCLB by providing more flexibility where necessary and more oversight where needed. We recommend your approval.

Highlights of Proposed New Regulations

Strengthening inclusion of students in accountability: Requires States to submit for review by experts and secretarial approval an explanation of how they establish the minimum number of students (n-size) for calculating subgroup performance in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Rationale: Test scores from very small groups of students are not reliable measures of school performance. As a result, States establish a minimum number of students below which subgroup scores are not counted for the purposes of determining whether schools are making AYP. This regulation will help prevent the abuse of some schools that use a high n-size number to omit the performance of certain groups of students in accountability decisions.

Anticipated Reaction: States will likely be pleased that we are not setting a national n-size number but will not be happy with the requirement to submit their State plan. Civil rights advocates will be pleased that we are taking steps to prevent States from excluding minority subgroups from accountability.

High school graduation rates: Establishes a uniform definition of the graduation rate by 2013 using a method agreed to by the National Governors Association (NGA). States will be required to disaggregate graduation rates, set a graduation rate goal, and define "continuous and substantial improvement" for purposes of making AYP decisions.

Rationale: A uniform method of calculating graduation rates is needed to improve transparency, raise expectations, and hold schools, districts, and States accountable.

Anticipated reaction: Given that States pledged to implement the NGA graduation rate, they should be supportive of the proposed definition. Nonetheless, they will be concerned about their technical capability to calculate the more sophisticated graduation rate. They will also have concerns about disaggregating the data and meeting AYP goals since it will increase the number of schools identified as needing improvement.

Multiple measures: Clarifies that measures of student performance may include multiple testing formats (e.g., short answer, multiple choice, essay questions) as well as multiple assessments within a subject area. This stands in contrast to Chairman Miller's proposal, which would allow for multiple soft measures, such as college enrollment or tests outside core areas, that dilute the importance of reading and mathematics achievement tests.

Rationale: Addresses complaints that accountability is based on a single measure or form of assessment, such as just multiple choice tests. For example, this clarifies that States can use both reading and writing assessments to calculate AYP for reading.

Anticipated reaction: Not likely to generate strong opposition.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data on State and local report cards: Requires States to include their schools' scores on this national benchmark in their annual reports to the public. Today, this data is only reported on the U.S. Department of Education and State websites.

Rationale: Allows citizens to compare their State standards to national norms.

Anticipated reaction: Not likely to generate strong opposition.

Supplemental Education Services (SES) Tutoring: Requires States to consider evidence of success and parent recommendations in approving and monitoring SES providers. Requires that a district work with community-based organizations to inform parents of SES and choice options before the districts can reallocate unused choice and SES funds. Schools would be required to use unspent funds on choice or SES the next year, with any remainder thereafter returned to the Treasury.

Rationale: These provisions will help ensure that schools make choice and SES available to eligible students before reallocating the funds to other purposes. The monitoring criteria will help States approve and assess providers.

Anticipated reaction: SES providers will appreciate the enhanced transparency. Schools will balk at requirements and the "use it or lose it" provision.

Restructuring: A school's restructuring plan must be rigorous and address the reasons for the schools being in restructuring. For example, a school that fails to make AYP in reading for five consecutive years must engage in restructuring that could consider replacing the school's reading staff.

Rationale: Helps to close a loophole in the current statute that allows districts to satisfy the requirement for restructuring by taking less aggressive action such as just replacing a principal.

Anticipated Reaction: States and schools may resist any new requirement that appears to make it more difficult to get away with doing very little under restructuring.

Public school choice: Clarifies that parents must be notified at least two weeks before the start of the school year in cases in which students are eligible under NCLB to choose to attend another school.

Rationale: Schools that notify parents about their public-school-choice options before the first day of school have higher participation rates than those that notify on or after the first day of school.⁶ Yet for the 2007-08 school year, only 29 percent of schools notified parents before the start of the school year, as required by law. This is one reason why only 1 percent of the 6 million eligible students exercised their public-school-choice option.

Anticipated reaction: Many schools will resist this requirement, just as they have resisted existing requirements; however, parents and students will benefit.

Proposed Pilots

The Education Department is using its waiver authority to create, expand, or improve these pilot programs:

Differentiated Accountability: Not all schools identified as "In Need of Improvement" under NCLB are the same. Of the schools identified for improvement in 2005-06, 56 percent were the result of low achievement among all students, indicating a widespread problem. But 14 percent were identified because of problems in a single subgroup. The Department's pilot, announced in March, provides States with the flexibility to assign different labels and consequences to schools in need of improvement. This flexibility allows States to blend their own accountability systems with NCLB, further embedding the principles of accountability, transparency, and choice.

Growth Model: A growth model gives schools credit for student improvement over time by tracking individual student achievement year to year rather than just student performance on one assessment at the end of the year. The Department announced in December 2007 the expansion of an existing pilot program to allow all 50 States to apply for permission to use a growth model as part of their accountability system.

SES Pilot Expansion: Under current law, schools identified as needing improvement must offer public school choice in the first year followed by choice and SES in the second year. Under an existing pilot, up to seven districts within a State are allowed to offer both SES and public school choice to students in the first year of school improvement. This would remove the limit on the number of districts that can participate within a State.

Improving District SES Practices: Districts in need of improvement are currently prohibited by regulation from serving as SES providers. In 2006 the Department launched a pilot program to make an exception for up to ten school districts in order to ensure more eligible students receive SES. The Department has already approved four districts but plans to tighten SES rules to prevent these districts, and others approved in the future, from abusing this opportunity. Districts would also be required to allow other providers to operate on-site in school buildings and provide multiple opportunities for parents to select an approved provider.





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Window

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings Announces Proposed Regulations to Strengthen No Child Left Behind

Focus on Improved Accountability and Transparency, Uniform and Disaggregated Graduation Rates and Improved Parental Notification

FOR RELEASE:

April 22, 2008

Contact: Samara Yudof or Elissa Leonard
(202) 401-1576

MORE RESOURCES

Fact sheets,
summaries, and
Secretary's remarks

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings today announced proposed new regulations to strengthen and clarify No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The proposed regulations focus on improved accountability and transparency, uniform and disaggregated graduation rates and improved parental notification for Supplemental Education Services and public school choice. The Secretary made the announcement at the Detroit Economic Club in Detroit, Mich.

"I'm proposing new policy tools that will give families lifelines—and empower educators to create dramatic improvement," said Secretary Spellings. "Many are actions that have gained broad support through conversations on how to strengthen No Child Left Behind. While I will continue working with legislators to renew this law, I also realize that students and families and teachers and schools need help now. So, at the President's request, I'm moving forward to empower educators to take actions that families have been waiting for."

The Secretary noted that these new regulations build on NCLB's positive results and are consistent with the law's core principles of annual testing, publishing data and helping schools that fall behind. She added that in her travels to nearly two dozen states—which included meetings with governors, state school chiefs and state legislatures—discussions focused on how states and districts can improve struggling schools, more accurately measure dropout rates and chart student progress over time.

Several of the proposed regulations seek to clarify elements of the law that demand school systems be accountable for results and transparent in their reporting to parents and the public, including requiring that states publish data from the Nation's Report Card alongside data from their own tests for students. The Secretary emphasized that measures of student academic achievement may include multiple types of questions and multiple assessments within a subject area. In addition, a state's accountability system must ensure the inclusion of all sub-groups of students by adopting appropriate N-sizes.

Building on the Department's growth model pilot program, the proposed regulations would outline the criteria that States must meet in order to incorporate individual student progress into the State's definition of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Secretary Spellings is also proposing to strengthen the provisions of the law on school restructuring. Schools in restructuring need the most significant intervention, and a recent study found that 40 percent of schools in restructuring did not implement any of the restructuring options under the law. The proposed regulations will clarify that restructuring interventions must be more rigorous and that interventions must address the reasons for the school being in restructuring.

To continue the dialogue and address some of the more technical needs of the states and their departments of education, Secretary Spellings proposed the creation of a National Technical Advisory Council. The council will be made up of experts in the fields of education standards, accountability systems, statistics and psychometrics and be tasked with advising the Department on highly complex and technical issues and ensuring state standards and assessments are of the highest technical quality.

Noting that, according to a recent study, 75 percent of high school students in Detroit public schools do not graduate on time, Secretary Spellings announced the Department would build on the work of the National Governor's Association to establish a uniform graduate rate that shows how many incoming freshman in a given high school graduate within four years.

"Over their lifetimes, dropouts from the class of 2007 alone will cost our nation more than 300 billion dollars in lost wages, lost taxes and lost productivity," said Secretary Spellings. "Increasing graduation rates by just five percent, for male students alone, would save us nearly eight billion dollars each year in crime-related costs."

All states would use the same formula to calculate how many students graduate from high school on time and how many drop out. The data would then be made public so that educators and parents can compare how students of every race, background and income level are performing.

States will be allowed to use an interim calculation on a transitional basis, but every high school in every state will be required to report new graduation rates for accountability purposes no later than 2013. In the meantime, each state will be responsible for setting a graduation rate goal and for disaggregating data by subgroup to report and determine AYP. Beginning in the 2008-2009 academic year, in order to make AYP, a school or district would have to meet the graduation goal or demonstrate their continuous and substantial improvement from the prior year.

Additionally, the Secretary is proposing rules to ensure parents are notified in a clear and timely way about their public school choice and supplemental education service options. The proposed regulations will ensure that states make more information available to the public about what tutoring providers are available, how these providers are approved and monitored, and most importantly, how effective they are in helping students improve.

"Research has shown that effective tutoring programs can reduce the achievement gap by 10 to 15 percent," said Secretary Spellings. "The problem is, these options will not make a difference if parents don't know they're available. I hope these proposed regulations will assist parents in getting the extra help their children may need to succeed."

The regulations proposed by the Secretary are published online in today's Federal Register for public comment. Hard copies of the Federal Register will be available on Wednesday, April 23.

For further information on how the regulations will strengthen NCLB, including a link to the Federal Register, please visit <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/reg/proposal/>.

###

Top

[» Back to April 2008](#)



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
April 24, 2008

President Bush Attends White House Summit on Inner-City Children and Faith-Based Schools

Ronald Reagan Building
Washington, D.C.

- [Fact Sheet: Providing Greater Opportunities for Our Children by Ensuring Access to Faith-Based Schools](#)
- [In Focus: Education](#)
- [White House Summit on Inner-City Children and Faith-Based Schools](#)

- [Video \(Windows\)](#)
- [Presidential Remarks](#)
- [Audio](#)
- [Photos](#)

10:23 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, all. Aysia, thanks for the introduction -- you did a fabulous job. I'm told that you're a very hard worker who loves school, and it's clear you always wear a smile. She's a member of her school's Student Advisory Group, has performed in plays ranging from Shakespeare to "The Lion King," writes short stories. And as you just heard her explain, she loves all language arts. Well, that's good -- some people say I'm pretty artful with language, as well. (Laughter and applause.)

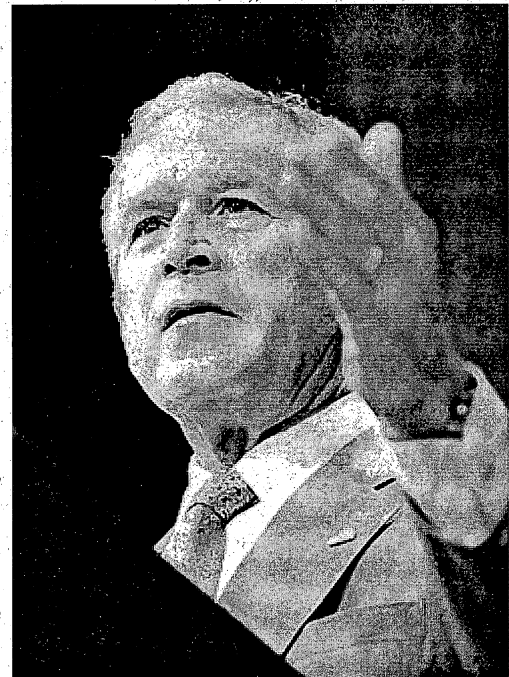
It is clear she has a promising future because of the education she is receiving at Saint Ann's. Unfortunately, thousands of other children like her are missing out on these opportunities because America's inner-city faith-based schools are closing at an alarming rate. And so that's why we've convened this summit: to discuss how we can extend lifelines of learning to all America's children. And I want to thank you for coming.

I take this summit seriously. Obviously you do, as well. My administration looks forward to working with you. This is a national objective, to make sure every child gets a good education. And I really appreciate you coming.

I want to thank my friend and Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, for joining with us today. I thank the Acting Secretary of HUD, Roy Bernardi.

Archbishop Wuerl, thank you very much, sir, for being here. We were just talking about what a glorious week it was to welcome His Holiness to America. It was an extraordinary moment for all who were directly involved, and I think extraordinary moment for all of America. I got to know Archbishop Wuerl in Pittsburg. I hope I conveyed to him my sense that providing a sound education for every child is one of the really important challenges for America. I happen to believe it is one of the greatest civil rights challenges. I am fully aware that in inner-city America some children are getting a good education, but a lot are consigned to inadequate schools.

And I believe helping these children should be a priority of a nation. It's certainly a priority to me. I married a teacher who has worked in inner-city schools; I helped raise one, as well. And helping inner-city children receive the education they deserve is so important as we head into the 21st century to make sure every child has got the skills necessary to succeed. That's what a hopeful country is all about.



Over the past seven years we have worked to strengthen the public school system. In other words, we haven't given up on public schools; quite the contrary, we've tried to help them succeed by passing the No Child Left Behind Act. In some circles it's controversial. I don't think it should be controversial, however, to demand high standards for every child. I don't think it should be controversial to insist upon accountability to see if those children are meeting those standards. And I don't think it should be viewed as controversial to say to a public school, if children are falling behind, here's supplementary services to help that individual child catch up. (Applause.)

As a result of accountability measures, I can now say that 8th graders set a record high for math scores. In other words, in order to be able to say that, you have to measure in the first place. When I was governor of Texas, I didn't like a system where we just simply guessed -- you know, "Do you think the child is learning?" "I don't know, maybe, maybe not." (Laughter.) That's unacceptable, particularly when a child's life is at stake.

We've learned that scores for minority and poor students are reaching all-time highs in a number of areas. And that's great. As a matter of fact, there's an achievement gap in America that is unacceptable. The good news is it's beginning to narrow. The problem is, is that while the No Child Left Behind Act is helping to turn around many struggling schools, there are still children trapped in schools that will not teach and will not change.



Today nearly one-half of children in America's major urban school districts do not graduate on time -- one-half of our children in major urban school districts do not get out of school on time. In Detroit, one student in four makes it out of the public school system with a diploma. When schools like these fail our inner-city children it is unfair, it's unacceptable and it is unsustainable for our country.

And so there are a variety of solutions. One is to work hard to improve the public school system, but also another solution is to recognize that there is a bright future for a lot of children found in faith-based schools. (Applause.)

The faith-based school tradition is not a 21st century phenomenon. A Quaker school opened in Philadelphia in 1689. A Jewish day school opened in New York more than 40 years before the American Revolution. And during the 19th century Catholic schools in our biggest cities welcomed children of poor, European immigrants. Can you imagine what it would -- what it's like to be an immigrant coming to America, can't hardly speak the language, and find great solace in two institutions -- one church and two schools? And generations of Americans have been lifted up. Generations of the newly arrived have been able to have hopeful futures because of our faith-based schools. It's been a -- it's a fact. It's a part of our history. Frankly, it's a glorious part of our history.

Today, our nation's poorest -- in our poorest communities, religious schools continue to provide important services. And as they carry out their historic mission of training children in faith, these schools increasingly serve children, you know, that don't share their religious tradition. That's important for people to know, that there's a lot of students who, for example, may not be Catholic, who go to the schools and get a great education. That's what we ought to be focused on: how to get people a great education.



In neighborhoods where some people say children simply can't learn, the faith-based schools are proving the nay-sayers wrong. These schools provide a good, solid academic foundation for children. They also help children understand the importance of discipline and character.

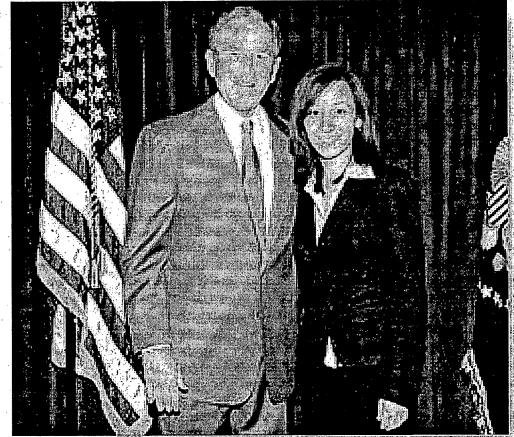
Yet for all the successes, America's inner-city faith-based schools are facing a crisis. And I use the word "crisis" for this reason: Between 2000 and 2006, nearly 1,200 faith-based schools closed in America's inner cities. It's affected nearly 400,000 students. They're places of learning where people are getting a good education and they're beginning to close, to the extent that 1,200 of them have closed. The impact of school closings extends far beyond the children that are having to leave these classrooms. The closings place an added burden on inner-city

public schools that are struggling. And these school closings impoverish our country by really denying a future of children a critical source of learning not only about how to read and write, but about social justice.

We have an interest in the health of these institutions. One of the reasons I've come is to highlight this problem and say to our country: We have an interest in the health of these centers of excellence; it's in the country's interest to get beyond the debate of public/private, to recognize this is a critical national asset that provides a critical part of our nation's fabric in making sure we're a hopeful place.

And so I want to spend a little time talking about what can be done to help preserve these schools and provide, more importantly, a hopeful future. And that's what you're going to do after I leave, as well.

First, ensuring that faith-based schools can continue to serve inner-city children requires a commitment from the federal government. (Applause.) Federal funds support faith-based organizations that serve Americans in need. We got beyond the social service debate by saying that it's okay to use taxpayers' money to provide help for those who hurt. My whole theory of life was we ought to be asking about results, not necessarily process. When you focus on process you can find all sorts of reasons not to move forward. If you say focus on results, it then provides an outlet for other options than state-sponsored programs -- which is okay.



I mean, what I'm telling you is that we're using taxpayers' money to empower faith-based organizations to help meet critical needs throughout the country -- critical needs such as helping a child whose parents may be in prison understand there's hope; a critical need is helping a prisoner recently released realize there's a hopeful tomorrow; a critical need is to help somebody whip drugs and alcohol so they can live a hopeful life. And we do that in the social services.

We also provide federal funding support for institutions of higher learning. We're using taxpayers' money to enable somebody to go to a private university, a religious university. It's a long tradition of the United States of America.

So my attitude is if we're doing this, if this is a precedent, why don't we use the same philosophy to provide federal funds to help inner-city families find greater choices in educating their children. (Applause.)

There is a precedent for this, called the D.C. Choice Incentive Act. And we've got some advocates here for the D.C. Choice Incentive Act -- I know, I've worked with them -- and I'm surprised they're not yelling again. (Laughter.) The law created Washington's Opportunity Scholarship Program, which has helped more than 2,600 of the poorest children in our nation's capital find new hope at a faith-based or other non-public school. In other words, one way to address the closings of schools is to empower parents to be able to send their children to those schools before they close.

This is a successful program, I think it's safe to say. One way to judge whether it's successful is to look at the demand for the scholarship relative to the supplies of the scholarships. There's a lot of people who want their children to be able to take advantage of this program. As a matter of fact, demand clearly outstrips supply -- which says to me we ought to expand the program and not kill the program. (Applause.)

So we'll continue to work with Congress to not only reauthorize the program as it exists, but hopefully expand it -- so that parents will be able to -- (applause.)

I also proposed an idea that I really hope Congress takes seriously, and that is Pell Grants for Kids. This would be a \$300 million initiative that would help as many as 75,000 low-income children that are now enrolled in troubled public schools to be able to go to a school of the parents' choice. See, one of the -- what's very important to make sure that an accountability system works is there's actual consequences and outlets.

And one of the outlets would be if you're in a public school that won't teach and won't change, and you're -- qualify, here's a scholarship for you to be able to have an additional opportunity. And to me this is a good way to

help strengthen the schools that I was talking about that are losing. I mean, one way to make sure you don't lose schools is you have people that are able to afford the education -- sustain the cash flow of these valuable American assets.

Pell Grants -- I want to remind our citizens Pell Grants have helped low-income young adults pursue the dream of a college education. And it is time to apply the same spirit to liberate poor children trapped in public schools that aren't meeting expectations. (Applause.)

State and local governments can help. Today, more than 30 state constitutions include so-called Blaine Amendments, which prohibit public support of religious schools. These amendments have their roots in 19th century anti-Catholic bigotry -- and today the legacy of discrimination continues to harm low-income students of many faiths and many backgrounds. And so state lawmakers, if they're concerned about quality education for children, and if they're concerned about these schools closing, they ought to remove the Blaine Amendments, they ought to move this -- (applause.)

There are other things state and local governments can do. I would call people's attention to the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit -- (applause) -- P-E-I-T-C, PEITC, which allows businesses to meet state tax obligations by supporting pre-K-through-12 scholarships for low-income students. It's an innovative way to use the tax code to meet a national -- in this case, state -- objective. The scholarships then allow children to attend the school of their choice -- including religious schools. Since 2001, these tax credits have yielded more than \$300 million to help Pennsylvania families. It's an innovative use of the tax code to meet social objectives. All 12 high schools in the Pittsburgh district have seen increased enrollment each year the program has been in place. That's positive.

And so I would call upon state leaders to listen to what comes out of this conference and to think of innovative ways to advance education for all children. Faith-based schools can continue to serve inner-city children requires a -- to see that that happens requires a commitment from the business community. It's in corporate America's interest that our children get a good education, starting in pre-K through 12th grade.

In Chicago a group of Jesuit priests found an innovative way to finance children's education called Cristo Rey, and they convinced Chicago's businesses to become involved. It's interesting that the Jesuits took the initiative. I would hope that corporate America would also take initiative. (Laughter.) But four days of the week the children go to class and then on the fifth they report for work at some of Chicago's most prestigious firms.

The businesses get energetic, reliable workers for high-turnover jobs. The students get a top-notch education plus real work experience. They feel a sense of pride when they leave some of the city's most dangerous neighborhoods for the city's tallest skyscrapers. It's a program that is working, and many of the students take that same sense of pride and accomplishment to higher education.

It's interesting to note that Cristo Rey is now involved in 19 cities. In other words, good ideas can take hold. The job of this conference is to provide a kind of go-by for people who share a sense of concern about our nation's future. And hopefully from this summit good ideas will be spawning other good ideas -- at the federal level and the state and local level, at the corporate level, and then of course at the citizen level.

Citizens -- you know, we're a -- we are a compassionate nation. What I see is America at its very best, which is these millions of acts of kindness and generosity that take place, and it doesn't require a government law. Sometimes it takes a little higher authority than government to inspire people to acts of kindness and mercy. But it happens all the time in America. It truly does. One-third of Americans who volunteer do so through religious organizations. Many of them happen to be faith-based schools, by the way. When you hear about an America that volunteers, many of the volunteers are at faith-based schools.

I was struck by an interesting story that came out of Memphis, Tennessee. Ten years ago private donors gave approximately \$15 million to the church in Memphis to help revive Catholic schools in the city's poorest neighborhoods -- assets exist -- they're worried about them going away, so rather than just watch schools close, somebody -- individuals did something about it by putting up \$15 million. With the seed money, the diocese launched the Jubilee Schools initiative, and reopened Catholic schools that had been shuttered, actually in some cases, for decades. Today, 10 Jubilee schools serve more than 1,400 students. Eighty-one percent of these children are not Catholic; nearly 96 percent live at or below poverty level.

With the help from Jubilee scholarship donors, tuition becomes whatever the family can afford. And the schools happen to be working, as well, which is really important. The program -- and the reason I can tell you is because test scores are up, they're not afraid to measure. You've got to be a little worried in our society when somebody says, I don't think I want to measure. That's like saying, I don't want to be held to account. The problem with that line of reasoning is that when you're dealing with our children, it's unacceptable. Of course you should be held to account. We ought to praise those who achieve excellence, and call upon those who don't to change so they can achieve excellence.

And so this school system is willing to measure, and it has been a great joy for the people of Memphis to watch excellence spread. And I want to thank those who have put forth the money, and call on all citizens to find ways they can contribute with their hearts to help educational entrepreneurs succeed -- is really what we're talking about, isn't it? Kind of innovation, they're willing to challenge the status quo if it's not working. I call it educational entrepreneurship -- so I'd consider yourself entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs.

Faith-based schools can continue to serve inner-city children and sometimes they can get a good boost from higher education. It seems like to me it's -- when I was governor of Texas I tried to get our higher education institutions to understand that rather than becoming a source of remediation, they ought to be a source of added value. And one way to do so is to help these schools early on, to make sure that children don't slip behind in the basics.

I was impressed by Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education, known as ACE, which prepares college graduates to work as teachers in under-served Catholic schools. It's an interesting way to participate in making sure the Catholic schools and the faith-based schools stay strong, and that is to educate teachers -- actually go in the classrooms to make sure that there's adequate instruction available. The people at Notre Dame commit to teach for two years as they earn their master's degree in education. And it turns out that when you get a taste for being a teacher, that you tend to stay. And so today there are about 650 ACE teachers and graduates who work at Catholic schools across the country.

And there's a -- I like the idea of these higher education institutions saying, okay, here's what I can contribute to making sure that elementary school and junior high school and high school education has high standards and excellence. And one way to do it is to support our faith-based schools all across the country.

And so that's what I've come to talk to you about. Here are some ways -- I mean, these are levels of society that ought to all be involved, and hopefully out of this meeting, that there's concrete action. We didn't ask you to come to Washington just to opine; we came and asked you to Washington to set good ideas out there for others to go by, because there's a lot of people in our country who share the same concern you share -- people understand what we're talking about here. This is pretty practical stuff. This isn't -- these are down-to-earth ideas on how to solve some of our nation's critical problems.

And so I'm -- let me end with a story here about Yadira Vieyra. Yadira says she goes to Georgetown University, and she said -- I was asking if Yadira was going to be here so I could ask her to stand here in a minute, and a fellow told me she's a little worried about missing class. So whoever Yadira's teacher is, please blame it on me, not her. (Laughter.)

She is a -- she was born in Mexico -- Mexicana. And they moved to Chicago, probably to try to realize a better life -- I'm confident, to try to realize a better life. Mom and dad had a dream to give their family hope. There's no more hopeful place in the world, by the way, than the United States of America. We shouldn't be surprised when people come to America for a hopeful life. That's what America has been and should be. (Applause.)

And then we shouldn't be surprised when the parents hope that their children get a great education, because there's nothing more hopeful for a parent than to know their child is receiving a good education. Well, that's what Yadira's folks wanted for her. So when the time came -- time for her to go to high school came, they wanted something better than a low-performing high school. You know, one of the interesting things about the accountability system -- a lot of people think that their child goes to the finest school ever, until the results get posted. (Laughter.)

And it's -- the whole purpose, by the way, is not to embarrass anybody, it's not to scold anybody. The whole purpose is to achieve excellence for every person. And so Yadira's parents I'm sure took a look at the school

system and said, there's a better way. And so, guess what, she went to Cristo Rey, the program I just described to you. And she was challenged by the school's rigorous academics.

If you set low standards, guess what you're going to get? Low results. If you believe in every child's worth and every child can learn, it's important to set high standards and challenge the children, and that's what happened in the school she went to. She was inspired by great teachers. She said she was motivated by the school's amazing job program. And she is now at Georgetown University, one of the great schools -- universities in America. And guess what she wants to do when she leaves Georgetown? She wants to enroll in Notre Dame's ACE program. Yadira, thanks for coming. (Applause.)

You either just got an A -- (laughter) -- or an F. (Laughter.) Either case, we're glad you're here -- (laughter) -- and I love your example. And the reason why it's important to have examples -- so that we get beyond the rhetoric and realize that we're dealing with the human potential. Someday no telling what Yadira's going to be in life, but one thing is for certain: it's going to be a productive citizen, and America will be better for it. And so we're glad you're here. Thank you for your spirit. Tell your parents, thank you. (Applause.)

And so let me close with what happened at National Stadium with His Holy Father. When he celebrated mass there, one of the objects he blessed at the end of the mass was the new cornerstone of the Pope John Paul the Great High School in Arlington, Virginia. Isn't that interesting? I'm sure there was a lot of demands on His Holy Father, but he took time to bless the cornerstone of a school.

And my hope is, is that we're laying cornerstones for new schools here or revived schools; that we take the spirit of the Holy Father and extend it throughout the country, and work for excellence for every child; to set high standards, and when we find centers of excellence, not them go away, but to think of policy that will enable them to not only exist, not only survive, but to thrive. It's in our nation's interest. It's an important summit for America.

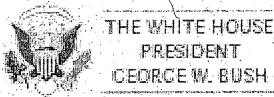
I thank you for bringing your talents, your energies and your efforts. I thank you for caring deeply about our young. And I thank you for being a part of what I believe is a necessary strategy to make sure America continues to be a hopeful place for all. God bless you. Thank you, all. (Applause.)


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



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
For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
April 24, 2008

Fact Sheet: Providing Greater Opportunities for Our Children by Ensuring Access to Faith-Based Schools

White House Summit Explores Ways To Help Faith-Based And Other Public School Alternatives Serve Our Nation's Urban Students

 [President Bush Attends White House Summit on Inner-City Children and Faith-Based Schools](#)

 [White House Summit on Inner-City Children and Faith-Based Schools](#)

 [In Focus: Education](#)

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Today, President Bush hosted a White House Summit on Inner-City Children and Faith-Based Schools in Washington, D.C. The event brought together educators, policymakers, and community leaders to develop local strategies to keep the doors of inner-city faith-based schools open to America's disadvantaged students. For many inner-city children across our Nation, America's faith-based schools provide an option for a better future. As we continue working to improve urban public schools through the No Child Left Behind Act, we must also work to preserve important educational alternatives for underserved students attending chronically underperforming public schools.

- **Non-public schools, including faith-based schools, have helped educate generations of low-income students, but they are disappearing at an alarming rate.** According to the National Center for Education Statistics, from 2000 to 2006, nearly 1,200 inner-city faith-based schools closed, displacing 425,000 students.
- **To continue the promise of a quality education for every student, we must pursue innovative solutions to improve public education and keep our high-performing faith-based schools open as valuable education alternatives.**

The Administration Is Providing More Choices For Parents Of Children Trapped In Underperforming Schools

Private schools serving America's poorest children deliver a valuable public service. Federal funds support religious institutions of higher learning and can help inner-city families find greater choices for educating their children.

- **President Bush calls on Congress to fund \$800 million in scholarships for 21st Century Learning Opportunities.** These scholarships will give parents the opportunity to enroll their children in high-quality after-school and summer school programs aimed at increasing student achievement, including programs run by faith-based schools and other community organizations.
- **In his 2008 State of the Union Address, President Bush proposed expanding scholarships for students trapped in troubled public schools around the country through the Pell Grants for Kids program.** Pell Grants for Kids would supplement State and local efforts to increase educational options for low-income K-12 students enrolled in underperforming schools. Under the Pell Grants for Kids program, the Department of Education would make competitive awards to States, cities, local educational agencies, and nonprofit organizations to develop K-12 scholarship programs for eligible low-income students attending schools that have not made adequate yearly progress under No Child Left Behind for 5 years or that have a graduation rate of less than 60 percent.
- **In 2004, President Bush signed into law the D.C. Choice Incentive Act, which expands choices for low-income students trapped in underperforming public schools.** This law created Washington's Opportunity Scholarship program, which has helped more than 2,600 of the poorest children in our Nation's capital find new hope at a faith-based or other non-public school. This program is showing signs of success, and Congress should reauthorize it so children can continue to benefit from Washington's

excellent private, charter, and faith-based schools.

Across The Country, Citizens Are Committed To Preserving America's Faith-Based Schools

Today's Summit is addressing how State and local governments, business communities, philanthropists, higher education institutions, and others can contribute to America's faith-based schools.

Nearly 10 years ago, private donors gave approximately \$15 million to the Diocese of Memphis to help revive Catholic schools in the city's poorest neighborhoods. With this money, the Diocese launched the Jubilee Schools initiative and re-opened Catholic schools that had been shuttered for decades. Today, 10 Jubilee schools serve more than 1,400 children. Eighty-one percent of these children are non-Catholic, and nearly 96 percent live at or below poverty level. With this strong academic program, students' scores on a number of standardized tests have gone up.


Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) prepares talented college graduates to work as teachers in under-served Catholic schools. These graduates commit to teach for 2 years as they earn their masters degrees in education, yet many remain in Catholic schools long after the program ends. Today, about 650 ACE teachers and graduates are at work in Catholic schools across the United States, including in New Orleans.

In Chicago, a group of Jesuit priests established the Cristo Rey school where students work part-time for local businesses to finance their Catholic school education. For four days a week, students go to class, and on the fifth day, they report for work at some of Chicago's most prestigious firms and provide businesses with energetic, reliable workers for high-turnover jobs. In return, the students get a top-notch education and real-world work experience. Today, there are 19 Cristo Rey schools across the Nation.

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