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Education - Standards [1]

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- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]



Michael Cohen
06/11/98 07:11:58 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: NATIONAL TEST--IMPORTANT



TESTQA.W

Today the National Academy of Sciences is releasing an interim report on a study called for in the Goodling compromise last year. Its good news for us. It concludes that Goodling's idea, of using statistical techniques to compare student achievement even though the students have taken different state or commercial tests, is not technically feasible. There's no way to measure student performance against national standards other than our test.

Attached is a Q&A for this for tomorrow for your review.

Should we also do a statement for the press office to release--something about how we agreed with Goodling last year to have this study done and be guided by the results--now we have the results and the independent bipartisan NAGB needs to get on with test development, without delay and without Congress playing politics with this important issue.

Let me know how you want to proceed.

- Q.** The National Academy of Sciences released a study today on national testing, concluding that Mr. Goodling's proposal to compare student achievement by using existing state and commercial tests is unworkable. What is the President's reaction to this study?

Background: In last year's compromise on national testing, we agreed to a Goodling proposal for the National Academy of Sciences to determine if the achievement of students from different states and cities, as measured by different state or commercial tests, could be compared by statistically related the different tests to each other. Presumably, if this could be done, there would be no need to develop a new national test, as the President had proposed. The NAS is releasing an interim report of this study today, which concludes that Mr. Goodling's approach is not feasible.

- A.** The study's conclusions clearly show that work on developing voluntary national tests must continue. Last fall the President and Mr. Goodling agreed to have this study conducted, and agreed that the results should inform Congressional action on national testing. Now we have the results, and they show conclusively that if we want to know how well students are performing compared to rigorous and widely accepted national standards, then we simply cannot rely on existing tests. Work on the voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math is proceeding under the authority of the independent, bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board. It is clear that this work must continue, without delay and without interference.

SENT BY:

2-12-98 10:04AM

Educ - Standards



National Assessment Governing Board

National Assessment of Educational Progress

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 12, 1998

Contact: Lawrence Feinberg
(202) 357-6942

Governing Board and Test Publishers Agree on Major Changes in Voluntary National Test Development Contract

The National Assessment Governing Board has reached agreement with a group of test publishers on major modifications in the contract for developing voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics.

Meeting the first deadline set by Congress for preparing the proposed exams, the contract modifications carry out fully decisions made by the independent, bipartisan Governing Board at a special meeting last month.

Under legislation passed by Congress and signed by the President in November, the Board has been granted "exclusive authority" over the five-year test development contract that was awarded by the U.S. Department of Education on August 15. By law, the Board was required to decide by February 11 whether to approve, modify, or terminate the contract.

Under the revised \$45 million contract, signed late yesterday by NAGB and the American Institutes for Research (AIR), the proposed tests would be based on the same content and performance standards as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). They would be designed to provide student-level results according to the Governing Board's standards for basic, proficient, or advanced performance.

The law prohibits any pilot testing of questions or field tests before October 1, 1998, a provision that is specifically incorporated in the revised contract. Other key contract revisions include:

- Changing the contract performance periods to end on September 30 rather than August 15. This brings the calendar for future contracting decisions in line with the Congressional calendar for legislation and appropriations for future fiscal years, which start October 1.
- Setting the schedule so that test questions are written during 1998; pilot testing would be conducted in March 1999 (if Congress does not prohibit continued test development); field testing would be held in March 2000; and the first testing of fourth and eighth grade students would be offered in March 2001.

-MORE-

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-2-

- Removing activities beyond the scope of test development, such as supplementary performance-item booklets, marketing, publicity, and recruiting for the proposed tests.

- Ensuring that all policy decisions are made by the Governing Board. In the original contract, decisions were made by the Education Department or the test development contractor.

- Ensuring extensive deliberation and public comment before the Board decides on accommodations, such as braille or bilingual booklets, for disabled or limited-English students.

- Providing information for the Board to make four determinations required under the law. These are related to avoiding test bias; maximizing test accuracy; meeting the needs of disadvantaged, disabled, and limited English proficient students; and informing parents and students about test content, purpose, and uses.

"All of the changes are designed to bring this contract in line with the law, as passed by Congress and signed by the President," said Mark Musick, chairman of the 26-member Governing Board. "Since Congress put the Board in charge of a five-year contract, we are planning, of course, for year two and beyond. But we are not presuming—one way or the other—whether test development will continue after September 30. We are carrying out the job Congress assigned to us."

Congress is planning to take up reauthorization of the National Assessment and the Governing Board later this year, and the future of voluntary national tests will probably be part of those deliberations.

"Our plans are based on the expectation that we will receive timely guidance through the congressional authorization and budgeting process," said Roy Truby, Executive Director of the Governing Board. "We are taking steps in the contract to ensure that we are positioned to act in accordance with that guidance."

The Governing Board, composed of state and local officials, educators, and business and public representatives, was established by Congress in 1988 to set policy for NAEP, the only testing program that regularly measures achievement of a cross-section of students in U.S. elementary and secondary schools. Over the past 27 years NAEP results in a range of academic subjects have been reported for the nation, regions, and states, but not for individual students.

As authorized at a Board meeting on January 22, final approval of the revised test development contract was given by the Board's Executive Committee and special contract review committee. The review committee was headed by William T. Randall, former NAGB chairman who was state Commissioner of Education in Colorado for many years.

-MORE-

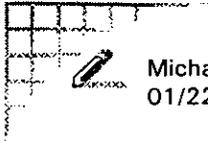
-3-

Other members of the review committee are NAGB vice-chairman Mary Blanton, of Salisbury, NC, a lawyer and general public member of NAGB; James Ellingson, of Moorhead, MN, a fourth grade teacher; Thomas Fisher, director of student assessment for the Florida Department of Education; Edward Haertel, a professor at Stanford University who is an expert in educational testing; Diane Ravitch, former Assistant Secretary of Education under President Bush, now senior research scholar at New York University and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution; and Deborah Voltz, assistant professor of special education at the University of Louisville.

Under the contract, the American Institutes for Research will oversee the test development effort. AIR is a national, nonprofit organization with broad experience in education-related research, including large-scale assessments and program evaluation. The project director is Archie E. Lapointe, former head of the NAEP program at Educational Testing Service (ETS), the NAEP contractor since 1983.

The major test publishers and others who will continue as subcontractors include California Test Bureau/McGraw Hill, Educational Testing Service, Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement, National Computer Systems, Riverside Publishing, and Westat, Inc.

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Michael Cohen
01/22/98 01:06:17 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP

cc: Michelle Crisci/WHO/EOP

Subject: Draft Statement on national test

Rahm: do you want the WH or ED to put out a statement?

Statement on National Assessment Governing Board Decision to Modify Contract for Developing National Tests

The Administration fought last year successfully to make sure that the independent, bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) was given responsibility for overseeing the development of voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. Today NAGB completed an important part of its work--to review and determine the modifications it deems necessary to the test development contract. We are pleased that NAGB is carrying out this responsibility in a serious and thoughtful manner.

Today we took another important step forward -- another step toward putting high standards in the classroom and keeping politics out. We do not agree with NAGB that it is necessary to delay the initial administration of the tests for one year. However, we are pleased that we are on track to having the first ever national tests in the basic skills, and to giving parents and communities tools to improve their local schools.

Michelle Crisci

01/22/98 01:29:49 PM

Record Type: Record

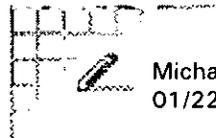
To: Laura Emmett/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: Draft Statement on national test

can you let me know what Bruce and Elena think about this?

----- Forwarded by Michelle Crisci/WHO/EOP on 01/22/98 01:11 PM -----



Michael Cohen
01/22/98 01:06:17 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP

cc: Michelle Crisci/WHO/EOP

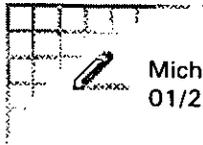
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Michael Cohen
01/22/98 07:45:49 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP
cc: Janet Murguia/WHO/EOP
Subject: NAGB briefing

Got briefed by NAGB chair and staff this evening. A few interesting highlights:

1. We never had much of a chance to turn the decision to delay the test around, even with the intervention of Romer and Norma Paulus.
2. NAGB briefed Goodling before they briefed us. He was furious with them, because they are acting as though there will be a test. He wants everything they write about test development to be in the conditional. They won't do it.
3. Lindsey Graham was at the briefing as well. He told them he heard that NAGB was now promoting fuzzy math. They offered to walk him through the math specifications when NAGB completes reviewing/revising them.
4. Goodling also told them that "the Administration is buying off the Black and Hispanic Caucuses." I took that to be both a good sign and a complement.
5. NAGB has been and will continue to brief all they key players on the hill. They are briefing Jeffords, Kennedy and Bingaman next week, and Jeffords will arrange a larger bipartisan briefing a couple of weeks later. We asked them to make sure they get to Coats, either through Jeffords or on their own. They will.
6. The Washinton Times report about NAGB dropping a Spanish version of the math test is not accurate. What they did is postpone deciding what to do about bilingual math until a later meeting. Our good friend Diane Ravitch is pushing to drop it as soon as possible, but most members of the Board apparantly haven't begun to think through the bilingual issues. They will probably hold a hearing on this before they do anything, though they do not yet have a firm plan.
7. I urged them to reach out to Wade Henderson soon, listen to his concerns, and walk him through their process for taking public input and deciding the issues. They agreed, and I will follow up on this (and everything else above as well).

Bottom line here: for a while at least, they can help create a better climate on the hill.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 22, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF

FROM: BRUCE REED
MIKE COHEN

SUBJECT: National Testing Strategy

As we indicated to the President in the most recent weekly report, we face two immediate challenges regarding national tests. This memo outlines the steps we are taking to address each of them, as well as our overall strategy for advancing this initiative.

I. Short Term Challenges

A. Delay in Test Administration. Today, the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), the independent body which was given responsibility for overseeing the development of the national tests, will consider a set of recommendations for modifying the test development contract, prepared by a special committee of the Board. NAGB is required to review the contract under the compromise reached last Fall.

One of the committee's recommendations would postpone pilot testing from Fall 1998 to Spring 1999, with the effect of delaying the initial administration of the tests until Spring 2001 rather than Spring 2000. This recommendation is being made so that the pilot test will occur during the same point in the school year that the test will be administered. We believe this change is unnecessary on technical grounds, and will most likely be seen as a setback for the President's proposal.

The current and former NAGB chairs, both strong supporters of our proposal, tried unsuccessfully to head off this recommendation when it was first considered by the special committee. While opposed to the recommendation, they believe it is very likely to be approved by the full Board. Few members are able to argue with the testing experts on technical grounds, and a number of members see this delay as a way to put some distance between the tests and the Clinton Administration, and thus increase its long term prospects in Congress.

Together with Secretary Riley and his staff, we have been working with our allies on NAGB to try to turn this around. Governor Romer and Oregon State Superintendent of Education Norma Paulus (a Republican), both key NAGB members who are strong test supporters and opponents of the proposed delay, will not be at today's meeting. Both have made their objections clear to the NAGB chair and requested that consideration of this one issue be postponed until the

next meeting so they can make sure that the views of state officials are fully considered. If NAGB ignores our objections, Senator Bingaman and other Congressional supporters of the test are prepared to express impatience with the delay -- while at the same time underscoring that this proves the test is for real (not dead, as Republicans insisted last fall) and NAGB is moving forward with test development in a serious, nonpartisan way.

B. Goodling Mark-up on Jan. 28. Bill Goodling has scheduled a full committee mark-up of legislation that would permanently prohibit any work on the development or implementation of national tests (beyond what was agreed to in the FY98 appropriations bill) without specific Congressional authorization. We expect that this bill will pass the House, with solid Republican support and quite possibly with support from African American and Hispanic Democrats, but will die in the Senate.

In the days leading up to the SOTU, Secretary Riley, Frank Raines and other Administration officials will brief members of the Black and Hispanic Caucuses on our new education initiatives and other education investments of interest to them. We will also brief key constituency groups. At a minimum, these should enable us to secure good will in the short-term. Whether they also lead to longer term support for the testing initiative remains to be seen.

Our position is clear: we do not believe Congressional authorization is necessary (and neither did the Bush Administration when it funded national standards). We are working with the leadership to prevent Democratic defections on this vote, though this will not be easy. We are in no better position to close the policy differences with the Caucuses and their supporters (over a Spanish version of the reading test, and the use of the tests to end social promotions) now than we were last fall. However, our new education initiatives and increased investments should make a difference.

At the request of Rep. Clay's staff, Secretary Riley has written to Mr. Goodling, asking him to reconsider the mark-up session. Riley asked that Goodling live up to the agreement reached last fall with the President, which contemplated further Congressional action only after the completion of several National Academy of Sciences studies later this Spring. This letter will have little impact with Goodling, but will help persuade the civil rights groups and members of the caucuses not to participate in Goodling's political maneuvering.

Goodling is seeking the support of the civil rights groups, and we have also asked Wade Henderson of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights not to ally himself with Goodling at this point. Riley's letter was important to him, and we believe the prospects are decent that the civil rights groups will not support Goodling's effort at this point.

II. Long -Term Strategy

We face a tough challenge again in Congress this year. We fully expect Goodling to use the reauthorization of the National Assessment of Education Progress later this year to specifically prohibit national testing, and to keep Republicans pretty well united with him on this issue. And

there is no guarantee that Congressional Black and Hispanic Caucus members will see the tests and our education investments as a package deal. Further, while we will have our greatest leverage once again in the appropriations process, we expect that it will be as least as difficult as last year to secure continued funding.

Our overall strategy for advancing the testing initiative is twofold: First, we need to make the most of NAGB's independent control over the test, frustrating as it may be. The more the test becomes an independent, non-federal effort and not a product of the Clinton Administration's Education Department, the more likely it will become a reality. Second, we need to play the only card we have with a reluctant Congress -- our appropriations vetoes -- to keep federal funding alive. That means doing what we can to win back liberal Democrats and expand our moderate Republican base, especially in the Senate.

A. Advance a Democratic bill in the House to authorize the tests. We can't stop Goodling's efforts without an alternative, yet we don't want to concede this year what we won last year: the ability to secure funding for continued test development without specific Congressional authorization.

Therefore, we will ask (and help) George Miller to take the lead in crafting a Democratic bill that will authorize the tests and that can win broad Democratic support. Miller can include provisions in his bill to satisfy the Black and Hispanic Caucuses that we would not want to advance. And we could support the bill in general without signing on to every specific provision, and still maintain that no specific authorizing legislation is needed. At the same time, we will keep working with the Hispanic Caucus to see whether they would be satisfied with an Administration recommendation to NAGB on a Spanish language reading test (and whether our Republican support in the Senate would evaporate if we took that position). NAGB would almost certainly reject such a recommendation. In fact, the Board may decide today to overturn the Education Department's plan to make the math test available in Spanish.

B. Reach out to Republicans. We have a core group of influential Republican intellectual and political leaders who continue to support the testing initiative: Bill Bennett, John Engler, Checker Finn and Diane Ravitch. Ravitch now serves on NAGB; Engler has agreed to serve on NAGB and will be appointed as soon as he completes his paperwork. We can use this group, together with the handful of moderate Republican supporters (Forbes, Castle, Horn) to try pick off Republicans from Goodling.

Our hold on the Bennett group will always be tenuous. We think it would be useful for you or the President to meet Bennett and others in the near future, to thank them for their support, seek their advice on how to proceed, and urge them to continue to help.

We can and will also try to activate the business community, which remains strongly supportive though not always eager to engage in the necessary hand-to-hand combat. We will shortly propose an event with the President that will demonstrate broad business support and energize their efforts on our behalf.

C. Build State and Local Support. The ongoing political battle in Washington and uncertainty over federal funding will make it difficult to sign up cities and states for the tests. However, now that the test is clearly in NAGB's hands, it should be much less of a partisan issue at the state and local level. We also hope Engler will help sell the test to Republican governors, whose support is essential for this to be truly national.

D. Win the Appropriations Battle. We will have the most leverage in the appropriations process, particularly on a popular issue just before the election. That is why our approach to the authorizing battles is designed to preserve our ability to press for funds again without authorization. Senate Democrats welcome this fight.

E. Prepare a Nonfederal Back-up. Because we face such an uphill battle, we will explore the possibility of challenging a nonfederal group, such as ACHIEVE (a group founded by Lou Gerstner, Tommy Thompson, and several other governors and business leaders who support the standards movement) to develop and implement national standards and tests, either in conjunction with, or if necessary, as a different form of, the NAGB tests. Under last fall's compromise, the National Academy of Sciences will make recommendations later this year on the feasibility of alternative ways to compare student performance to national standards and across state lines.

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

Tonight, I issue a challenge to the nation: Every state should adopt high national standards, and . . . , every state should test every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math to make sure these standards are met.

President Bill Clinton

1997 State of the Union Address

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

A CHALLENGE TO PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOOLS TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERY STUDENT MASTERS THE BASICS IN READING AND MATHEMATICS.

Reading well by grade 4 and mastering mathematics -- including the foundations of algebra and geometry -- by grade 8 are the gateways for further learning and achievement. Research shows that students who fail to learn to read English well by the end of grade 3 are at greater risk of dropping out and facing diminished success in school and life. Students who fail to master the basics of mathematics by the end of grade 8 do not have the foundation to take tough mathematics and science courses in high school which prepare them for college and better jobs.

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

RIGOROUS VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS IN 4TH GRADE READING AND 8TH GRADE MATHEMATICS. Parents need to know that students have mastered the basics no matter where they live or move in this country. And they have the right to know how well their children are doing compared with students in other schools, states, and countries. The voluntary national tests for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math will help give parents and teachers this information by providing, for the first time, scores for individual students, measured against widely accepted national and international standards of excellence. They will give states, local communities, teachers and parents the kind of accurate information they need to help students master basic and advanced skills and strengthen academic performance.

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

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

TOOLS FOR PARENTS; GUIDES FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES. The current NAEP is designed to assess how well a sample of students across the entire nation and individual states perform in reading and mathematics. Only a sample of students participate in NAEP, and parents do not know how their own children do on this test. In contrast, the voluntary national tests will provide students, parents, and teachers with meaningful scores to compare individual student performance to widely accepted national and international standards and to identify students and schools that need extra help. In addition, when parents, teachers and students receive test results, they will also learn which questions the student got right and which ones were incorrect. These standard measures of excellence will help

teachers and principals improve curriculum and instruction, give students a guide for charting their own progress, and help parents hold schools accountable for improved performance. Individual test scores will *not* be collected by the federal government; state and local school districts will decide how to use the data.

DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE TESTS. The voluntary national test development contract was awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to a group led by the American Institutes for Research. Subcontracting companies include some of the most respected test publishers and research organizations in the country. NAGB will review the contract for test development and the test specifications and modify them if necessary. Guidance for test development has come from mathematics and reading teachers, parents, and local and state education, civic and business leaders. The voluntary national tests will be field tested in the spring of 1999 and administered in the spring of 2000.

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES WILL CONDUCT COMPARATIVE STUDIES. The National Academy of Sciences, in consultation with the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and NAGB, will study whether tests already developed by commercial publishers and states may be used to measure individual student performance against the NAEP standards. The study will also evaluate whether existing tests can be compared against each other. In addition, the Academy will study the technical quality of the voluntary national tests and other aspects of test item development, as well as issues of test bias and test use.

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
STATEMENT ON EDUCATION STANDARDS
THE WHITE HOUSE
January 8, 1998**

Good morning. This week, an independent report showed that more than half the students in our nation's city schools are failing to master the basics in reading, math, and science -- the building blocks of all the skills our children need to succeed in the 21st Century. And while some city schools systems are making progress, all too many are clearly failing our children.

As a nation, we have a responsibility to all our children-- and especially those in our most vulnerable communities. That is why I have fought for high national standards and national tests to help our children reach their highest potential. Since I called for national standards, I am proud to say that 15 major city school systems have stepped forward to accept that challenge. But we must not rest until every school system in the nation commits to adopting high standards -- and helping their students to meet them.

If we are going strong into the 21st Century, we must continue to expand opportunity for all of our people -- and when it comes to our children's education, that means continuing to expect and demand the very best from our schools, our teachers, and above all, from our students. That is why I have fought for excellence, competition, and accountability in our nation's public schools, with more parental involvement, greater choice, better teaching, and an end to social promotion. We cannot afford to let our children down when they need us the most.

Thank you.

Voluntary National Tests Agreement Allows Test Development to Move Forward

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

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

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

Research the needs of students, parents and teachers. The test development contractor will conduct research on how to best present test questions and interview students, parents and teachers to gain understanding of and report test results for clarity and usefulness.

Write the test items. The test development contractor is responsible for writing test items according to specifications for the voluntary national tests approved by the National Assessment Governing Board.

Convene advisory committees. Advisory panels in reading and math will review test items and provide feedback on a range of issues such as test reporting, test use and accommodations. A technical advisory group will also be convened.

Plan the pilot tests. The purposes of the pilot tests are to try-out test items and collect item statistics. The first pilot tests are scheduled to occur in the fall of 1998. Prior to the pilot's administration, the contractor is responsible for identifying the sample of schools and students needed, recruiting schools to participate, and training staff to administer the pilot.

Prepare for the field tests. The purposes of the field tests are to collect data for equating the test forms and linking the voluntary national tests to the national standards of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and benchmarks from Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS). The first field tests will be conducted in the Spring of 1999. In preparation for the field test, the contractor is responsible for organizing a nationally representative sample of students, recruiting schools, and planning studies for linking the voluntary national tests to NAEP and TIMSS.

Develop guidelines for accommodations, appropriate test use, and test reporting. Each of these guidelines will be created through a public input process and in accordance with nationally accepted standards.

Create informational materials. Brochures and a web site will be created by the contractor to inform state education agencies and local school districts, as well as parents, teachers and students about the voluntary national tests.

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

November 7, 1997

The White House At Work
September 8, 1997

**PRESIDENT CLINTON UNDERSCORES HIS COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION WHILE
AMERICA GOES BACK TO SCHOOL**

"[E]very child in America -- every single child in America needs to be able to read well, and needs to be able to read independently by at least the end of the 3rd grade, so that all this other learning can occur. That's what this whole national standards debate is about. We want everyone -- students, teachers, principals, schools, school boards -- to be held accountable and also to get the help and support they need...."

--President Clinton, September 8, 1997

The President traveled to the Four Seasons Elementary School in Gambrills, Maryland to meet with students as they start their school year. He reinforced his call to Congress to support national academic standards by supporting voluntary national testing for 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math. The voluntary national tests provide an opportunity for local school districts and parents to measure their children's educational success and raise academic achievement across the country. This year there are more than 52 million young Americans in school -- the largest number of children ever in school in the history of America. It is more important than ever that we make sure these students have the tools they need to succeed in the economy of the future.

- **Helping Parents Ensure Their Children Are Learning:** Parents should be able to know how well their children are doing compared with students in other schools, states, and countries. Voluntary national tests will give parents this information by providing, for the first time, scores for individual students, measured against national and international standards of excellence. These tests will allow states and local communities that choose to participate to measure and strengthen the academic performance of their schools and students. In today's global economy, our students need a sound foundation in reading and mathematics - voluntary national tests will help ensure they are getting the foundation they need.
- **Broad Bipartisan Support for National Testing:** In the President's State of the Union address, he challenged every state and school district to adopt high national standards, and by 1999, to join in a national test for all 4th graders in reading and all 8th graders in math, to make sure they have mastered these basics. Educators and business groups, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee, the Education Task Force of the Business Roundtable, the National Alliance of Business, and 240 technology industry leaders, have joined in a bipartisan call for high national education standards and testing in reading and math.

"Every state should adopt high national standards, and by 1999, every state should test every 4th grader in reading and 8th grader in math to make sure these standards are met. President Clinton's national testing initiative offers a new opportunity to use widely accepted national benchmarks in reading and math against which states, school districts and parents can judge student performance."

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

Good News for American Education at Close of School Year
June 10, 1997

U.S. 4th Grade Students Are Internationally Competitive in Science and Math.

President Clinton announced today the fourth-grade results of the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS), which show that U.S. students score above the international average in both science and math, compared with 25 other participating countries. The President welcomed the news, calling the results a good first step toward our national goal of being first in the world in math and science, and a clear indication that our students and schools can compete with those all over the world.

- In science, U.S. students' average score was 565 -- 41 points above the international average science score of 524. U.S. fourth graders were outperformed only by students in Korea, and scored higher than students in 19 other countries.
- In math, U.S. students' average score was 545 -- 16 points above the international average of 529. Only seven countries -- Singapore, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Austria -- outperformed U.S. students, while U.S. students outperformed those in 12 other countries.

These results show that U.S. schools are improving. The mathematics results in particular show gains from a previous international assessment, which had indicated that U.S. students performed below the international average.

President Calls for National Standards and Tests for 8th Grade Math to Keep American Students on Track. While U.S. 4th grade math and science achievement is strong, 8th grade achievement is relatively weak, especially in math, based on TIMSS results released in November. To keep American students achieving at a high level, the President again challenged all states to adopt national standards and tests in 8th grade math. The voluntary national test in 8th grade math will be based on the existing widely accepted National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 8th grade math test, and will also be linked to TIMSS, allowing students, parents and teachers to see how schools and students did compared with international benchmarks. The new test will focus on the years when U.S. achievement begins to falter and will help ensure that students have mastered the basics of math, including the essentials of algebra and geometry.

Kentucky to Participate in The Voluntary National Tests in 4th Grade Reading And 8th Grade Math. The President also announced that Governor Paul Patton of Kentucky has asked that Kentucky be included in the voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math when the tests are first given in the Spring of

1999. Governor Patton joins a growing list of educational leaders in California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina and West Virginia in endorsing the tests.

WORLD EDUCATION LEAGUE

Educational standards

Board / or Study
HOC

Who's top?

Bx

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

4-10-97

Some countries seem to educate their children much better than others. Why? No comprehensive answer has emerged yet but plenty of lessons are being learnt from the tests which reveal the educational discrepancies

A CLASS has 28 students and the ratio of girls to boys is 4:3. How many girls are there? Which of the following is made using bacteria: yogurt, cream, soap or cooking oil? Simple enough questions in any language (the answers, by the way, are 16 and yogurt). But when half a million pupils from around the world were set questions like these, some countries, just like some pupils, did very well and some very badly.

The tests were set for the largest-ever piece of international education research, the Third International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS). Of the 41 nations participating in this first phase, Singapore was teacher's pet: the average scores of its pupils were almost twice those of South Africa, bottom of the class (see table 1).

East Asian countries have overtaken nations such as America and Britain which have had universal schooling for much longer. America came 17th in science and 28th in mathematics. England came 25th in maths and Scotland (whose pupils were tested separately) came 29th. The four richest East Asian economies took the first four places in maths.

Some former communist countries, notably the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Bulgaria, also did significantly better than their richer western neighbours, even though they spend much less on education. Six of the top 15 places in both maths and science went to East Europeans. It seems that how much a country can afford to spend has less than you might think to do with how well educated its children are. American children have three times as much money spent on their schooling as young South Koreans, who nevertheless beat them hands down in tests.

International educational comparisons like the TIMSS study have been subjects of growing academic enthusiasm and criticism since the 1960s (for the controversies, see box on next page). Teachers, though, have been almost entirely

2+2=7

13-year-olds' average score in TIMSS (unit average = 500)

Maths		Science	
1 Singapore	643	Singapore	607
2 South Korea	607	Czech Republic	574
3 Japan	605	Japan	571
4 Hong Kong	588	South Korea	565
5 Belgium (Fl)	565	Bulgaria	565
6 Czech Republic	564	Netherlands	560
7 Slovakia	547	Slovenia	560
8 Switzerland	545	Austria	558
9 Netherlands	541	Hungary	554
10 Slovenia	541	England	552
11 Bulgaria	540	Belgium (Fl)	550
12 Austria	539	Australia	545
13 France	538	Slovakia	544
14 Hungary	537	Russia	538
15 Russia	535	Ireland	538
16 Australia	530	Sweden	535
17 Ireland	527	United States	534
18 Canada	527	Canada	531
19 Belgium (Wt)	526	Germany	531
20 Thailand	522	Norway	527
21 Israel	522	Thailand	525
22 Sweden	519	New Zealand	525
23 Germany	509	Israel	524
24 New Zealand	508	Hong Kong	522
25 England	506	Switzerland	522
26 Norway	503	Scotland	517
27 Denmark	502	Spain	517
28 United States	500	France	498
29 Scotland	498	Greece	497
30 Latvia	493	Iceland	494
31 Spain	487	Romania	486
32 Iceland	487	Latvia	485
33 Greece	484	Portugal	480
34 Romania	482	Denmark	478
35 Lithuania	477	Lithuania	476
36 Cyprus	474	Belgium (Wt)	471
37 Portugal	454	Iran	470
38 Iran	428	Cyprus	463
39 Kuwait	392	Kuwait	430
40 Colombia	385	Colombia	411
41 South Africa	354	South Africa	326

*Third International Maths and Science Study; †Flanders; ‡Wallonia
Source: TIMSS

hostile and most governments have held themselves aloof from the arguments, fearing embarrassment. A poor showing in the league table would give political opponents ammunition, while the studies might be used to accuse ministers of starving their education system (or, possibly, of wasting taxpayers' money on a grand scale).

Now, attitudes are changing, at least among politicians. Over the past ten years or so, governments' desire to know more about how their schools compare with others, and what lessons can be learned from the comparison, have begun to outweigh fear of embarrassment. More countries took part in TIMSS than in its predecessors, and the attention paid to its findings by the world's politicians, educators and the news media was much greater than for previous studies.

Politicians do their homework

President Clinton described the test in his state-of-the-union message in February, as one "that reflects the world-class standards our children must meet for the new era." America's poor overall showing has sparked calls for the adoption of a national curriculum and national standards for school tests—including from Mr Clinton himself. These calls are based on the observation that the countries which did best in the study tended to have national frameworks of this kind.

In a television interview in December, the French president, Jacques Chirac, described as "shameful" a decision by his education ministry to pull out of an international study of adult literacy which was showing that the French were doing badly. And in Britain last year, Michael Heseltine, the deputy prime minister, brushed aside objections from officials in the Department for Education and Employment, and published the unflattering results of a study he had commissioned comparing British workers with those in France, America, Singapore and Germany—chosen as key economic competitors.

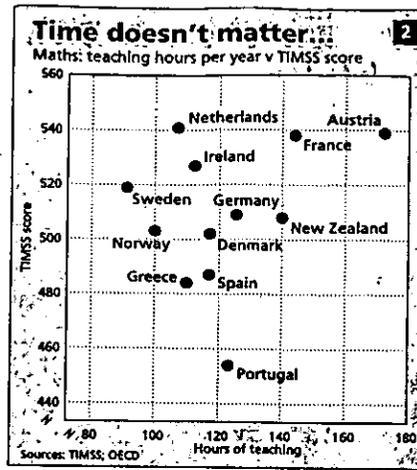
The Germans, in turn, were shocked by their pupils' mediocre performance in the TIMSS tests. Their pupils did only slightly better than the English at maths, coming 23rd out of 41 countries. In science, the English surged ahead (though not the Scots) while the Germans were beaten by, among others, the Dutch, the Russians—and even the Americans. A television network ran a special report called "Education Emergency in Ger-

many"; industrialists accused politicians of ignoring repeated warnings about declining standards in schools.

There are more studies to come. In December the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a club of 29 of the world's richest countries, launched its own series of annual reports. The OECD already collects data on how the governments spend their combined \$1 trillion annual education budgets, and what proportion of each nation's population reaches a given level of education. The new studies will go much further, comparing how schools, colleges and universities are run in each country and analysing the implications for policymakers.

In some countries, international comparisons are already being used as a catalyst for educational reform. The poor performance of Swedish children in maths, in one study in the mid 1980s, led to the setting up of a new programme of in-service training for teachers. The initial results from TIMSS suggest that Sweden has since pulled itself up to slightly above the international average.

Although Japanese children have repeatedly gained high overall marks in maths tests, some studies have suggested that they are not as advanced in other things, such as analysing data, as they are in basic arithmetic. The Japanese government



has started using such findings to reform its national curriculum. Hungary, discovering in early studies that its children were among the world's best in maths and science but among the least literate, ordered its teachers to spend more time on reading.

Knowledge workers

Leaving aside the results of the tests, two main factors lie behind governments' increasing willingness to take part in international education studies to begin with. The first is the growing consensus that education is the key to getting rich—for countries

as well as for individuals. It is widely believed that one of the main reasons why tiger economies like Singapore and South Korea have grown so quickly is that their governments have made determined and successful efforts to raise educational standards.

The other factor is value for money. Governments everywhere have woken up to the full economic significance of education just as they are making desperate attempts to rein in public spending. OECD countries already spend about 6% of national income on education; given the pressure to trim budgets there is no prospect that governments will chuck money at schools without checking to see whether standards are improving. Hence the enthusiasm for comparisons. If governments could discover what it is about their education system that helps growth, then perhaps, they hope, they could do better without spending more.

So do the tests help? They do not provide a sure-fire formula of exactly how much should be spent on schools, how schools should be managed and precisely how each subject should be taught.

All the same, the tests are already proving useful, especially for exposing myths. A popularly-held view has it that "opportunity to learn" is the key to educational success—ie, the more time children spend on a

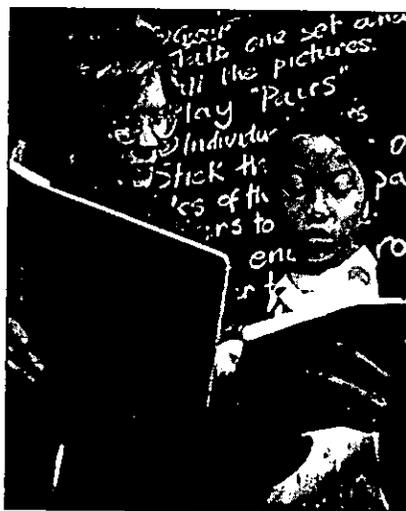
Answering the critics

CROSS-COUNTRY comparisons have long been controversial. Among the doubts: Do tests put an unwarranted premium on certain qualities—speed of recall, mental arithmetic—while ignoring hard-to-measure ones like creative thinking? Were pupils from different countries really comparable? (For instance, in countries where children are made to repeat a year of their education if they fail to reach a certain standard, tests for, say, 13-year-olds may exclude those who have been sent to join a class of 12-year-olds.) Were pupils in some countries told that the tests were extremely important, while others were not? Did the tests give an unfair advantage to countries whose curriculum for 13-year-olds happens to include more of the topics included in them?

Wendy Keys of Britain's National Foundation for Educational Research, one of the bodies that organised the TIMSS project, says that a number of measures were taken to answer such criticisms. The score for each country was adjusted to take account of any pupils who were held back a year. Teachers everywhere were given precise instructions on how to explain the tests to pupils, and indepen-

dent monitors were sent to schools chosen at random. After the results were in, experts in each country looked at how their pupils had done on those questions which most closely matched the curriculum for children of their age.

The results? Broadly, the new study confirmed the relative positions of coun-



Much to learn from each other

tries which had taken part in earlier studies. That consistency suggested the original criticisms may have been exaggerated. However, the refinements made in the recent study may overturn one of the theories that has been used to explain why America and Britain, in spite of having had universal education for longer than most nations, do so poorly. This is that they contain an unusually large proportion of pupils who perform very badly. The comforting implication would be that ordinary pupils do reasonably well but that average scores are dragged down by a so-called "long tail of low achievers".

This explanation was given a colour of plausibility by earlier tests. In those, mediocre scores in Britain and America could be explained away by the failure of the tests to take account of countries where pupils are held back a year. The new version of the test puts that problem right—and the two countries are still doing poorly. Though the mass of results from TIMSS is still being analysed, Dr Keys says there is no sign so far of the "long tail". The implication would be that the average scores of American and British pupils are mediocre because average performance is mediocre, and not because of some peculiarity at the very bottom of the class.

subject, the better they do at it. Alas, the evidence so far is not encouraging for the proponents of this theory. Taking the twelve countries which both took part in TIMSS and also had their average teaching hours measured in the OECD's recent study of school management, there seems little correlation between time spent on a subject and performance of pupils in tests (see chart 2). Young Austrians spend exceptionally long hours on maths and science lessons; for them, it pays off in higher test scores. But so do New Zealand's teenagers—and they do not do any better than, say, Norwegians, who spend an unusually short time on lessons in both subjects.

Next—and of particular interest to cash-strapped governments—there appears to be little evidence to support the argument, often heard from teachers' unions, that the main cause of educational under-achievement is under-funding. Low-spending countries such as South Korea and the Czech Republic are at the top of the TIMSS league table. High-spenders such as America and Denmark do much worse (see chart 3). Obviously, there are dozens of reasons other than spending why one country does well, another badly, but the success of the low-spending Czechs and Koreans does show that spending more on schools is not a prerequisite for improving standards.

Another article of faith among the teaching profession—that children are bound to do better in small classes—is also being undermined by educational research. As with other studies, TIMSS found that France, America and Britain, where children are usually taught in classes of twenty-odd, do significantly worse than East Asian countries where almost twice as many pupils are crammed into each class. Again, there may be social reasons why some countries can cope better with large classes than others. All the same, the comparison refutes the argument that larger is necessarily worse.

Further, the tests even cast some doubt over the cultural explanation for the greater success of East Asia: that there is some hard-to-define Asian culture, connected with parental authority and a strong social value on education, which makes children more eager to learn and easier to teach. Those who make this argument say it would of course be impossible to replicate such oriental magic in the West.

Yet the results of TIMSS suggest that this is, to put it mildly, exaggerated. If "culture" makes English children so poor at maths, then why have they done so well at science (not far behind the Japanese and South Koreans)? And why do English pupils do well at science and badly at maths, while in France it is the other way around? A less mystical, more mundane explanation suggests itself: English schools teach science well and maths badly; French schools teach



Please sir, why are we so brainy?

maths better than science; East Asian schools teach both subjects well.

Apart from casting doubt on some widely-held beliefs, do international comparisons have anything constructive to say? So far, the conclusions are tentative, but some answers are emerging.

Teaching the teachers

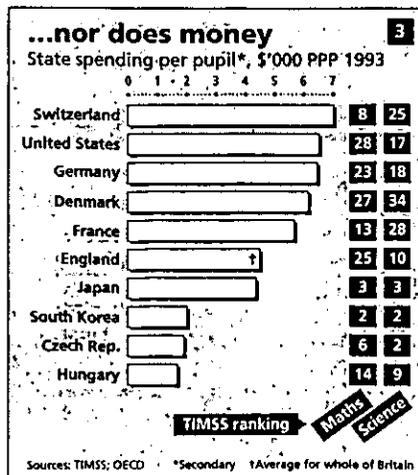
As well as getting pupils to sit tests, the TIMSS researchers monitored the way lessons were taught in each country. Eventually this should point to which teaching method tends to be most successful, though the data are still being worked on. Meanwhile, other researchers have been searching for common factors among those countries whose schools seem to turn out well-educated pupils.

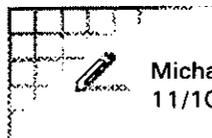
Julia Whitburn of Britain's National Institute of Economic and Social Research has studied the way maths is taught in Japan and Switzerland, two countries which are different in many ways but whose pupils seem to do consistently well at in the

subject. She noted a number of common factors:

- Much more time is spent on the basics of arithmetic than on more general mathematical topics such as handling data;
- Pupils learn to do sums in their heads before they are taught to do them on paper; calculators are usually banned;
- Standardised teaching manuals, which are tested extensively in schools before being published, are used widely;
- A method known as "whole-class interactive teaching" is used widely. The teacher addresses the whole class at once, posing questions to pupils in turn, to ensure they are following the lesson. American and British schools have been criticised for letting pupils spend much of their time working in small groups, with the teacher rushing from one group to the next to see how they are doing. Ms Whitburn notes that in Japan and Switzerland this method is only used in teaching arts and crafts;
- Finally, great efforts are made to ensure that pupils do not fall behind. Those that do are given extra coaching.

Learning, though, is not a one-way street. Just as western countries are busy seeking to emulate Japanese schools, schools and universities in Japan are coming under pressure from employers to turn out workers with the sort of creativity and individuality that the Japanese associate with western education. And just as American and British politicians are demanding that schools copy their more successful oriental counterparts and set their pupils more homework, the South Korean government is telling schools to give pupils regular homework-free days, so they can spend more time with their families—just like western children. Perhaps in education there is such a thing as a happy medium.





Michael Cohen
11/10/97 07:47:17 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Summary of national test discussion with Smith

Mike and I had a productive conversation; a brief summary is below. We agreed that we need to have another meeting soon, involving the two of you, the two of us, and leg. affairs staff from WH and ED. The purpose would be to review and further develop the basic strategy, especially with regard to NAEP reauthorization.

Cohen/Smith

Next Steps on National Tests

1. Declare victory in the next few days

Bill Signing on Wednesday Or Thursday

Benjamin op ed.

Calls from Reed/Cohen/Smith on day of signing ceremony to national political and education press, to explain victory

Riley letter to States/Districts that have signed up, describing where we are

2. Get NAGB right, and in charge, quickly

RIR - push this.

Invite NAGB chair to bill signing, and meet with him afterwards to talk about how he moves forward quickly

Add Engler and either Diane Ravitch or E.D. Hirsch to NAGB before its Nov. 21 meeting. (Engler is easy; Ravitch or Hirsch can be added only if we drop someone else; Smith will talk through options with Riley)

Try for 11/21 event with POTUS when NAGB is in town--to officially put them in charge

3. Keep states/cities on board

keep them as close as possible to test development process

involve them in strategy for moving forward

4. Figure out NAEP reauthorization strategy

Administration reauthorization proposal, including testing authority, ready to go by January

Develop legislative strategy, including consultations with Dem. Supporters, Caucuses, moderate R's

5. Keep ACHIEVE helpful or neutralized

Keep Romer from wandering off the reservation

Work with ACHIEVE staff to keep their next move supportive with “multitest” approach

Don't let the word “harmonize” become part of their vocabulary as it has ours.

Draft 11/21/97 12:20pm

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
RADIO ADDRESS ON NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TESTING
November 21, 1997**

Good morning. Today I would like to speak with you about a breakthrough for education -- our agreement to move forward with national tests to ensure no child leaves school without mastering the basics.

The best way to give our children the world-class education they need to thrive in the 21st century is by setting high standards of academic achievement. When we fail to encourage our children, we encourage them to fail. And that is why I called on America to join me in raising education standards -- and adopting nonpartisan national tests to chart our progress at meeting them.

We have now taken a significant step forward in this effort. I recently signed an education bill that supports high national standards and the development of voluntary national tests of 4th-graders in reading and 8th-graders in math. And, as I had recommended to Congress, the independent, bipartisan National Assessment Governing Board -- often called NAGB [NAG-bee] -- will oversee these tests. Congress created NAGB a decade ago, its 26 members include governors and legislators of both parties, business leaders, parents, and teachers. I am pleased to be joined in the White House by the NAGB board members, who have just convened for the first time since taking on their new responsibilities.

The independent board is already off to a great start. They have just presented me with their plan for developing national tests -- including a pilot test next October -- and several new members have been appointed to help, including Diane Ravitch, an assistant secretary of education under President Bush; Lynn Marmar, the President of the Cincinnati school board; and Jo Ann Pottorff [need pronunciation], a member of the Kansas legislature. I am grateful they have agreed to take on this important role. And I am confident that the board's diversity will ensure that the new tests measure what they should -- nothing more and nothing less.

As Diane Ravitch has said, these tests will not be a harness; they give the federal government no new authority. Instead, the tests will be a yardstick -- providing standard measures of excellence to give parents information on what their children must learn to master the basics. The tests will also set clear objectives for teachers and let us know which students and schools need extra help.

We must make sure that as we raise standards, we continue to make progress on our pledge to make sure every 8-year old can read, every 12-year old can log onto the Internet, and every 18-year old can go on to college. Earlier this month, we helped build a citizen army of reading tutors, nearly doubled our investment in education technology, expanded public school

choice, and funded the largest increase in Pell Grants in two decades.

With high national education standards and voluntary national tests, we can make sure all our children can seize the opportunities of the 21st century. Working together, we can continue to raise our children's sights, lift their hopes, and honor our obligation to improve today in order to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Numbers Racket

'Standards' Math Is Creating a Big Division In Education Circles

It Favors Strategic Thinking, And a Good Guess Is OK, But Critics Call It Fuzzy

Multiplication Table as a Relic

AI

By JUNE KRONHOLZ

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Would it be so awful if schoolchildren didn't learn long division?

Why teach square roots if calculators can compute them in an instant?

Should math teachers give students points for trying?

What in the world are the math uses of the characters * and / ?

More to the point, what is going on in math class, and why has something as arcane as conic sections — the geometry of curves and circles — turned into a rancorous political issue?

Standards of Controversy

Eight years ago, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the association of grade-school math teachers, published a list of standards aimed at raising the math skills of U.S. schoolchildren. "The standards are 50 statements saying what we think kids ought to learn," says Thomas Romberg, a math professor at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and chairman of the standards panel.

That sounds straightforward enough. But while Americans are united in dismay over the quality of schools, they are divided over how to fix them, and standards-based math has become a symbol to its opponents of all that is wrong with U.S. education: undisciplined, dumbed down and — the ultimate insult — fuzzy. It allows for a fair amount of "bumbling to an answer," says Michael McKeown, a San Diego molecular biologist and father of three high-school-age kids.

It is also swamping some school districts in acrimony. Traditionalists accuse standards proponents of plots to ruin education; proponents label traditionalists "math Nazis."

"I don't understand the meanness," says Kate Dubost, a high-school teacher of standards math in Atascadero, Calif., where the superintendent and curriculum director took early retirement over a standards uproar. "We're talking about math."

The math council's standards propose, among other things, that students learn to work in teams, become comfortable with calculators and computers, explain their answers, learn mapping and graphing, probability and statistics, and spend more time solving multistep problems. Something has to be cut to make room for all this, so the standards suggest that elementary teachers devote less time to activities such as work sheets, long division and rote practice, while high-school teachers reduce emphasis on such things as conic sections, two-column proofs and paper-and-pencil trigonometry solutions.

Divining What Matters

Yet, in an economy increasingly dependent on high technology, and where millions of people can't make a dollar's change, how and what is taught in math class isn't an idle debate. The computer revolution has sparked an explosion in math discovery, and with that explosion, vast new uses for math — stock-market derivatives, airline scheduling, production planning and pricing.

At the same time, factories are asking for more brain and less brawn. "The people on the assembly line at Ford and Corning Glass are having to manage their own processes, and that requires mathematical thinking," says Lynn Steen, a math professor at St. Olufs College in St. Olufs, Minn.

But the math of the past stressed memorizing formulas over solving problems and was geared toward college-bound students instead of being something everyone needs to get a job, says Margaret Cozzens, who is director of school math and science programs at the National Science Foundation. "Kids were left by the wayside because they weren't good at memorization."

The math council says it circulated 30,000 copies of the draft standards before they were published. There wasn't a peep. State school boards began adopting the standards; publishers wrote new texts and workbooks to meet the standards. Perhaps half the U.S. high schools and 10% of the elementary schools now teach the standards math, Mr. Steen says.

Sums of Criticism

Critics of the standards — math professors, teachers and parents; the same sort of people who favor the standards — say it took them until the new math books worked their way into the curriculum before they concluded the standards didn't add up. In Atascadero, Madalyn McDaniel, a mother of two who always liked math herself, took up residence in Kate Dubost's standards-based sophomore-math class during a section on the Pythagorean theorem. "There was no emphasis on right answers," she says. "In an effort to improve self-esteem, everyone's solution was discussed and valued equally."

Mrs. McDaniel became such a vocal irritant that the school passed new rules monitoring parental visits. Undeterred, she formed a parents' committee that forced Atascadero to reintroduce traditional math — and split the central California community in the process. Babette

Please Turn to Page A6, Column 1

Continued From First Page

DeCou, a standards proponent with three children in Atascadero schools, says math traditionalists even accused her of taking money from a publisher to promote standards math. "There was a lot of 'you people,' as in 'you people got us into a horrible mess,'" she says with a sigh.

Opponents of standards math complain that the new books promote a "guess-and-check" approach to answers (make a guess, see if it is right, make another guess, getting any closer?) instead of pencil-and-paper solutions. They charge that teachers overdo teamwork, and as a result, weak or lazy students slide by on a strong student's performance. "When I was in school, we called that cheating," Mrs. McDaniel says.

Standards opponents contend the new teaching makes children dependent on manipulatives, which are piles of blocks or toys that they separate into groups, instead of learning to add and subtract on paper or in their heads. They are angered that some publishers issue only workbooks or sheaves of papers to elementary-school youngsters. "There ought to be a book that a kid takes home that explains how to do

things," says Paul Clifton, a San Diego statistician and father of two school-age children. And they are irate over a teaching philosophy called constructivism that says children learn better if they construct something on their own — use a string to measure a circle and "discover" that the circumference is 3.14 times greater than the diameter, for example — rather than hearing it from a teacher. That is time-consuming, and worse, says Frank Allen, a Chicago math teacher for 46 years and a former president of the math council, "every generation begins not where the other left off; it starts all over again."

Turning the Tables

But nothing outrages opponents of standards math so much as something that often isn't there: the multiplication table. Eric Robinson, a math professor at Ithaca College in Ithaca, N.Y., is reviewing standards-based math books for the National Science Foundation and pauses when asked if they reprint the multiplication table. No, he allows, but then he adds quickly: "Partly I want to deny it and partly I want to celebrate it." Children learn multiplication by practice, not memory, he says; they learn math strategies ("What's the best way to get to the answer?") instead of algorithms.

In MathLand, a math series produced by Creative Publications, a unit of Tribune Co., fourth graders are taught 12x13 this way: Imagine "seeing" 12 groups of 10, then add on 12+12+12. That's one of "several strategies" to get the answer, says Dennis Estrada, MathLand's math consultant; the multiplication that adults were taught (actually, an algorithm in which you multiply 12 by 3, move one column to the left, multiply 12 by 1, add the two sums) is another strategy, he says.

The missing multiplication table, and the idea that an algorithm is just another strategy, mystifies parents raised on reciting 6x6=36. (The highly regarded Everyday Mathematics series, developed at the University of Chicago and published by Everyday Learning Corp., also a unit of Tribune, prints a variation of the multiplication table, but substitutes "x" with "*" and uses "/" for division since computer keyboards don't have the traditional division icon.)

But it appalls such math teachers as the University of Wisconsin's Richard Askey, who see it as evidence of education lite. "Technical skills are downplayed in favor of calculators and computers, and proof is a dirty word," he says in exasperation. Gayle Cloud, a Riverside, Calif., mother of six, compares it to "digging a garden with your hands: There are no tools."

The math-standards handbook probably doesn't help matters. In phrases that beg to be parodied, the math council talks of the need for children to "gain mathematical power," and suggests that "to decorate a ceramic pot with a regular pattern is doing mathematics." Everyday Mathematics, which says it is used in 75,000 classrooms, assigns card and dice games as occasional homework, and sprinkles its workbooks with stray facts like, "The average lifespan of a goldfish is about 14 years." That's getting children to think about numbers, says Steve Mico, the director of development.

MathLand, which is widely used in California and in the Department of Defense overseas schools, has even sixth graders use piles of toys to figure fractions, and asks fourth graders this question: "Which is greater, one-half of a pear or one-third of an orange?" (The answer, which Mr. Estrada says encourages conceptual thinking, is: "It depends on how big they were before you cut them.")

Critics of the standards dubbed them fuzzy math, or whole math—a reference to whole-language reading, an idea that children can learn words by seeing them in use rather than by sounding them out (which has created a controversy in its own right). Or, even more disparaging, the new-new math, a shot at new math, the 1960s attempt at math overhaul that failed dis-

mally. "There are no such things as those things," says a spokesman for the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Still, the names have stuck.

With feelings mounting, a group of San Diego parents last year formed a group called Mathematically Correct and put up a World Wide Web site to spread their displeasure over the standards and the new math books. Some editorial pages also took up the cry, but it was President Clinton who turned the math standards into a political issue earlier this year by proposing a national math test for eighth graders. The idea roiled conservatives, who see education as a purely local matter and view national testing as a foot-in-the-door to a national curriculum.

But even many people who favor national testing are opposed to the Clinton test because, as it was proposed by the president, it would conform to the math council's standards—including letting students use calculators and giving them credit for trying, even for giving the wrong answer, even for writing "I don't know." At any rate, the test remains mired in Congress: The Senate has endorsed it, the House is opposed.

Shock of Recognition

Meanwhile, the math council seems dismayed that its admonitions to study three-dimensional geometry and explore "relationships . . . among whole numbers, fractions, decimals, integers and rational numbers" should have entered the public

discourse. "We've put out recommendations for years, and no one's ever listened," says Mary Lindquist, who teaches math education at Columbus State University in Columbus, Ga.

Council members insist the standards are misunderstood; indeed, the standards don't mention constructivism or guess-and-check, and they don't abolish the multiplication table. "The council never intended that students shouldn't have to know basic facts," says John Dossey, a math professor at Illinois State University in Normal, and president of the council when the standards were written. Overenthusiastic teachers simply took the standards too far, he says, and traditionalist opponents exaggerated the facts. Still, the math council will revise the standards next summer as part of a review it says it had planned all along.

But California, epicenter of the world's math-based computer industry — and not coincidentally, of opposition to the standards—isn't waiting. Five years after writing the math standards into its state math program, California is writing them out. The state's new program, which must be approved by the legislature, requires that students have a textbook with an index, discourages the use of calculators, and toughens work on basic skills so that first graders will be expected to add and subtract two-digit numbers.

Nevertheless, there are avid supporters of standards math — including Brenda Hammond's 25 second graders at William Tyler Page Elementary in Montgomery County, Md., outside Washington. Mrs. Hammond, who has a doctorate in education and has been teaching for 32 years,

studied the standards at summer school on a grant from the National Science Foundation. So on a recent morning, when she introduces her class to fractions, she throws out the old book in favor of the new standards.

The class is pretty typical of American schoolchildren these days: A Sikh boy with a hair knot sits next to a Muslim girl in a veil; three children are Spanish-speaking, one is deaf; a third of them come from families poor enough to qualify them for subsidized lunches. Mrs. Hammond calls the children together on a shag rug and poses a complicated problem about sharing a cake with her fellow teachers, four of whom each want one-eighth of the cake, and one who wants one quarter. "Will there be any left for me?" she asks as she dispatches the children to tables.

For the next hour, she has them cut colored paper in halves, quarters and eighths; overlay them, and compare sizes. "Which is bigger?" she asks, as the class comes to terms with the idea that while 8 is larger than 4, one-fourth is larger than one-eighth. "Prove it to me," she says, when hands shoot up in answer. "Tell me why you think so. Show me why one-half is less than three-quarters."

With lunchtime approaching, Mrs. Hammond again poses the question about the cake. First, a girl in turquoise tights inches her hand up, then a boy with a sticker pasted to his forehead waggles his arm. Finally, an excited buzz spreads across the room and the students declare: "You still have one-quarter left!"

The class files out to the cafeteria, leaving Mrs. Hammond glowing. "This is exciting," she says. "This is math."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1997

2/12

SCHEDULING REQUEST

October 2, 1997

ACCEPT

REGRET

PENDING

TO: Stephanie Street, Director of Scheduling and Advance

FROM: Bruce Reed, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

REQUEST: Departure statement on high-tech CEOs support of education standards.

PURPOSE: To meet with seven high-tech CEOs on education issue and make a statement to the press.

BACKGROUND: John Doerr and six other high tech CEOs will be in town on Oct. 8th for a series of Republican congressional meetings. They would like a brief meeting with the President to reaffirm their support for his national testing initiative. While this meeting would be closed to the press, the president could make a statement to the press following the meeting on the importance of education standards in a high-tech economy. The participants would also be available to meet with press afterwards.

PREVIOUS PARTICIPATION: The President met with John Doerr in San Francisco, but their last education event was in the East Room on April 2, 1997.

DATE & TIME: Morning of October 8, 1997

LOCATION: The White House

PARTICIPANTS: The President, The Vice-President, John Doerr, Floyd Kvamme, *Kleiner Perkins*, Jim Barksdale, *Netscape*, John Chambers, CEO *Cisco Systems*, Wess Serman, CEO *Heartport*, and Bob Grady, Managing Partner *Robertson, Stevens, and Co.*

OUTLINE OF EVENTS: -15 minute meeting
-Statement on departure

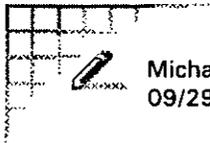
REMARKS REQUIRED: Yes

MEDIA COVERAGE: Meeting: Closed press
Departure: Open press

RECOMMENDED

BY: Bruce Reed

CONTACT: Christa Robinson x6-5165



Michael Cohen
09/29/97 09:10:02 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Response to Broder

After discussing yesterday's Broder piece with Ann Lewis, Riley and Bruce, I'm recommending a 2-part response strategy.

The first would be an op-ed that makes the case that Clinton and Riley have been consistently working to improve public education by investing more resources, promoting serious accountability for results (through Goals 2000 and national tests), and giving parents choice in public education through charter schools. This strategy is showing results (e.g., virtually every state has standards now, there has been a dramatic increase in charter schools, and we are beginning to see achievement increases (4th graders above international norm in math and science). While there has been bipartisan support for some of these efforts, there is also a core group of Republicans that oppose these common sense steps, and who are constantly trying to undermine standards and tests, slash funding, and oppose efforts to improve public education. All they want to do is provide vouchers and walk away from the public schools. It's a good thing Bill Clinton and Dick Riley are providing sound, consistent leadership, and showing resolve, in the face of these attacks.

I would see either a Dem. gov or Member of COngress as the author for such a piece. Roy Romer, Jim Hunt, Howard Dean or Parris Glendining are the most obvious choices, though they all have liabilities (Romer's DNC role may make him look like an administration shill, Hunt probably won't want to take on the right wing, Dean still doesn't get our testing initiative, and Glendining, while supportive, is weak at home). From Congress, Bingaman, Kennedy and George Miller seem like the most obvious prospects.

Any reactions?

The second approach would be a letter from Riley to Broder--polite but firm, in which he makes several points: (1) he continues to have the facts about Goals 2000 all wrong including, particularly, that the R's have not raided Goals \$ because they perceive it lacks a policy rationale now. This year is the first year since the R's took over that the House approps bill has contained any funds for Goals. (2) while he keeps criticizing the testing initiative as tiny, it would be in even more trouble with the R's if we had gone the route he advocates--mandatory rather than voluntary, and lots more subjects and grades; (3) a general argument that we are on the right side and providing leadership, while the R's are the ones messing things up.

What do you think?

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 3, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRUCE REED
JOHN HILLEY
MIKE COHEN

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON NATIONAL TESTS

This memo outlines the current status of the national testing initiative in Congress, and our strategy for winning the fight to keep the initiative on track.

I. Current Status and Recent Developments

The conferees have begun to meet, but are not expected to take up the testing issue until many other issues are addressed. We have two distinct objectives in conference: (1) securing an authorization along the lines of the Senate provision, permitting tests to proceed under NAGB's auspices, and (2) ensuring that the bill provides the \$16 million needed for continued test development.

Conservative Republican Senators who supported the Coats/NAGB compromise have come under strong pressure from the Eagle Forum, and 14 of the 42 Republicans who voted for the Coats amendment switched sides last week and signed a letter written by Ashcroft, threatening to filibuster the appropriations bill if it does not contain Goodling's prohibition on the tests. We are relying on business groups and Finn and Bennett to hold as many Republicans as possible. Senate Democratic support is holding firm. Last week, 43 Democratic Senators signed a letter written by Bingaman, threatening a filibuster if the conference report does not let your testing initiative go forward.

In the House, securing Republican support for something along the lines of the Senate provision is key. This task will be difficult, given that Goodling is firmly locked into his position, with the apparently strong support of the House leadership. Last week, Goodling sent you a letter implying that he will not move an America Reads bill as long as you continue to press for the tests. Staff of the Department of Education and DPC have reached out to moderate Republicans, including Mike Castle (who spoke in favor of the Senate provision on the floor and has previously served on NAGB) to urge a compromise. We anticipate that such a compromise will need to modify the Senate provision at least somewhat, and we are working with the Education Department to prepare proposals that we can support. So far, the only idea floated by Republican staff is to proceed with test development, but require separate authorization for test implementation. We do not think this is a good deal for us. We are instead considering

compromises along the lines of including language that prohibits the Education Department from developing national curriculum in reading and math, or delaying full test implementation for a year while providing for a field test in interested states and districts in 1999.

In addition, we continue to explore ways of reducing the opposition from the Black and Hispanic Caucuses, though securing their support alone will not substantially advance our cause. Secretary Riley has met with the three members of the CBC who opposed the Goodling amendment -- Chaka-Fattah, Al Wynn, and Harold Ford -- to seek their advice on how best to secure the support of the Black Caucus. They noted that the primary concern of caucus members is school construction, and that members feel strongly that we have failed to fight sufficiently hard for this initiative. There are two school construction tax-credit proposals likely to be introduced in Congress in the near future, both as alternatives to Coverdell-like provisions to provide IRA tax-free withdrawals for K-12 education. One will be offered by Rangel in a Ways and Means mark-up, and the other by Daschle if Coverdell offers his proposal in the Senate. We believe that it will be helpful for us to endorse at least one of these proposals if they begin to move in Congress.

We also have been working closely with the Council of Great City Schools to explore ways to make use of commercially available 4th grade reading tests in Spanish that are aligned to NAEP frameworks and performance standards. At least one such test is already available -- essentially the equivalent of a Spanish-language version of the national reading test. Our strategy is for the Great City Schools and the local superintendents to take the lead in persuading the Hispanic groups and the Hispanic Caucus that this test provides what they have been asking for. We then would help ensure that these tests could be administered and reported in coordination with the national tests, and would support paying for their administration through Title I.

II. Communications

Our overall approach over the coming weeks is to convince the Republicans that they are fighting a losing battle by opposing us again on education issues. We will highlight the national tests as the centerpiece of your campaign to improve public education, through a comprehensive strategy of promoting higher standards and greater accountability; increasing parental involvement and public school choice through charter schools; and investing in improved teaching and learning, including technology programs. We will cast our Republican opponents as trying to undermine improvements in public education by blocking the tests and pushing for block grants that will end important programs and cut investments.

On Monday we will flesh out an overall strategy for waging a continuing, high profile campaign over the next few weeks, which will build upon the following events that are already being planned:

- A visible, high-tech business leaders' effort, including a White House meeting with John Doerr, James Barksdale and other high-tech CEO's.

- A meeting the week of October 20 with the newly formed Learning Alliance for public education, a consortium of 12 national organizations involved in K-12 education working to promote a standards-based reform agenda at the local level.
- If his schedule permits, the Vice President's participation in a joint meeting of the Council of Great City Schools and U.S. Conference of Mayors on October 15-18, where an additional 4-5 cities would announce their participation in the tests.
- One or more background briefings on public education for selected press by the Vice President or First Lady and Secretary Riley.
- Release of a Department of Education report that says students who take algebra and other advanced math courses are far more likely to go on to college, along with the release of a Department of Education/National Science Foundation math directive action plan.
- Additional technology announcements, including a new plan for recycling surplus federal computers to schools.
- Continued efforts by Secretary Riley, Deputy Secretary Smith, White House staff, and other Cabinet members to talk to editorial boards, Sunday shows, and talk radio in key states and congressional districts.
- A congressional recess strategy in targeted districts, with aggressive efforts by surrogates while you are out of the country.

III. Outreach

Education Department and DPC staff meet weekly with education and business groups that support the tests to share information and coordinate strategy. We also have worked closely with other business leaders and groups, including Lou Gerstner and John Doerr. As a result, we have learned that:

- A number of business leaders are considering buying ads in support of the tests.
- Lou Gerstner is trying to secure an endorsement for the tests by ACHIEVE. The six CEO's on the Board and four of the Governors (Engler, Romer, Hunt and Miller) are supportive; Voinovich and Thompson have not yet agreed.
- John Doerr has written to governors and state education officials, as well as big city education leaders, thanking those who have signed up for the tests and urging others to join.

- Business and education groups alike have sent alerts to their grass roots membership urging them to contact their Congressional delegations and promote the testing initiative in the press.

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs has worked regularly to shore up the Governors and Mayors already participating in the tests and keep them apprised of the Congressional battle and Intergovernmental also is reaching out to additional state and local elected officials.

Education Department and DPC staff continue to meet with civil rights groups in an ongoing effort to respond to their concerns and to educate them about the implications of placing NAGB in charge of the tests.

We also have been in close contact with Checker Finn and Diane Ravitch, urging them, together with Bill Bennett and John Engler, to work to maintain Republican support in the Senate and help find a toehold in the House.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 2, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRUCE REED
JOHN HILLEY
MIKE COHEN

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON NATIONAL TESTS

This memo outlines the current status of the national testing initiative in Congress, and our strategy for winning the fight to keep the initiative on track.

I. Current Status and Recent Developments

The conferees have begun to meet, but are not expected to take up the testing issue until many other issues are addressed. We have two distinct objectives in conference: (1) securing an authorization along the lines of the Senate provision, permitting tests to proceed under NAGB's auspices, and (2) ensuring that the bill provides the \$16 million needed for continued test development.

For the most part, House Appropriations Committee members have argued that resolving this issue will require reaching an agreement with Goodling. By all accounts, Goodling is firmly locked into his position with the strong support of the House leadership. Last Friday he sent you a letter implying that he will not move an America Reads bill as long as you continue to press for the tests.

In a staff-level discussion, the only idea floated by Republican staff was to proceed with test development, but require separate authorization for test implementation. We do not think that is a good deal for us.

Conservative Republican Senators who supported the Coats/NAGB compromise have come under strong pressure from the Eagle Forum, and 14 of the 42 Republicans who voted for the Coats amendment switched sides last week and signed a letter written by Ashcroft, threatening to filibuster the appropriations bill if it does not contain Goodling's prohibition on the tests. We are relying on business groups and Finn and Bennett to hold as many Republicans as possible. Senate Democratic support is holding firm. Last week, 43 Democratic Senators signed a letter written by Bingaman, threatening a filibuster if the conference report does not let your testing initiative go forward.

In the House, securing Republican support for something along the lines of the Senate provision is key. Staff of the Department of Education and DPC have reached out to moderate Republicans,

including Mike Castle, who spoke in favor of the Senate provision on the floor and has previously served on NAGB.

We anticipate that any compromise will need to modify the Senate provision at least somewhat, and we are working with the Education Department to prepare proposals that we can support. These might include language that prohibits the Education Department from developing national curriculum in reading and math, or that delays full test implementation for a year, while providing for a field test in interested states and districts in 1999.

In addition, we continue to explore ways of reducing the opposition from the Black and Hispanic Caucuses, though securing their support alone will not substantially advance our cause. Secretary Riley has met with the three members of the CBC who opposed the Goodling amendment -- Chaka-Fattah, Al Wynn, and Harold Ford -- to seek their advice on how best to secure the support of the Black Caucus. They noted that the primary concern of caucus members is school construction, and that members feel strongly that we have failed to fight sufficiently hard for this initiative. There are two school construction tax-credit proposals likely to be introduced in Congress in the near future, both as alternatives to Coverdell-like provisions to provide IRA tax-free withdrawals for K-12 education.

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The work on test development has been proceeding over the last several weeks. The test specifications that would provide the blueprint for test development were completed, and new advisory committees organized by the test development contractor began to meet.

For a number of reasons, these developments were greeted with some alarm by key Republicans in the Congress (e.g., Coats, Specter, and Riggs) and elsewhere (e.g., Finn, Ravitch, Bennett and Engler), especially a provision in the test specifications permitting students to answer all test questions with the aid of a calculator. At our urging, Secretary Riley issued a statement criticizing the calculator decision, urging NAGB to reverse the decision.

II. Communications

Our overall approach over the coming weeks is to convince the Republicans that they are fighting a losing battle by opposing us again on education issues. We will highlight the national tests as the centerpiece of your campaign to improve public education through a comprehensive strategy of promoting higher standards and greater accountability; increasing parental involvement and public school choice through charter schools; and investing in improved teaching and learning, including technology programs. We will cast our opponents as trying to undermine improvements in public education by blocking the tests and pushing for block grants that will end important programs and cut investments.

We will wage a continuing, high profile campaign over the next few weeks, with the following events being planned:

- The Vice President's release of an Education Department Study on the importance of father's involvement in education on Thursday.
- A visible, high-tech business leaders effort, which you will kick off at a White House meeting with John Doerr, James Barksdale and other high-tech CEO's on October 8, followed by a public statement prior to your departure to New Jersey.
- A meeting the week of October 20 with the newly formed Learning Alliance for public education, a consortium of 12 national organizations involved in K-12 education working to promote a standards-based reform agenda at the local level.
- If schedule permits, the Vice President's participation in a joint meeting of the Council of Great City Schools and U.S. Conference of Mayors on October 15-18, where an additional 4-5 cities would announce their participation in the tests.
- One or more background briefings on public education for selected press by the Vice President or First Lady and Secretary Riley.
- Release of a Department of Education report that says students who take algebra and other advanced math courses are far more likely to go on to college, along with the release of a Department of Education/National Science Foundation math directive action plan.
- Announcement of a new plan for recycling surplus federal computers to schools.
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III. Outreach

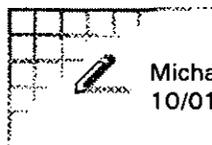
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Michael Cohen
10/01/97 03:01:04 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP
cc: Christa Robinson/OPD/EOP
Subject: Testing event possibility for next week

I just met with Wade Randlett, the political director for the high-tech ceo groups. I think we can put together a good, brief and easy testing event with POTUS next Wed--just before he goes to New Jersey. There is a very good chance we can set up a meeting with John Doer, Jim Barksdale and 5 other Republican high tech CEO's. They are all going to be in DC that day for a series of meetings on the hill, primarily with Republican leadership as well as Goodling. The meetings are mainly on a noneducation issue, but they were planning on taking up the tests, especially with Goodling.

I would envision a 15-20 minute meeting in the Oval, during which everyone can agree on how important the tests are. They can follow POTUS out to Marine One, be there for a departure statement in which POTUS tells the press that these guys have just told him that they are convinced we need national tests for the economy of the future. They nod in agreement, and talk about how they are going to deliver that message to Congress later in the day.

I just talked to Ann Lewis about this; she think's its a great idea. We had talked earlier today about the possibility of a departure statement. If we don't do this, we may have to endorse Rangel's school construction tax credit that no one can explain. Ways and Means is scheduled to mark up Coverdell that day, and Rangel is going to offer his as a substitute.

BR - pabulous

'97 SEP 17 PM5:59

Draft 9/17/97 5:30 p.m.

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
RADIO ADDRESS ON GORTON AND GOODLING AMENDMENTS
SEPTEMBER 18, 1997**

Good Morning. We are living at a time of great hope, optimism and prosperity in America. And it's been a banner year for education. Our historic balanced budget contains the largest investment in higher education since the passage of the G.I. Bill, opening the doors of college even wider for more Americans. But we cannot rest. We have much more to do to prepare our children to seize the opportunities of the 21st century.

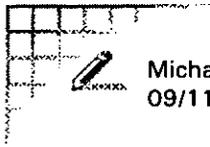
I have called upon all Americans to leave politics at the schoolhouse door and work together to provide our children the best education in the world. Many have answered the call. Just last week, the Senate voted overwhelmingly for voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, bringing us an important step closer to setting high standards of academic excellence.

But unfortunately, two events in recent days have jeopardized this essential progress in education. First, the same forces that have resisted education reform for years in the House of Representatives have voted against developing the national standards we need to challenge students, improve teaching, empower parents, and increase accountability. In effect, they have cast votes against better schools and for a status quo that is allowing too many of our children to leave school without mastering the basics.

Second, the Senate has passed an amendment that would undermine some of our most successful efforts to strengthen schools by converting their funding into block grants for states and local school districts. The amendment would virtually abolish federal efforts to bring computers to every classroom, to help immigrant children learn English, to create safe and drug free schools, and to bring more charter schools to more communities across America. This morning, I will see firsthand just how high the stakes are. I am visiting the San Carlos Charter Learning Center in California, one of the many charter schools across our country that are bringing new life, new energy and new creativity into public education. It's an innovation we can't afford to lose.

In the 21st Century, America's children must have a world-class education. We must strengthen our schools, raise our standards, and demand excellence at every level. So if Congress sends me partisan legislation that denies our children high national standards, or weakens our national commitment to stronger schools, I will give it the failing grade it deserves -- I will veto it.

Bringing vital change and progress to our schools will take clear vision and great courage. Throughout our history, Americans have always risen to the challenge of building better futures for our children. I know that -- if we all work together -- we, too will be up to the task.



Michael Waldman
09/11/97 06:03:06 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message
cc: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message
Subject: fyi

THE EDITORS: GETTING TESTY

By The Editors

Six years ago, then-President George Bush announced his support for national education standards--a single, nationwide set of criteria to gauge the performance of students and schools. Congressional Democrats shot down the plan. New tests, they argued, would serve only to stigmatize poor performance.

TNR supported Bush's proposal in 1991, and we support the virtually identical national testing plan President Clinton proposed in this year's State of the Union address. But now, lo and behold, it's the Republicans who are lining up against the idea. Lamar Alexander, who led the fight for national performance tests as Bush's education secretary, now fulminates against them. Alexander's confusion seems to have permeated his party. Chester Finn, a former assistant secretary of education under President Reagan who serves as the GOP's eminence grise on the topic, first issued a ringing endorsement of Clinton's plan-- "better than Bush's"--then later announced his modified, updated view that "the president's proposal would do more harm than good."

Confused? So, obviously, are the Republicans. Their excuses for opposing fourth-grade reading tests and eighth-grade math tests seem awfully, well, excuse-like. The tests would cost virtually nothing--\$15 million a year--but William Goodling, chairman of the House Education Committee, vaguely proposes to spend the money instead on "the classroom." New federal pencil boxes for every second grader!

House Speaker Newt Gingrich says that instead Clinton "ought to be focusing on local parents, local students and local teachers," but it's hard to understand what this phrase even means. There is no such thing as a parent, student or teacher who isn't local, since everyone resides in a locality. If Gingrich wants all initiatives to well up from the grass-roots, then President Clinton can't very well "focus" on them, since everything he proposes is by definition a national initiative. If Gingrich is trying to suggest that Clinton should not subject local government to federal regulation, his objection is groundless. Any school or state would have the right to opt out of the tests.

Perhaps the underlying reason for Republican opposition is that national tests will nationalize the debate over education. Currently, parents have no objective measure by which to compare the performance of their child's school district with any other. National standards would allow for inter-district comparisons, thus empowering parents to question the backward and inefficient practices employed by many local school boards. This in turn would expose conservatism's local control fetish. Critics of public education--those who wish to replace it with vouchers, rather than those who wish to improve it-- point to the superior educational performance of foreign schools, while failing to acknowledge that all other major industrial countries have centralized, nationally run

public school systems.

Of course, should national testing spark a movement for real reform, conservatives are not the only ones who would be threatened. Many administrators and teachers from poor, low-performing school districts resist national standards. Diagnosing the problem, they argue, is not a substitute for treating it. True. But the public will never face up to public education's inequalities and inadequacies until the consequences of those inequalities are laid out in hard numbers. National testing would not only spur reform, it would also serve as an essential condition of reform. Without testing, there's no way to know if reform is actually working.

Clinton's plan, then, has no appreciable downside and could even be a first step toward transforming the political climate on education. But the promise of reform is not the same thing as reform, and for this reason Clinton's education plan, taken as a whole, doesn't quite warrant the lyrical rhetoric with which the president has surrounded it. After all, education was supposed to be the cornerstone of Clinton's second term. But, in pursuit of a budget deal with the Republicans, he bargained away his highly touted plan to spend \$5 billion renovating dilapidated, inner-city schools.

The one portion of his education package that he refused to negotiate--tax deductions and credits for college tuition--is a transparent political bribe and a grossly inefficient method of increasing access to college. That Clinton put a higher priority on tax pork for the middle class than on far cheaper, and more urgent, aid for the truly needy belies his grandiose pronouncements. The only thing worse than Clinton's settling for modest reform is the Republicans' obtuse resistance to modest reform in education.

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Table of Contents:

The New Republic
09-29-97

About
The New Republic
Subscribe
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Search
the Archives
Talk
to The New Republic

Message Sent To:

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Subject: Mickey's Mtg. w/Gov. Michael Leavitt (R-UT)

This message is from Suzanne.

Although Mickey is on "vacation" this week, he asked me to report back to you on his "very pleasant" 45-minute mtg. yesterday morning w/Governor Michael Leavitt (R-UT) at the Governor's mansion. The Governor and Mickey focused on four topics during their meeting:

- 1) **Fast Track:** Mickey said that the Governor was "not aware of this issue." He agreed to become familiar with the issue right away. [FDV/Sky -- Mickey would like someone to send our Fast Track paper to the Governor ASAP.]
- 2) **National Education Testing Initiative:** The Governor is still open to the possibility of Utah signing on to our testing program. However, he is concerned about the tests interfering with Utah's current comprehensive testing program. The Governor explained that there is a "trust issue" with the local governments that is difficult to address.
- 3) **Escalante National Monument:** The Governor is very pleased with the progress of the monument implementation team towards crafting a plan. Governor Leavitt relayed to Mickey that he has developed a positive relationship with Secretary Babbitt.
- 4) **English-Only Legislation in Utah:** The Governor does not support the "English- Only" movement.

Mickey informed Governor Leavitt that he will make every effort to keep the Governor aware of concerns to Utah. He also explained to the Governor that Fred is available to assist him as well.

The meeting was closed press until the final minutes, when a reporter from the *Standard Examiner* came in to listen to the Governor and Mickey's discussion on the Escalante Monument issue. There were several local stories following Mickey's speech on Monday to the Utah State Democratic leaders.

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Throw These Tests Out of School

By CHESTER E. FINN JR.

This week Congress weighs President Clinton's plan for national standards and tests, beginning with fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math. But although national testing is in principle a good idea, the president's proposal will do more harm than good. If Congress is going to enact such a measure, it should do it right.

The House is likely to vote to block future funding for the program. A multimillion-dollar contract, however, has already been signed by the Education Department and work is now under way. Timid GOP Senate leaders, lacking the nerve to kill the program, will decide whether to accept the Clinton version or make last-minute repairs. House and Senate negotiators from the appropriations committees, who have scant expertise in education policy, will then work out the final version of the bill.

All the Stops

The administration has pulled out all the stops to keep its plan alive, including threats to veto the huge Health and Human Services appropriation in which it is embedded. Only in the past few weeks has its fate been in doubt. For six months, a passive GOP Congress simply allowed the executive branch to proceed unilaterally with the first-ever nationwide standards and tests in a country that heretofore left such things to states and local communities. The White House brashly asserted that it didn't even need authorization from Congress. The president has already signed up six states and 15 cities to participate. Congress merely yawned. My fellow alumni of the Reagan and Bush administrations agree that if a Republican White House had attempted a maneuver like this, it would have taken the Democratic Congress about 30 seconds to cut us off at the knees.

The reason the testing plan is now one of the hotter issues in Washington is not, alas, because Republicans in Congress took the lead but because outside opposition finally surfaced. On the left, groups such as FairTest (which has never seen a test it deems fair) and the Congressional

Black Caucus are opposed on grounds that test scores may harm minorities and more dollars should instead be pumped into school programs. Conservative groups, such as the Christian Coalition and Concerned Women for America, protest this new federal intrusion into education. One influential congressman, Rep. Bill Goodling (R., Pa.), himself a former school superintendent, opposes national testing in principle. In his view, more tests wouldn't tell us anything we don't already know about what's wrong with U.S. schools, and comparisons among schools are invidious.

Many fellow Republicans think Mr.

sulls from letting the Education Department run the project on behalf of its school-establishment and ivory-tower pals. No issue is more fundamental than who is in charge of the tests: Mr. Clinton opted to vest that control in his own appointees and contractors and experts of their choosing. That arrangement invites future manipulation of sensitive matters such as test content, standards and "accommodations" for influential groups. A dozen assistant secretaries can fiddle and meddle, and their machinations will shift with passing political winds and changing administrations.

Once the plan encountered opposition,

The Clinton administration has mangled a promising idea to the point that the GOP Congress should either make major repairs or scrap it altogether.

Goodling is wrong. Properly done, standards-based national tests would provide useful information to students and their parents and put pressure on schools to improve. The public-school establishment is opposed because it wants to continue obfuscating the truth about its dismal performance.

But the Clinton administration has mangled this promising idea to the point that the GOP Congress should either make major repairs or scrap it altogether. The past few weeks have brought bountiful evidence that the tests now in the works are sorely flawed, just the sort of exams teachers' unions would love. They won't tell us whether children can actually read or compute. Major problems include dumbed-down standards, "fuzzy" math (as Lynne Cheney calls it), universal use of electronic calculators, and assumptions about reading that partake of "whole language" and "deconstructionist" notions rather than systematic phonics, grammar and basic understanding. The Clinton tests will examine the things trendy experts wish the schools were teaching, rather than the skills and knowledge that parents, employers and state officials prize.

This subversion of national testing re-

the White House made a sop to its critics. It hastily cobbled together a proposal to transfer jurisdiction partly from the Education Department to a body called the National Assessment Governing Board. That's the "deal" currently before Congress.

I served on the NAGB for eight years, and chaired it for two. It's a good group. If it were made truly independent and bipartisan, given unambiguous control over the tests and invited to fix the mistakes of the Clinton plan, it might be able to do this delicate job.

But that isn't what the administration proposed. Rather, the White House would hand very limited authority to the NAGB, a board that also remains vulnerable to second-guessing and foot-dragging by the Education Department. Its membership is anybody the secretary of Education wants to appoint. It could have as few as two Republicans out of 25 members. It includes plenty of educators, and "testing experts" but just a few governors, parents and employers. As currently constituted, and with the meager authority proffered by the White House, the NAGB cannot be counted on to fix the errors in the Clinton scheme, much less safeguard the future integrity of national testing.

Congress, which created the NAGB in 1983 and weakened it in 1994, could easily set this right. It would take minutes to write good legislation to reconstitute the board and give it full control, and the Clinton White House is so hot for national testing that it would likely go along. But today it appears Congress is not up to that assignment. These are complex, technical issues that the president cares mightily about but few on Capitol Hill even understand. Indeed, the GOP leadership seems to have virtually abandoned education, apparently concluding that it cannot outgun or outmaneuver the White House and its powerful allies in the school establishment. On issues far larger than testing, the GOP has already yielded to the administration. The pending appropriations bill, for example, would more than double funding for the genuinely destructive bilingual education program.

Bad Advice

Pundits and business spokesmen, meanwhile, are giving bad advice, urging Congress simply to get on with the president's well-intended initiative. They evidently haven't read the test "specs" and they dismiss the governance issues as "details." Yet if we are to have national testing, it's precisely these details that matter most. The crucial questions about any test are who decides what's on it, and who sets the standards by which student performance is judged.

If the House and Senate cannot make sure that sound answers to such questions are enshrined in law, the country would be better off without the tests. But that's not apt to happen either. Keeping this project alive is hugely important to Mr. Clinton, and the GOP leadership would rather create a bad program than risk defeat on a showdown vote. So the president will likely have his way, or close to it. Bad national tests will proceed. A weak NAGB will provide political cover. And true education reform will again be dealt a setback by Uncle Sam.

Mr. Finn is a fellow at the Hudson Institute and a former assistant secretary of education.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1997

Boiled

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Pk. Review

Discussion

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Education -
standards

National Education Standards

Perhaps the greatest gift we received on standards is the Republican opposition to the, This now guarantees us coverage of an issue that the press was ignoring.

We should run with this and continue to add events to the schedule and make clear our unwavering support for standards and testing across the board, in all schools and in all communities. Black voters are in fact very supportive of standards and while they waiver when told of negative consequences, they return to being very supportive based on positive argumentation.

However, the Hispanic community does not, and has special concerns related to language. This community is single mindedly focused on the importance of education in this country, and so having them oppose educational standards and testing can be very counter productive.

Possible compromises include having everyone take the English test and then offering a Spanish one as an option so that a student could show that he is smart but behind in this language.

Polling Data:

Awareness for the President's support of voluntary standards and testing is 56%, (43% unaware).

Does this make you much more favorable to President Clinton, somewhat more favorable, somewhat less favorable, or much less favorable toward him?

57% more favorable (20% much more + 37% somewhat)

21% less favorable (10% much less + 11% somewhat)

Unaided, 76% support national education standards and tests (19% oppose).

This is consensus support across party and race

Support/Oppose:

Party - Democrats: 79/21, Republicans 77/16, Independents 78/17

Race- White 79/15, Black 81/15, Hispanic* 65/21

Describing the specifics of the President's plan increased support 2 points (78/19)

"President Clinton has proposed a national test in reading for fourth graders and in math for eighth-graders. The tests would be prepared by a bipartisan board appointed by Congress. The tests would be voluntary, with each state deciding whether its students would participate."

Opposition arguments pull support down - to 55% when the costs are mentioned. Support returns to 69% when necessity is stressed.

Given this, do you support or oppose national education standards and tests?	Support	Oppose
Some opponents to testing argue that national tests will not be appropriate for some disadvantaged students, and may encourage them to drop out of school.	64	33
Opponents also say the national tests would cost \$22 million to develop and \$100 million per year to administer, which could be better used to hire more teachers or providing additional training for instructors.	55	40
Supporters of national tests say they are essential to gauge the performance of public schools, encourage improvement in schools and ensure that students have the basic skills necessary to move forward.	69	24

Republicans are most affected by the cost of the tests – dropping support to 48% (45% oppose)

56% believe the President should veto the Education Appropriations if Congress it bars national testing, 35% believe he should accept the bill. 62/26 would be more/less favorable (22% much more favorable) if the President vetoes it for that reason.

% saying support	Party			Race		
	D	R	I	W	B	H
Given this, do you support or oppose national education standards and tests?						
Some opponents to testing argue that national tests will not be appropriate for some disadvantaged students, and may encourage them to drop out of school.	68	63	34	68	44	66
Opponents also say the national tests would cost \$22 million to develop and \$100 million per year to administer, which could be better used to hire more teachers or providing additional training for instructors.	65	48	57	58	54	48
Supporters of national tests say they are essential to gauge the performance of public schools, encourage improvement in schools and ensure that students have the basic skills necessary to move forward.	72	72	70	72	76	54

THE WHITE HOUSE AT WORK
September 8, 1997

**PRESIDENT CLINTON UNDERSCORES HIS COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION WHILE
AMERICA GOES BACK TO SCHOOL**

"[E]very child in America -- every single child in America needs to be able to read well, and needs to be able to read independently by at least the end of the 3rd grade, so that all this other learning can occur. That's what this whole national standards debate is about. We want everyone -- students, teachers, principals, schools, school boards -- to be held accountable and also to get the help and support they need..."

--President Clinton, September 8, 1997

The President traveled to the Four Seasons Elementary School in Gambrills, Maryland to meet with students as they start their school year. He reinforced his call to Congress to support national academic standards by supporting voluntary national testing for 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math. The voluntary national tests provide an opportunity for local school districts and parents to measure their children's educational success and raise academic achievement across the country. This year there are more than 52 million young Americans in school -- the largest number of children ever in school in the history of America. It is more important than ever that we make sure these students have the tools they need to succeed in the economy of the future.

- **Helping Parents Ensure Their Children Are Learning:** Parents should be able to know how well their children are doing compared with students in other schools, states, and countries. Voluntary national tests will give parents this information by providing, for the first time, scores for individual students, measured against national and international standards of excellence. These tests will allow states and local communities that choose to participate to measure and strengthen the academic performance of their schools and students. In today's global economy, our students need a sound foundation in reading and mathematics - voluntary national tests will help ensure they are getting the foundation they need.
- **Broad Bipartisan Support for National Testing:** In the President's State of the Union address, he challenged every state and school district to adopt high national standards, and by 1999, to join in a national test for all 4th graders in reading and all 8th graders in math, to make sure they have mastered these basics. Educators and business groups, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee, the Education Task Force of the Business Roundtable, the National Alliance of Business, and 240 technology industry leaders, have joined in a bipartisan call for high national education standards and testing in reading and math.

"Every state should adopt high national standards, and by 1999, every state should test every 4th grader in reading and 8th grader in math to make sure these standards are met. President Clinton's national testing initiative offers a new opportunity to use widely accepted national benchmarks in reading and math against which states, school districts and parents can judge student performance."

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

For Review
Recommendation

Confidential

Education - Standards

Voluntary National Tests: It's a No Brainer

By

Draft #1

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

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

The question before Congress, posed by Education and Economic Opportunity Committee Chair Bill Goodling (R-PA), is whether the legislature should permit the Clinton Administration to use federal funds to develop and administer the new assessments. The vote is, of course, a proxy on the tests themselves.

The amendment has put groups often aligned with one another at each other's throats in permutations unusual even by Washington standards. Noted conservatives like Chester Finn and Diane Ravich who were once for the tests are now against them. Groups, like the National Education Association, who once opposed them are now in favor. Business groups like them; Republican don't. Mayors embrace them; Governors have not. Urban schools will take them; urban Democrats are split. But there are good reasons why Congress should support them.

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

Second, the Republicans—if party leadership does not turn over in the 106th Congress—will want answers to tough questions about federal education programs that national test results could help answer. A Republican House and Senate will conduct the next reauthorization of the main engine of federal involvement in schools, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, for the first time in the programs' history.

*
Third, Congressional Republicans really need an education agenda that embraces something else beside private school vouchers. They have substantially shaped the current national educational debate on issues of excellence, accountability and performance. The tests are consistent with that focus, and give the party something other than escape to espouse.

Democrats, on the other hand, fear that test results could reflect badly on minority children, could exclude or label them. They argue, correctly I think, that testing is not teaching, and that the challenge is to provide opportunity. The sorry truth, however, is that we are never going to get to issues of opportunity until the debates on standards are more settled. The nation should be able to walk and chew gum at the same time as it pursues both ends of the educational reform process, but apparently it cannot. The national tests will give liberals a better data base from which to argue for greater opportunity than it has now.

Urban public school systems, for their part, announced recently that they would take the exams, a move Clinton called historic and astonishing. They stepped forward not to surprise people or to tweak the states over their sluggish pace, but because high standards have more significance to urban communities from which so little is expected than they have almost anywhere else. And they volunteered to say clearly to the nation that urban school children could compete with any kids anywhere if they are given an opportunity to learn. That should appeal to conservatives and liberals alike.

The initial test results, particularly out of urban schools, may—in fact—be low. That will catch few by surprise. It may surprise more people how well some city schools do and how poorly wealthier districts perform. Few people have noticed yet that America's urban public school systems are coming back, the snafus about opening D.C. School doors aside. The reasons have a lot to do with the attention they are paying to the bottom line: student achievement. Nothing sharpens one's attention better than test results. Not all urban schools will want to take the Voluntary National Tests but they sure would like the opportunity to decide. Now that's local control.

Education - Standards



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE SECRETARY

August 19, 1997

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

Dear Editor:

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

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

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

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

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Page 2 - Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,



Richard W. Riley

Day and Evening Telephone No.

P6/(b)(6)

[001]

question of what kind of calculation procedure to use in a numerical problem as a decision that depends on the problem at hand. Although the council wants all students to learn to estimate and use mental calculation and to be equally comfortable using paper and pencil, calculators and computers, nowhere does it argue that students do not need to memorize multiplication facts. Nor does the council say that students should use a calculator for all computations.

Similarly, the examples the teachers council has produced often portray students working on real-world problems, providing oral or written explanations of how a problem was solved, or collaborating with other students. But the council never meant to imply that such approaches are appropriate for every lesson.

Many horror stories cited by the standards' critics, if accurately portrayed, are indeed bad. Sometimes teachers

initially put too much emphasis on the general standards without considering mathematical content. For example, they may teach problem-solving without having students learn algebraic procedures.

Sometimes honest attempts by well-meaning teachers to try a new method of instruction, like having students work in groups, have led them to initially give up class discussions or individual assignments. Sometimes publishers' claims that their texts met the council's standards were mere puffery. Sometimes material that in an author's mind seemed wonderful proved to be less than wonderful in a classroom. And sometimes even appropriate material is ineffective because the teacher using it doesn't have enough math background or the right training to turn the recommended activities into a learning experience for students.

Despite these problems, test scores tell us that teaching math by using the council's recommendations makes sense. Teachers and teacher trainers know that we need a new approach to math instruction, and most defend the standards. And while criticism is essential to refine the suggested techniques, it's unfair to attack the entire program because of initial missteps and isolated examples of misapplied guidelines.

Unless we reform math education so that our children can be prepared for the immense technological changes already occurring, our nation will lose — and so will our children.

About the Author: Thomas Romberg, a professor of mathematics education at the University of Wisconsin, was chairman of the commission on standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics from 1986 to 1995. ■

58. The New York Times

08/11/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section A; Editorial Desk; Page 15, Column 1

Dialogue: Creative Math, or Just 'Fuzzy Math'? Once Again, Basic Skills Fall Prey To a Fad

By Lynne Cheney

WASHINGTON — For Stacy Christ, a fourth grader in Fairfax County, Va., a homework problem about pencils and packages was an exercise in frustration.

"The answer required division," her mother, Susan, explained to me, "but she'd never been taught to multiply."

Susan Christ saw this as one more sign of the miseducation of her child, but to advocates of what is sometimes called "whole math" (or "fuzzy math" or "new-new math"). Stacy's assignment was exactly right. Students don't need to know multiplication tables in order to divide, they say. Using objects and calculators, they can figure it out — and thus begin to create their own mathematical knowledge.

The idea that knowledge is something to be constructed, rather than acquired, has been moving into American schools since the 1970's. This approach is obvious, for example, in language-arts teaching that encourages invented spellings.

But now "constructivism," as it is sometimes called, has become a force in teaching mathematics — and the paradox

is immense. In a field distinguished by reliance on proof, an unproven approach is being taken in thousands of schools.

The saga of whole math began in earnest in 1989, when the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics published standards that denounced a "longstanding preoccupation with computation and other traditional skills." According to the council, stressing addition, subtraction and, worst of all, memorization made students into "passive receivers of rules and procedures rather than active participants in creating knowledge."

The standards recommended that students get together with peers in cooperative learning groups to "construct" strategies for solving math problems, rather than sit in class with teachers instructing them. Calculators were a necessity from kindergarten on, the council said, because students liberated from "computational algorithms" could pursue higher-order activities, like inventing personal methods of long division.

Dr. Frank Allen, a former council president and whole-math opponent, has

noted that as the standards were being developed, the council's research advisory committee expressed concern about the failure of the standards commission to provide research support for its recommendations. But the standards' writers were undeterred, and today their views drive the direction of curriculums and textbooks in both public and private schools.

Those who regard the council's recommendations as revealed truth have been rewarded: a panel named recently to oversee the development of President Clinton's national test in mathematics is composed entirely of supporters of the math teachers' council. Critics, meanwhile, have been shut out. In a recent speech, Prof. E. D. Hirsch of the University of Virginia noted that a leading journal, *Educational Researcher*, had refused to publish a section of an article debunking constructivist teaching even though its authors were "among the most distinguished cognitive scientists in the world."

The entry of whole math into the schools has angered many parents, particularly in California, where schools

have enthusiastically embraced the constructivist fad, parents have complained about students unable to do simple mental computations, about high school graduates who get A's and B's in whole-math classes and have to do remedial work in college.

A woman in Occanside, Calif., wrote to The San Diego Union-Tribune that her child had been "used like a laboratory rat, experimented on with new, untested curricula." A parent whose child attended one of the overseas Defense Department schools, which have adopted two constructivist programs, MathLand and Interactive Mathematics, reported on a Web site, "We all feel our children are guinea pigs in a bad experiment."

Parental backlash has sent whole-math advocates scrambling for evidence to prove that what they do works. When American fourth graders did fairly well on an international test, a prominent whole-math advocate credited constructivist teaching. Her claim would have been more convincing had another leader in the movement not earlier explained away the dismal performance of eighth graders on the same test by saying that whole-math teaching had not sufficiently penetrated American classrooms.

Constructivist views were also undercut by survey data accompanying

the international results. In high-performing countries like Singapore, Japan and Korea, teachers primarily teach the whole class rather than having students in small groups invent knowledge for themselves, and classroom calculators are extremely rare.

Creative Publications, publisher of the MathLand program, recently released an analysis of eight California districts purporting to show that at the least its curriculum does no harm: after one year, "when compared to students across the nation, MathLand students showed one year's growth in both computation and concepts and applications." The districts were not identified, however, nor the reason for choosing them rather than others. The analysis also failed to explain whether the test scores of all students within a district were considered.

Meanwhile, new evidence bears out the gloomy assessment of parents. The median percentile scores in mathematics on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills taken by more than 37,000 students one year after the Defense Department introduced whole math show that students gained little in conceptual understanding from being encouraged to construct their own knowledge. Scores in concepts and applications were roughly the same as the previous year. De-emphasizing computation, on the

other hand, cost them dearly. Scores on that section of the exam dropped 9 points for third graders; 12 for fourth graders; 11 for fifth graders, 10 for sixth graders, 10 for seventh graders, and 4 for eighth graders.

After these results, the Pentagon decided to change its test to one "better aligned" with whole-math instruction. This move may produce better scores but at the price of masking student weaknesses in basic skills.

When medical researchers administering a protocol find it has negative consequences for human subjects, they do not ignore those results and change their test. They end the experiment to avoid imposing further harm.

Surely it is time for educators to realize that the same ethic should apply to them. In the face of strong evidence that constructivist mathematics does not help and even hurts, they should consider closing down the whole-math experiment. If we want our children to be mathematically competent and creative, we must give them a base of knowledge upon which they can build.

About the Author: Lynne Cheney, former chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. ■

59. Baltimore Sun

August 10, 1997

Reading the test results

By Elise Armacost

WHAT, ANOTHER test?

That was my first thought when Baltimore County School Superintendent Anthony G. Marchione said last week that he is getting ready to release the results of a first-ever standardized assessment of early elementary students' ability to read.

Let's see, we already have the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program, which kids take in third, fifth and eighth grades.

Starting in seventh grade Maryland students take four "functional" tests of basic skills, which they must pass in order to graduate.

There's the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS), a nationally recognized standardized test, which school systems give to all or some second-, fourth- and sixth-graders.

Baltimore City has just invented a new animal called the "Baltimore Quarterly Assessment."

Now comes Dr. Marchione, with a whole new testing program for kindergartners and first- and second-graders (actually, only the kindergarten and first-grade tests are new; the second-grade test is the CTBS).

As far as he knows, the superintendent says, this is the first early-grade assessment in Maryland. One can hardly blame parents if we roll our eyes and ask, "Aren't we testing kids enough already?"

But let us put our anti-testing biases aside for a moment. Let's leave the questions about whether MSPAP is all it's cracked up to be for another day, along with the debate over national testing standards.

Let's look specifically at what Baltimore County is trying to do with

and find out about early-grade reading.

If you believe that schools ought to make sure young children master the basics before they are promoted to higher grades, where with every passing year it becomes more difficult to help them catch up, Dr. Marchione's reading initiative makes considerable sense.

The superintendent has said that, before his tenure expires, he wants all second-graders reading and computing on or above grade level.

Focusing on reading first, last fall he imposed a new curriculum in kindergarten and first and second grades that stresses phonics and language structure in a literary context.

Dr. Marchione is not a phonics purist: children will be bored silly, he says, if reading class never includes anything fun to read, only drills and workbook activities.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Corinne L. Velasquez, Administrator

59

Educative - standards



1535 West Jefferson
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 542-5057
FAX (602) 542-3046

Bruce -
FYI.
Elena

June 30, 1997

William J. Clinton, President
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20502

President:

Wm. Byron Darden
Phoenix

Re: National Assessment of Reading and Mathematics

Vice President:

Kenneth R. Bennett
Prescott

Mr. President:

Executive Officer:

Honorable Lisa Keegan
Phoenix

Thank you for your thought provoking ideas regarding the development of and participation in a national assessment for our children/students in reading and mathematics. As President of the Arizona State Board of Education, I can unequivocally state that the Board eagerly supports national discussion, debate, and exchange of ideas in this regard. However, we do not support the proposed national assessment, and therefore will not participate in it.

Members:

Dr. Lattie Coor
Tempe

Thava Freedman
Holbrook

Dr. Mary Garcia
Tucson

Certainly an explanation is in order, and I will explain a few of the more critical reasons for our decision; a decision that was not made hastily nor without our own discussion and debate. First, Arizona is just now completing the upgrade and improvement of our Standards and Assessments to a more rigorous level needed to prepare our children for the future. We have approved challenging Standards in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science. These will all be assessed in the third (prior to when your reading assessment would take place), fifth, eighth, and twelfth (with the opportunity to achieve proficiency in each of them starting in the tenth) grades. As you can see, our timeline is more advanced and our Standards are higher and more in tune with our children.

Bruce Kulp
Parker

Janet E. Martin
Tempe

Felicia Muller
Phoenix

In addition, we have approved equally rigorous Standards in the remainder of Language Arts, Technology, Workplace Skills, Art, Foreign Language and Comprehensive Health. If you read our Standards you would also see that Technology, Workplace Skills and Art are integrated throughout all the Standards. We expect that this will create an academically proficient and well-rounded graduate. By the way, our Standards can be accessed on the Internet at www.ade.state.az. We encourage you to use them as a resource in your endeavor.

Secondly, your proposed program supports whole language, a continuation of the support found in Mrs. Clinton's "It Takes A Village". We do not believe that is a viable technique on which school districts should build their curricula (California can attest to that). In fact, we support the teaching of phonetic skills. Certainly there are individual students who may learn better using alternative techniques, and they should

1997 JUN 30 10:57 AM
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William J. Clinton, President
Page 2

be afforded the best opportunity to learn (my son is an example of that). But the basis for curriculum development should be built around what works best for the most students, and teaching phonetic skills is that basis.

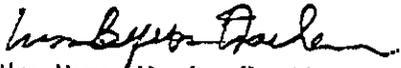
Another reason we will not be participating in the National Assessment involves financial issues. Your program calls for federal monetary support only for the first year, and not necessarily in an amount that would cover the total cost to the participating States. After that, participation would cause yet another unfunded mandate upon these States. The Board consciously shies away from such unfunded mandates whenever feasible, and since participation in this program is voluntary, we do so in this case.

Also, there will be a considerable expense involved in using the mass numbers of volunteers you are proposing. Administrative and staffing costs would escalate to handle the logistical, recordkeeping and professional development required. This has not been fully addressed in your plan.

In conclusion, because of the above and other pertinent reasons I would be pleased to discuss with you at your convenience, the Arizona State Board of Education declines your invitation to participate in the proposed national assessment of Reading and Mathematics. However, keep in mind that the Board does support and would like to be involved in any discussions, exchange of ideas and debate at the national level. Personally, I hold Secretary Riley in high regard, and would look forward to working with him and his staff in these discussions.

Thank you for your time and offer.

Sincerely,

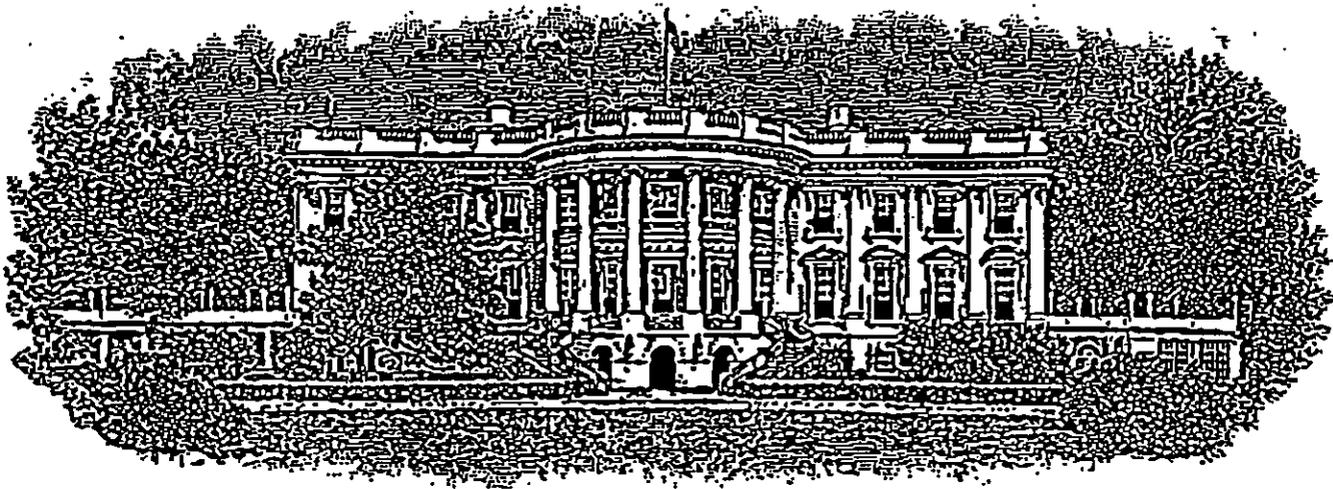


Wm. Byron Darden, President
Arizona State Board of Education

cc: Secretary Richard Riley
Governor J. Fife Symington, III
Arizona Congressional Delegation
Superintendent of Public Instruction Lisa Keegan
State Board Members

Education - Standards

The White House



Domestic Policy Council
Old Executive Office Building, Room 220
Washington, DC 20502

Telephone Number: (202) 456-2857
Alternate: (202) 456-2216

FAX Number: (202) 456-7028
Alternate FAX: (202) 456-7431

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: Bruce Reed / Elena Kagan
FAX: 6-2878

FROM: BILL KINCAID

THIS FAX INCLUDES THE COVER SHEET PLUS 2 PAGES.

IF YOU DID NOT RECEIVE THE COMPLETE FAX, PLEASE CALL (202) 456-2857.

MESSAGE:

Letter of support from Gov. Carper (DE)
on national tests. Should we note in
weekly? Note that this is not exactly a
"sign-on" letter - but I think this is what
we had been anticipating from them.



STATE OF DELAWARE

WASHINGTON OFFICE

444 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 230

Washington, DC 20001

Phone: 202/624 - 7724

Fax: 202/624 - 5495

Thomas R. Carper
Governor

J. Jonathon Jones
Director

FACSIMILE COVER PAGE

To: Mike Cohen / Allison

Fax: 456-7078

From: Jonathon Jones
Martha Feichter
Cecily Cutbill

Date: 8/5/97

Pages: 3

Re: National Voluntary Tests

Urgent For Review Please Comment Please Reply Please Recycle

NOTE: Please give me a call if you
have any questions.

Please Note: The pages comprising this facsimile transmission contain confidential information from the Washington Office of Governor Tom Carper. This information is intended solely for use by the individual entity named as the recipient thereof. If you are not the intended recipient, be aware that any disclosure, copying, distribution or use of the contents of this transmission is prohibited. If you have received this transmission in error, please notify us by telephone immediately so we may arrange to retrieve this transmission at no cost to you.



STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

THOMAS R. CARPER
GOVERNOR

July 30, 1997

President William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to express my support for your effort to develop new national achievement tests for reading and mathematics at the fourth- and eighth-grade levels. In Delaware, we have been working hard over the past several years to implement our own rigorous standards and complementary assessments to help ensure that our kids are prepared for success. Decisions involving the State's assessment program are shared between my Department of Education and the State Board of Education. I will be urging the State Board to include the new national test as a component of our Delaware State Testing Program. Although the State Board has not yet discussed it, I am confident that a decision to participate will be viewed as consistent with Delaware's ongoing effort to implement high standards, develop better assessments, and increase accountability in our schools.

While I support Delaware's voluntary participation in these national tests, some concerns still need to be addressed. First and foremost, the new national test must clearly reflect the NAEP standards being used in its development. We believe that Delaware's new curriculum content standards match well with the NAEP frameworks, but if the new national test does not measure well against these standards, it will not be relevant to us.

Second, it is essential for test results to be reported at the student level. The fact that the NAEP does not provide this level of detailed reporting has been a source of long-standing frustration in Delaware. If such reporting is not made available, I believe we should consider discontinuing our use of the NAEP when new national tests are implemented. As you well know, instructional time is a precious commodity. Taking time away from instruction for assessments that do not produce useful results at the student or school level - or that do not provide parents with a sense of how their children are doing - is luxury we cannot afford. Similarly, given that Delaware is in the midst of developing a state assessment program for grades 3, 5, 8, and 10, we also want to be sure that the new national test does not require more than a few hours to administer.

LEGISLATIVE HALL
DOVER, DE 19901
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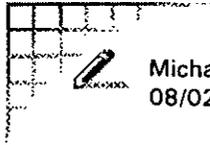
Third, the U.S. Department of Education should ensure that turnaround time for producing test results be measured in days – not months or years. In order for the tests to be useful, diagnostic information must be available to teachers and administrators well before the ensuing school year begins.

Our last concern involves how the levels of performance will be established. In Delaware, we are setting our expectations for performance on state tests at a high level. If there is no relationship between our standards for English/language arts in the third and fifth grades and the national fourth-grade standard for reading, then the national test will undermine – rather than complement – our efforts.

In closing, we want to thank you for the leadership you are showing in this critical element of education reform. We look forward to working together with your administration to make this effort a success.

Sincerely,


Thomas R. Carper
Governor



Michael Cohen
08/02/97 09:26:41 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP

cc:

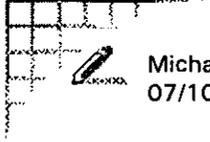
Subject: Polling questions

Friday evening we discussed getting some polling data that could help with the Hispanic testing issue and the Goodling battle. Here are my suggestions:

1. Would you like to know how well your child is doing in reading in English at the 4th grade and math at the 8th grade compared with national standards of excellence?
2. Would you like to know how well your local school is doing in reading in English at the 4th grade and math at the 8th grade compared with national standards of excellence?
3. Should the U.S. Congress prohibit your local school or state from having the opportunity to give a 4th grade national reading test and an 8th grade national math test, in order to tell if students are meeting national standards of excellence?
4. For students who have immigrated to the U.S. within the last (3 years? 2 years?), should they have the opportunity to show how well they can read in their native language, such as Spanish, as well as in English, since they haven't had the chance to learn English well?

I don't know if Penn usually does or can provide breakdowns by subgroups, but it would be great to see breakdowns by urban/suburban/rural; parents of school-age kids (and maybe grandparents); Hispanic, African-American, White; and something like fundamentalist Christians.

It will be especially helpful to see how Hispanics react to the last questions, and if white Americans care much one way or the other. It will also be helpful to see how fundamentalist Christians respond to the first three--it would be helpful if we can pass around some data that shows that even that group thinks the schools should have a right to use the test.



Michael Cohen
07/10/97 07:42:46 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP

cc: Christa Robinson/OPD/EOP

Subject: Cities and tests

Thought I ought to give you an update on the testing event. First, the good news. The following cities are 98%+ nailed down, though I need an additional phone call to each to make sure:

1. Broward County FL
2. Cincinnati
3. El Paso (which may bring a consortium of 2 other school districts)
4. Houston
5. Long Beach
6. Los Angeles
7. Philadelphia
8. San Francisco
9. San Antonio (if we want to bring them in for this, since they already announced at the Family Conference)

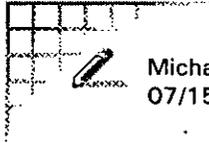
The following are in play:

1. New York City -- which I think will work out
2. Memphis
3. New Orleans

In addition, I have a call into the Mayor's office in Milwaukee as per the meeting with Bruce and Rahm; am waiting to here from Mickey and Lynn Cutler if they have gotten to Daley, and will reach out to Seattle and Omaha tomorrow (the Omaha superintendent is quoted in a recent Education Week story saying he thinks Omaha should participate in the tests)

With respect to states, Alaska is already signed up, and we are waiting for Colorado, Vermont, Missouri and Delaware to make good on promises to get us something within the next week. I am trying to find one Republican state as well, focusing on Wisconsin and New Jersey as the first targets. Riley and Thompson are scheduled to be at the same conference tomorrow, and Riley will try to work Thompson.

I am still trying to work out the event logistics. I had a good conversation with Jennifer Palmari this morning, and I think she will help make sure there is some time for the leaders of these states and cities to meet briefly with the President (for photo's) before he speaks to the elementary school principals. However, I need to nail this down some more before I can figure out how many from each place to invite. And, dealing with governors and mayors will make this a bit more complicated.



Michael Cohen
07/15/97 02:17:57 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Sylvia's standards meeting today

Well, on account of the fact that neither of you showed up for it, Sylvia, with the consent of all present (Rahm, Doug Ann, and John Podesta, as well as myself) cancelled the meeting. She will reschedule.

I did learn more about the point of the meeting: to discuss what kind of fight we might start on the Hill over the tests. As best as I can tell, the purposes of this move would be to get press, demonstrate resolve and momentum, and help define partisan differences. John asked me to develop some options before the next meeting.

In the event we have to do this quickly, here are my preliminary thoughts:

1. It would be really helpful to have Hilley and/or Andy Blocker at the meeting before we pick some Congressional fights.

2. Here are several possible vehicles for raising the profile of the issue in Congress (I won't go through pro's and con's with respect to policy or politics yet):

- Send up legislation to create an advisory board for the tests
- Send up legislation seeking specific, explicit authority to administer and pay for the tests
- Send up legislation providing financial incentives to states or districts that administer the tests--if you give the test, we will send \$ for improving teaching and learning in reading and math, perhaps as a supplement to Title 1
- Send up some kind of failing school legislation, that give school improvement \$ to cities that sign on to the test and helps them take over failing schools
- Send up legislation that provides financial incentives for kids who do well on the test (e.g., Chakkah Fattah)
- Send up legislation requiring use of the test in order to continue to receive Title 1, Goals 2000 or other funds
- Announce that we are going to give the 4th grade reading test in Spanish
- Announce that we are not going to give the 4th grade reading test in Spanish
- Support a Sense of the House Resolution urging support for the tests

Yuch

3. As a threshold issue, we probably have to decide if we want a fight we can clearly win (which may minimize conflict and press attention) or one that we can get credit for fighting even if we lose--in which case we need to figure out who we want to fight with, the left or the right.

4. One of my next steps will be to limit this list to those positions that I think make sense on policy grounds, or at least to be clear about that in any pro's and con's.

MEMORANDUM FOR BRUCE REED

FROM: Mike Cohen
SUBJECT: Legislative Options for National Testing
CC: Elena Kagan

In preparation for the testing meeting Sylvia Mathews is organizing, I thought the following might be helpful:

Key Background Information

- From the outset, our plan for developing the tests has been to proceed without provoking a Congressional debate; partly because we were uncertain of the outcome, partly because even a successful effort to enact legislation would be a drawn-out process and delay the implementation date. Further, the Congressional debate itself could well freeze the process of signing up states. The Education Department is developing the national tests, and planning to underwrite its administration, based on general authority the education department has to fund activities that promote the improvement of education. This is similar to the authority used by the Bush Administration to develop national standards.
- Also from the outset, we have recognized the need to create an independent policy committee to oversee the tests, in order to fulfill the President's commitment for the tests to be "national, not federal". The best way to accomplish this is to make the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), the body that currently oversees NAEP, the policy body. Accomplish this would require changing the current statute--moving us toward a Congressional debate on the testing issue. We have been working to determine the best time and way to structure -- and win -- such a debate, and to continue our efforts to develop the tests at the same time..
- Thus far, the national tests are not highly visible in the Congress. Most members in the states that have signed up haven't been aware of that fact, though the Education Department has been bringing them up to speed.
- In the House, we've had decent support from Democrats. George Miller has volunteered to champion this in the House, and was outspoken in support at several hearing in which this came up. Other House Dem's, such as Kildee, Mink, Roemer, etc. have also been solid in their support. Obey has been helpful in the appropriations committee.
- The biggest threat to strong and continuing support from Democrats is the resistance from the civil rights groups, and in particular the concerns in the Hispanic community because we have not offered to develop a Spanish-language version of the 4th grade reading test.
- On the Republican side, Frank Riggs, the subcommittee chair, also supports the tests and wants to be helpful. John Porter is ok as well.

- As you know, Bill Goodling has been the major opponent of the tests, and is keeping Riggs and Porter from aggressively being supportive. While initially supportive of the tests when he met with the President earlier this year, he has since changed his position. Riley has talked with him several times, as have business groups--but to no avail. Goodling also is a roadblock to making NAGB the independent policy body. So far, we have dodged an effort by Goodling to attach a rider to the supplemental appropriations bill to prohibit the Education Department from funding the test development. He has attached a provision to the FY98 appropriations bill subcommittee mark, requiring the National Academy of Sciences to complete an evaluation of the test development and field test before we can proceed to implement.
- There is no real attention to the issue in the Senate, though we start with good support from Kennedy and Jeffords.

Legislative Objectives:

- Adequate funding (\$10 million in FY98) for continued test development
- Authority to establish independent policy body
- Funding for test administration (\$96 million in FY99¹ if every state participates)
- Creating a vehicle for the President to advance his testing agenda

Legislative options:

1. **Stay the current course, working quietly to secure sufficient funds in FY98 to continue test development and minimize potential impact of Goodling-like riders in conference. This could include an effort to get the Senate appropriators to attach a provision making NAGB the independent policy body, and trying to win that in conference.**

Pro's

- Keeps us moving forward in test development and state sign-up
- If we succeed at getting funding and governing authority for NAGB, our major Congressional battles are behind us
- If we get NAGB authority, we can make highly visible announcement of advisory committee

Cons

- Getting authority for NAGB through appropriations process is a stretch
- We would still vulnerable to Goodling-like attacks

2. **Introduce legislation seeking authority for NAGB as independent policy body. This could either be stand-alone legislation, or part of a bill to reauthorize NAGB and NAEP, which is needed sometime this year anyway. It could either contain explicit authority to develop and administer the tests, or simply focus on NAGB's role in a way that provides**

¹Recent discussions with state officials suggest that it would be ideal to get Congressional commitment to these funds now rather than in the FY99 appropriations; the Education Department is exploring if there are any ways to accomplish this.

implicit authority and still constitutes Congressional action on the tests.

Pro's

- If we win, legislative issue is settled and future of tests pretty well assured
- Provides President a new forum to promote the tests, and to define the Congressional debate on our terms

Con's

- Prospect's for victory are uncertain
- Congressional process may produce legislation that compromises the tests as a result of amendments from right or the left (e.g., prohibits the use of open-ended problem solving questions in math; prohibits the use of the tests for accountability purposes)
- Legislative process would slow down state sign-up; if debate produces a partisan fight, the value of the tests to the states is severely compromised, and participation by Republican governors will be restricted
- A highly partisan fight could jeopardize existing bipartisan support for NAEP and NAGB.

3. As part of any Chaka Fatah-like proposal, tie additional student financial aid to performance on 8th grade math test

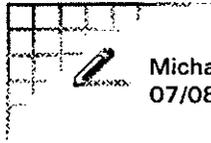
Pro's

- Rewarding academic performance is good policy and good message

Con's

- Basic Chaka Fatah proposal contains fundamental weaknesses; it's chances of enactment are probably slim
- Civil Rights groups strongly oppose "high-stakes" testing; this proposal could activate their opposition to the test

Education - Standards



Michael Cohen
07/08/97 12:05:45 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Ann F. Lewis/WHO/EOP
cc: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP
Subject: Re: Standards

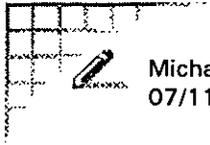
Yep. we did it together at Camden Yards.

On a related subject -- John Merrow's proposed PBS National Town Meeting on Education. I received a packet of materials about this from you.

John got in touch with me quite some time ago, and after raising this with Don, I put the two of them in touch directly. I think it would be good for the President to do this. The shows leading up to the town meeting are on his issues--charter schools, standards and urban education. I've known John Merrow for a number of years. He's a respected education journalist. I think he will do a serious treatment of the issues, and give the President a good forum in which to address priority issues.

Bruce and I raised the possibility of doing this show with the President in our recent memorandum to him on the standards and testing initiative. His response: "Should do."

Mike -
When + where is this?
Elena



Michael Cohen
07/11/97 12:32:22 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP
cc: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP
Subject: Heads Up: Money for national tests

We may need to move very quickly to solve a potential problem in funding the 1999 national test administration. Education has begun to hear from some states that the 1999 appropriation bill, which will contain the funds for the first administration, will be enacted too late in the game for them to contract with test publishers to administer the tests -- forcing some to either delay entering into contracts in time to administer the tests, or requiring states to appropriate their own funds for the test, a risky step that makes state legislatures a much bigger player in this.

Mike Smith and I have been talking about seeing if we can't work money into the '98 appropriations bill, now, to take care of the problem. Riley is ok proceeding in this fashion. Mike is looking for possible offsets within ED. Most education programs are forward-funded: funds appropriated in FY98 will be for school year 98-99, the same year the tests are being given, so this approach won't be seen as crazy by the appropriators.

However, I suspect it will be extremely difficult to pull off. I assume this will require a deal with the leadership, and strong Presidential insistence may be required to pull it off.

I'd like to run this by Ken Apfel to see where OMB would be, and put something in the weekly for POTUS. Is this ok with you, or is there someother way you would like me to proceed?

Copied
Reed
Cohen
COS

Education - Standards

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
7-7-97

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 17, 1997

'97 JUN 17 PM3:38

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRUCE REED
MICHAEL COHEN

SUBJECT: Long-Term Strategy for National Standards and Tests

*We need to do more
on this in future
U. Dept*

Last week's TIMSS announcement of 4th grade progress in math and science was front-page news across the country. This memorandum provides an update on our efforts to sign up states and cities for the testing initiative, and outlines a long-term plan to secure broad support.

I. TEST DEVELOPMENT

The test development process is on track to be ready for administration as a pilot in Spring 1998 and nationwide in Spring 1999. A contract has been awarded to the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to develop the detailed specifications for the reading and math tests. This involves, for example, determining the balance of multiple choice and open-ended items for each test. CCSSO performed this same role for the development of NAEP, and this step is one signal to the education community that the new tests will in fact parallel NAEP as promised. As it did with NAEP, CCSSO has also established several advisory committees of subject matter specialists, testing experts and the education community to help guide the development of test specifications.

The Request for Proposals for the test development contracts has been let, and the contracts will be awarded before September 30. The Education Department is on schedule to award additional contracts for related research, development and evaluation necessary for the development and validation of the tests.

II. STATE PARTICIPATION

The success of this initiative is largely dependent on the voluntary efforts of states to incorporate the 4th grade reading and 8th grade math tests into their state testing programs. We have focused most of our efforts toward building a critical mass of states, with governors of both parties, to commit to participate in the testing program. We continue to believe that if we can achieve this objective over the next several months, we will pave the way for most remaining states to sign up over the course of the next school year.

Over the last four months, we have waged an intensive retail campaign to solicit every state's participation. Secretary Riley has written to every governor and chief state school officer, and he and Mike Cohen have worked closely with scores of state officials on ways to incorporate our tests into their state's approach to standards, testing and reform. The Vice President and Secretary Riley met with more than 40 chief state school officers in April, and secured their organization's endorsement.

We have made steady but slow progress to date. Half a dozen states are on board; another dozen are within reach of the next few months, as outlined below. But even states with leaders strongly committed to participating in the test are reluctant to commit publicly without first building the necessary support within the state. A number of factors are making officials in many states cautious. These include financial and political investments that states have already made in their own state standards and tests; skepticism from the education community about "yet another test"; concern about stimulating opposition from the far right, especially in states which experienced serious battles over state reform efforts or over Goals 2000; short-term distractions during the legislative sessions; limited understanding among governors about NAEP and the relationship between the new national tests and NAEP; and diffuse governance arrangements and tensions between governors and other state education officials. In each state we have to overcome these hurdles and take advantage of strong public support for national tests in reading and math.

States Signed Up: As you know, 6 states -- Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, West Virginia, Massachusetts, and Kentucky -- have pledged to participate in the test, with support in each case coming from the governor, the chief state school officer and the state board of education. In addition, the Department of Defense schools have also pledged to participate in the testing initiative.

In a seventh state, California, State Superintendent Delaine Eastin has pledged her support, though Gov. Wilson and the State Board of Education (Wilson appointees) have withheld theirs. They have not opposed participation in the test, but instead have chosen to oppose Delaine's independent action. These 7 states represent approximately 24% of the nation's 4th and 8th graders.

Next Target States: A number of additional states are within reach in the near future, based on our discussions with governors and chief state school officers. Over the next several weeks we will work to nail down as many of these states as possible. If possible, we would like to hold a multi-state sign-up event with a handful of states at the White House in mid-July.

Our most promising current targets are 14 states with another 20% of the 4th and 8th grade population:

✓ **Colorado** Gov. Romer has indicated his intention for Colorado to participate. We are working with him to determine how soon he will be prepared to announce publicly.

✓
Nevada Gov. Miller has indicated that he wants Nevada to participate. We are also working with him to determine the timing of the announcement.

✓
Vermont Gov. Dean wants Vermont to participate; he is working to secure the support throughout the state for Vermont's participation. One critical step in this process is a mid-July meeting of a state task force on student achievement. No official decision will be made until after this meeting.

Missouri Gov. Carnahan and his chief state school officer are prepared for Missouri to participate in the 4th grade reading test. They have just completed the development of an 8th grade state math test (at a cost of \$6 million) and do not believe they can move forward with a separate national math test as well. We are working with Carnahan to determine the timing of an announcement.

I talked to him
✓
Delaware Gov. Carper is heavily leaning toward participating in the national testing initiative; he is planning on working to secure the support of his state board of education and legislature. We will work with Carper to determine how soon he will be prepared to make a public commitment.

Utah Gov. Leavitt has expressed tentative interest in having Utah participate, pending consultation with his chief state school officer. We are following up directly and working with Romer to secure Leavitt's support.

✓
Wyoming Gov. Berringer participated in a conference call with Secretary Riley, Mike Cohen, and a number of governors identified above. He expressed considerable interest, and we are now following up with him.

✓
Oregon Gov. Kitzhaber and State Superintendent Norma Paulus are both interested in Oregon's participation, with the most active leadership coming from Norma. Norma has indicated they would be willing to make a public announcement after the legislature adjourns in late June.

✓
New Jersey Preliminary discussions with the New Jersey Commissioner of Education (a gubernatorial appointee) indicated clear interest from him and Gov. Whitman. The New Jersey Supreme Court recently ruled that the state's approach to complying with a court order to provide more equitable funding is unconstitutional, so the attention of state education officials is now heavily focused on school finance issues. But we are trying to determine if an announcement from New Jersey will be feasible in the near future.

✓
New York Commissioner Rick Mills is working to secure New York State's participation in your testing initiative. He has discussed this privately and publicly with the Board of Regents, has solicited input from education and business leaders in the state, and has discussed it with

Gov. Pataki. There is no specific timetable for the Regents to take this issue up, but Rick is pushing to have the Regents consider this as soon as possible.

✓ **Wisconsin** Gov. Thompson has moved from initial opposition (he wrote an op-ed piece in the New York Times in February) to tentative interest, in part due to several conversations with Secretary Riley which resolved some misunderstandings he had. We believe Thompson is interested in having Wisconsin participate in the tests, although a running conflict with his chief state school officer may make it difficult for Thompson to provide the necessary in-state leadership. We are reaching out to the chief state school officer in an attempt to resolve this problem.

✓ **New Hampshire** Gov. Shaheen is inclined to support participation in the test, as is Commissioner of Education Betty Twomey. They are both currently preoccupied with enacting Shaheen's kindergarten initiative. Once the legislative session is over, we will approach Gov. Shaheen again.

✓ **Maine** Both the Commissioner of Education and Gov. King have expressed preliminary interest in participating in the test. We are working with them to address concerns they have raised regarding how best to integrate the tests into their own standards and tests, and to explain participation in national standards and tests to the public after so much effort has gone into developing the state's own standards.

✓ **Tennessee** The Commissioner of Education (a gubernatorial appointee) is very interested in participating in the testing initiative, and had secured Gov. Sundquist's agreement to participate. Unfortunately, within the past several days, as we were working toward an announcement with the Vice President prior to next week's Family Conference, Sundquist has begun to backpeddle, apparently under pressure from the far right. Sundquist has told the Commissioner that he still intends to participate, but at some later, unspecified time.

Next Steps: Secretary Riley and Mike Cohen have met with Govs. Bob Miller, Romer, Hunt, Thompson and Leavitt and discussed the possibility of a bipartisan effort between now and the NGA meeting, to reach out to and gain the support of as many governors as possible. The Democratic governors are prepared to help; we are trying to determine over the next several days which of the Republican governors will also help. We will then proceed to work with the governors to secure the commitment of as many states as possible to participate in the testing initiative.

• **Democratic States:** We are making a special effort to reach out to the seven Democratic governor not already listed above (Knowles, Chiles, Zell Miller, O'Bannon, Nelson, and Locke) We have made preliminary contact with these states, and encountered difficulties with a few. In Georgia, responsibility for deciding state testing policy lies with the chief state school officer, an elected Republican who is openly hostile to every form of federal

involvement in education. Gov. O'Bannon has indicated that the timing is not right in Indiana for him to pursue participation in national tests. And Gov. Locke's office has sent Secretary Riley a letter indicating that Washington will not participate in the testing initiative, because they believe it will disrupt their own efforts. We have asked Gov. Locke to reconsider that position, and to indicate so in writing.

Republican States: We believe that a bipartisan approach led by Romer, Leavitt, and perhaps Engler will be the most effective way to reach a number of big-state Republican governors, including Govs. Ridge, Edgar, Carlson, and Rowland. It may be the only way we have of reaching out to Gov. Bush.

Unlikely States: Finally, a number of states are not likely to sign up unless there is a change of leadership or political climate. These include Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Virginia. These 8 states represent about 10% of the nation's school children.

We have also been exploring the possibility of securing an NGA endorsement for the testing initiative. However, this may prove impossible, due to the opposition of Gov. Voinovich, the incoming chair. Despite the close overlap between his agenda for education reform and yours, in recent years Voinovich has generally opposed federal involvement in education (it took nearly a year to persuade him to support Ohio's participation in Goals 2000). In addition, there are two civil rights issues pending between the Department of Education and Ohio. While Secretary Riley and the Education Department are trying to resolve these issues in a cooperative fashion, they complicate our ability to reach out directly to the governor. We have also asked for the assistance of the Ohio Business Roundtable and CEO's such as John Pepper and Joe Gorman. However, we do not anticipate that this will produce quick results.

III. LOCAL PARTICIPATION

We are also trying to sign up a number of urban school districts, where the need for reform is greatest. Cities that sign up will also be asked to share with us and with their communities the steps they will take to help prepare students for these tests (in most cases, this will create opportunities for cities to highlight, enlist new support for, and integrate efforts already underway). This will underscore that your testing initiative is about preparing students to meet higher standards, not simply testing.

We have identified a pool of approximately 20 large urban school districts in which we believe there will be strong interest in participating by the local superintendent, and by the mayors that are involved heavily in the local schools. The Council of Great City Schools has made preliminary contact with each of the superintendents; at least half a dozen expressed strong interest (Boston, Broward County FL, Cincinnati, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and San Francisco), and we will follow up with all 20 superintendents over the next few weeks. We anticipate being ready to announce the cities that will participate by mid-July.

*Cam
Bannon
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*I should
write to Mr. Gov.
Voinovich
explaining that
we would like
to work with
him on
this year*

*See list of
superintendents
in
list*

We are working to assemble a package of assistance we can provide to cities that commit to participate in the testing program. For example, the Education Department and the National Science Foundation are identifying technical assistance resources, models of effective practices, and discretionary funds that can be directed toward assisting the cities. Enterprise Zones may have funds that can be directed to assist participating schools. The Office of Bilingual Education is planning an outreach effort to involve the Hispanic community in support of reading and math, and this effort will be targeted to participating cities. America Reads can help mobilize reading tutors, and NSF will help identify local partners from the mathematics and scientific communities.

IV. CONGRESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

As you know, Rep. Goodling has backed away from his earlier support for the testing initiative and has now signaled his opposition, including an attempt to add a rider to the supplemental appropriations bill that would have prohibited the Education Department from spending FY 1997 funds on test development. If Goodling continues his opposition, we are likely to face a battle over continued funding for test development as part of the FY 1998 appropriations bill. If we can regain Mr. Goodling's support, we think it will be possible to assemble a bipartisan coalition that will ensure continued funding and the legislative authority we will need in the future.

At your request, Secretary Riley and Mike Cohen met with Goodling last week, to explore his concerns. While no specific progress or commitments were made, Goodling's opposition softened over the course of the discussion. We will keep working on him.

Beyond Goodling and selected others on the Education and Economic Opportunities Committee, your national test initiative has received little attention from most members of Congress. Consequently, it is difficult to gauge the level of support we will receive if there is an appropriations battle.

We have launched a concerted effort to firm up Democratic support. First, the Education Department has begun to provide members with information on the testing initiative on a targeted basis, starting with members from participating states. Second, we are identifying members who will actively promote the test, especially in the House. Reps. George Miller, Dale Kildee and Tim Roemer are especially strong supporters, and virtually every Democrat on the House Education and Economic Opportunities Committee starting with Clay can be counted on to support the testing initiative. In addition, Rep. Etheridge is preparing to introduce a sense of the House resolution in support of this initiative, and will work to secure broad support for it. On the Republican side, Reps. Frank Riggs and Mike Castle have been quite supportive. However, we suspect neither will want to split from Goodling on this issue if he remains firmly opposed.

V. CONSTITUENCY GROUP SUPPORT

We are working with the business groups that have endorsed your testing initiative (Business Roundtable, National Alliance of Business, Chamber of Commerce, as well as high-tech CEO's) to encourage governors to participate in the testing initiative, especially in the states we have targeted as most promising.

We are working with the AFT, which also supports the testing initiative, to encourage local union affiliates to support local district participation in the testing initiative. And we are working with the Council of Chief State School Officers to identify states that may be prepared to announce participation in the testing initiative.

We are working with other education groups to secure endorsements for the testing initiative. The American Association of School Administrators and the National School Boards Association are likely sources of support. The national organizations representing elementary and secondary principals are also potential sources of support, though they historically have not supported the idea of national tests. We will be meeting shortly with Bob Chase to discuss how best to enlist NEA's support; as you know, NEA has also not traditionally been a strong supporter of national or state testing initiatives.

Several constituency groups have expressed serious concerns about the testing initiative, especially civil rights groups. In general, their concerns focus on issues of: (1) test bias and test fairness; (2) concern that the tests will be used for high stakes purposes; and (3) the difficulties Hispanic and other students with limited English proficiency will face on the 4th grade reading test if it is given only in English. Both White House and Education Department staff have met frequently with representatives of the civil rights groups, these discussions have not yet resulted in greater support for this initiative.

The national PTA organization has long been opposed to national tests. However, we believe strongly that parents ought to be among the strongest supporters of these tests. We have met with the incoming PTA president to discuss ways of building support for the testing initiative, and will be working with that organization and its leadership to generate parental enthusiasm for these tests.

VI. BUILDING SUPPORT AND SUSTAINING MOMENTUM

The idea of national standards and tests is quite popular -- with the public, parents, business leaders and, increasingly, with educators. But translating broad public support into specific state and local actions to participate in the tests is a challenge, since state and local officials have every incentive to continue existing testing programs rather than add a new one which will demonstrate low achievement levels in most education systems. Therefore, in addition to the strategies described above to "retail" the tests state-by-state, city-by-city, and group-by-group, we need ways to focus broad public attention on the push for tests, and spur parents to apply public pressure at the state and local level.

So far, the national press has shown little interest in the standards movement. It doesn't cost a lot of money, it doesn't involve a protracted legislative battle in Washington, it has bipartisan support, and it does not have an imminent deadline or an obvious villain.

To maintain a high public profile on this issue, we will have to generate a sense of urgency and drama on our own -- and we should look for every chance we can to bypass the national press and appeal directly to parents, as you have done in your state legislative speeches and the West Virginia town meeting. We are looking at a variety of ways to raise the profile of this issue:

We must do more

Creating a fight over the tests: At present there is no defining conflict over the tests in a way that would capture the interest of the press and the public, and raise the issue above the narrow confines of the policy community. This could change whether we want it to or not, especially if Goodling aggressively pursues his effort to use the appropriations process as a vehicle for stopping the development of the test. If so, we would have a clear battle over the test, and one in which you could fight for basic skills, hard work and accountability,

Be sure to do more

We could also take the initiative to create a more visible fight over this initiative in the Congress in order to create a vehicle for mobilizing support for the tests. For example, we could transmit legislation requesting specific authority to develop and implement the tests, or to provide financial incentives for states to participate in the tests. Such a battle has some advantages -- it would attract press attention and could solidify Democratic support. But it has clear downsides as well. It may create uncertainty about whether we will be able to follow through on our commitment to develop the tests. In addition, a partisan, polarizing battle will make a number of Republican states harder to sign up.

Pushing the policy envelope on standards: We can also attract public attention and debate on standards and testing by promoting new initiatives tied directly or indirectly to the tests. We have been considering several possibilities:

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Promoting "no social-promotion" policies through steps such as developing guidelines for school districts. Chicago attracted enormous attention last week for requiring a quarter of its 8th graders to attend summer school before receiving their middle school diploma.

Good

More vigorously promoting state and local intervention in failing schools, through steps such as providing guidelines for state and local interventions or issuing new and tougher regulations for the interventions already required under Title I; and providing new incentives for state and local efforts to close down failing schools by enabling them to use charter schools and community schools funds together, in order to reopen failed schools as charter schools that also stay open longer so that students can get tutoring and other forms of extra help.

- ▶ **Providing new financial aid for college to 6th graders in high poverty schools tied to meeting performance requirements.** As an alternative or complement to the proposal under consideration to provide a Pell Grant guarantee for elementary school graduates in high poverty schools, we could propose "education trust funds" for the same students, and provide \$500 -\$1,000 deposits tied to specific accomplishments, including graduating from elementary school, graduating from middle school, doing well on the national 8th grade math test, and graduating from high school. We could design this approach to fit with proposals for KidSave accounts currently under consideration. This approach would send a very powerful message to students -- and to the country -- that academic achievement counts and will be rewarded. We could also provide bonuses to school and/or teachers with high pass rates for Title I students.
- ▶ **Proposing the development of a national high school level test,** once the 4th and 8th grade testing initiative is on more solid footing. This could be done by creating individual level versions of NAEP in key subject areas, by asking an independent group such as the College Board to develop new high-school level assessments, or by creating a mechanism to recognize existing national or state tests.

A steady pace of events on standards and tests: We are planning a number of events over the next few months to highlight your testing initiative for the public. We are also working with the Education Department on a major Back-to-Basics, Back-to-School initiative, which will provide several opportunities starting in August and continuing through the early Fall for you to highlight the testing initiative and your entire Call to Action.

Specific plans for June and July include:

- ▶ **The Vice President's Family Conference** The conference this year will focus on families and learning. During the conference, the Vice President will announce a fund being established by John Doerr (who organized the high tech CEO's who endorsed your testing initiative) to support reforms in schools participating in the testing initiative. This will also be an opportunity to announce Tennessee's participation in the tests.
- ▶ **America Reads Event in Boston Linked to Testing Initiative.** You will be in Boston on June 30. None of the nearby states are ready to sign up for tests. We are working to develop an event to highlight your America Reads initiative at an appropriate Read Boston site. Because Massachusetts has already signed up for the test, we can use this to emphasize that your reading initiative will prepare students to meet national reading standards. This event could also focus on Work Study tutors, since new work-study funds will be available July 1.
- ▶ **Launch of Education Excellence Partnership / Major League Baseball Public Service Announcements on Standards** The Education Excellence Partnership (the Business Roundtable, the National Alliance of Business, the American Federation of Teachers, the

We haven't announced this yet - when can we?

National Governors' Association and the U.S. Department of Education) have joined with Major League Baseball to produce a series of PSA's that use baseball players to reinforce the value of raising academic standards. The fulfillment materials for the campaign encourage parents to find out if their school will be participating in the national testing program. The PSA's will be launched in early- to mid-July at an event at Camden Yards prior to an Orioles game. This is tentatively scheduled for July 2.

- ▶ **Multi-State Sign-Up Event** We anticipate holding an event in mid-July at the White House, to announce a handful of states pledging to participate in the testing initiative. (Alternatively, this could be our news for the NGA meeting).
- ▶ **Multi-City Sign-Up Event** We anticipate holding an event in mid July at the White House, to announce a handful of cities pledging to participate in the testing initiative.
- ▶ **Announcement of Interagency Math Strategy.** Prior to your speech to the Michigan legislature, you directed the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation to work with the DPC and OSTP to develop an interagency strategy to help states and local communities prepare students for the 8th grade math test. In line with last week's 4th grade TIMSS findings, the strategy will have a particular focus on improving middle school math. The strategy will address issues such as improving the knowledge and skills of teachers, expanding access to high quality instructional materials, maximizing the benefits of technology, and motivating students to take math seriously. The strategy will include recommendations for involving the math and science community in these efforts. Announcement of this strategy could be combined with the state or city sign-up events.
- ▶ **NGA Meeting** You will be speaking to the NGA Annual Meeting on July 28. This will be an important opportunity to make case for the testing initiative directly to governors.
- ▶ **NCSL Meeting** NCSL's Annual Meeting will be held in early August. This would be an opportunity to continue the crusade you brought to three state legislatures in the spring to legislators from every state. While few state legislatures are in a position to initiate state involvement in your testing initiative, most are in a position to block it if they choose. Making the case for the testing initiative could be an important step toward clearing the path for state participation.

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America Goes Back to School 1997: The Department of Education is planning the third annual America Goes Back to School effort, designed to encourage parents, community leaders, employers, employees, and other community members to become more actively involved in improving education in their communities. The effort spans August through October; last year, more than 2,000 local events occurred during this time period.

This year's effort is led by a broad-based steering committee chaired by Secretary Riley and co-chaired by Tipper Gore, former Governor Tom Kean, Michael Keaton, and Lois-Jean White.

President of the National PTA. The campaign this year will be focused on your Call to Action. We are working with the Education Department and the Steering Committee to organize a series of local sign-up events, in which local schools and communities sign-up to respond to your call to action, including the testing initiative.

The Steering Committee met last week to develop more specific plans and activities. We will develop a more specific set of events appropriate for your participation. In addition, we expect that we will be asking for the entire Cabinet and others throughout the Administration to participate in high-profile Back-to-School events with a back-to-basics theme.

At present, we are considering the following as possible Back-to-School events for your involvement:

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Nationally Televised Town Meeting on Education You have been invited to participate in a town hall meeting on education sponsored by PBS, which would be the culmination of a week-long series of shows devoted to education. The series will include one or two shows devoted specifically to standards. The town meeting would pose questions to you sent in by viewers in response to the first four shows. We can also organize one or more town meetings patterned after the one you recently did in Clarksburg, West Virginia. You might also consider going back on the state legislative circuit.

JK
anubis
Fifty-State Business Leaders Event We are working to organize a day in the fall when, in each state, high-tech and other independent CEO's who are supporting your education efforts join with CEO's involved with long-standing business/education partnerships through organizations such as BRT, NAB, and the Chamber of Commerce, to support a common agenda of higher academic standards, employer efforts to review academic performance in hiring decisions, and a call for state participation in the national tests.

* * *

Together, these steps should keep us on track to our interim goal of signing up 20 or more states this year, with another 20 to follow in 1998. At some point, we may need your help in making direct retail appeals to individual governors. But the most important challenge is to keep finding ways to sell the public on the value of national tests and the urgency of raising standards.

Educatic - Standards

July 14, 1997

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Michael Cohen

SUBJECT: Hispanic Concerns about National Tests

Over the past several weeks, DPC, OPL and Education Department staff have met with representatives of MALDEF, the Hispanic Congressional Caucus and other leaders from the Hispanic community to discuss their concerns regarding the national testing initiative.

Concerns of Hispanic Groups: The primary concern is that the 4th grade reading test will be given only in English. The Hispanic groups argue that there should be a Spanish-language version of the reading test as well. They have advanced several arguments for this position.

The first is that a Spanish-language version is necessary in order to enable Limited English Proficient (LEP) students to demonstrate their reading comprehension skills in their native language. For many students, a reading comprehension test in English would be a measure of proficiency in English rather than a true measure of reading skills, skills which are transferrable to any other language. Thus, the test will unfairly underestimate the reading comprehension skills of LEP students. The groups have pointed out that current Title 1 policy requires local school districts to test students in the language that enables them to best demonstrate proficiency in the subject area being tested. The Administration' plan for the 8th grade math test includes an English/Spanish bilingual version; the plan for the 4th grade reading test should be brought into line with Title 1 requirements and our 8th grade policy.

The Hispanic groups also argue that giving the reading test in English only will lead to the exclusion of many LEP students from the test, thereby eroding accountability for their performance. Further, they argue that this policy will lead teachers to prematurely emphasize the acquisition of English in ways that will be detrimental over the longer run to the same students' ability to master other subject areas.

Administration Position: In our discussions, White House and Education Department staff have made three basic points.

First, the purpose of the test is in fact to test student skills in being able to read in English, not in their first language. English is the language of school instruction and the language students must master to succeed in the larger society, and it is

reasonable to expect students to learn to read in English, and to test their proficiency against that standard.

Second, we are looking into ways to minimize the difficulties testing in English will pose for LEP students. Among the steps we have discussed specifically include:

- **Development of appropriate criteria for including and excluding students from the test:** Education Department policy is that students who have not been instructed in English for at least three years may be exempted from the English reading test. Inclusion criteria may be further refined at the local level. Such refinements will include provisions for parent input into inclusion decisions, the definition of instruction in English, and procedures for deciding a student's participation in the test.
- **Development of accommodations that will support the inclusion of LEP students in the test.** These might include providing LEP students with extra time; testing in one-on-one or small group sessions; help with the test directions.
- **An R&D effort on the assessment of LEP students.** The focus of investigation will be address issues such as when testing in a second language yield meaningful results, and what accommodations are most appropriate for LEP students.
- **Development of strategies to help Hispanic parents use the test as tool for school improvement.** These strategies include disseminating information about the test in languages used in the community, checklists that parents can use to determine if their school is preparing students for the test, and technical assistance to school districts about the test.
- **The Department of Education will work with states to ensure that tests in languages other than English used for Title I are of comparable rigor to the Voluntary National Test.**

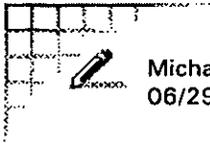
Third, we have indicated that we are open to continuing to discuss and consider the issue. At the same time, we have pressed the Hispanic groups to recognize that it is quite appropriate to expect all students, including those from LEP backgrounds, to learn to read well in English, and test students against this standard.

Preliminary discussions with bilingual education and assessment experts, as well as with superintendents in urban school systems with large LEP populations underscore the importance of addressing this concern, but also underscore the diversity of views on the subject. In addition, we are mindful of the strong

reactions we could provoke against the entire testing initiative if the test appears to be a tool for lowering expectations for LEP students. The Education Department is developing a set of options (including continuing our current policy with no change, as well as several that might provide a Spanish language version of the test as long as students also took the reading test in English as well).

If this issue is raised during your meeting, we recommend that you indicate awareness of their concerns, indicate that the Education Department and Domestic Policy Council staff are examining the issue, and avoid making specific commitments.

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Education - Teachers



Michael Cohen
06/29/97 02:05:34 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Outline of new CBEST brief

I've reviewed the outline for the "compromise" CBEST brief, and here's what I think:

1. The final section of the outline (III) goes beyond the limited approach we discussed -- namely, that the brief would object only to the early version and not to the current version of the test -- because it poses objections to the whole set of validation studies. If this section remains in, we are back to the original EEOC brief and objections.
2. Assuming this section is deleted, then the brief essentially argues that the original validation studies were deficient, demonstrated by the fact that the state made significant changes in the math portion of the test in particular after the 1994 Lundquist evaluation study. Consequently, the unrevised, pre-1995 version of the test lacked demonstrated validity and job-relatedness, and therefore its use was unlawful in light of the disparate impact it created. In addition, the court committed a serious procedural error when it let the state get away with either failing to conduct validity studies, or conducting seriously deficient validity studies, in the pre-1994 period of test administration.
3. The brief doesn't state this, but if this is the essence of the case we would present, I presume we would take this the next step and suggest that the appropriate remedy would be to give back pay (or some other compensation) to any of the plaintiffs who take and pass the current version of the test, and who then go into teaching. If they can't pass the test, or no longer want to teach, then I don't think they would be entitled to some kind of remedy.
4. The brief needs to more clearly make the argument for our standards and testing policy, along the following lines:
 - setting high standards for students is a necessary first step in improving teaching and learning; this is especially important for students from disadvantaged background, because they have traditionally suffered from a "tyranny of low expectations" which has resulted in these students being exposed to a watered down curriculum which limits their learning opportunities
 - testing to see if students are meeting these standards is also essential, because the test reinforces the standards; drives curriculum and instruction in the classroom (what gets tested gets taught); lets students, teachers and parents know if the kids are making progress and on track; and provides the basis for holding schools accountable for performance;
 - raising standards for students requires setting standards for teachers: kids can't learn from teachers who lack the basic prerequisite knowledge. This is especially true for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is considerable evidence to suggest, for example, high poverty schools are most likely to have the least-well prepared teachers, which clearly works to the disadvantage of the most disadvantaged kids.
 - all teachers need to master some basic reading, writing and math skills in order to teach, because these skills are likely to be required at some point in just about every class and in every other setting in which professional educators (including counselors, principals, school

nurses, etc.) interact with kids; are required in order to build and retain public confidence in public schools; and, because adults in schools are supposed to be role models for kids; if they demonstrate that they lack basic skills students are expected to learn, they undermine the moral authority of the school, which is necessary to maintain order and to motivate students (who, by virtue of compulsory attendance laws are the involuntary clientele of the school).

- that's why we support the basic idea of requiring prospective teachers to pass basic skills tests; in fact, we think teachers ought to also be required to pass more rigorous tests in the subject area in which they teach, and ought to also be required to demonstrate a level of expertise in other areas (e.g., pedagogy, classroom management, child development, etc.) The point here is to clarify that on policy grounds we think basic skills testing is at one end of a continuum of performance requirements, and we'd like to see states move to the other, more rigorous, end.
- Because these basic skills tests are so important, and because we expect more states to adopt even more rigorous testing policies, we think it is very important that these tests be done right, and especially that they are consistent with civil rights employment laws.
- We also value very highly the goal of increasing the number of well prepared, qualified minorities in schools. Because high standards and well designed licensure tests can be a very important tool for upgrading teacher preparation (just as standards and tests are a tool for upgrading teaching and learning for kids), it is important that we make sure that the tests are in place, done right, and do not needlessly discriminate.
- Title VII is the tool for doing this; if Title VII requirements and procedures are met than we will have valid tests that will serve to improve teaching. If not, then they will neither improve teaching nor increase the participation of underrepresented minorities in the classroom.
- That is why we are appealing the court's decision: the court set a precedent for allowing a poorly validated test be used when there was a disparate impact. Even though the test is now "fixed", if the part of the ruling bearing on the pre-1995 test is allowed to stand, than future tests may be used where they also lack validity, and may be based on much more demanding standards which could lack the easy "face validity" of basic skills.

4. I think the outline above makes a more compelling case than the EEOC outline for why standards and testing are important policy tools, and why enforcing Title VII is important in this context. I could imagine proceeding with a brief framed along these lines from a policy perspective.

5. Finally, from a policy point of view, I could be comfortable about proceeding with a brief along these lines. I will defer to other's judgment about the wisdom of this approach from a legal and strategic standpoint,. My own instinct is that we still look like we are raising a relatively small concern about a really big issue, though I am still thinking about this.

I hope this helps.

Education - standards *MC*

June 8th Survey

- Would you favor or oppose administering a national test for 11th graders which must be passed before graduation from high school?

79/18 favor/oppose

- If this test were administered to students in the fall of their junior year - 21 months before graduation, so they knew what level of preparation was necessary to graduate, would you support or oppose administering a test required for graduation?

85/12 support/oppose

- Some people say requiring students to pass a standardized test before graduating from high school will increase high school drop out rates because poor performing students will be discouraged if they think they will not pass the test.

74/21 support/oppose

March 11th Survey

- Promoting national educational standards for our schools. Does this make you much more comfortable with the President's values, somewhat more comfortable, somewhat less comfortable or much less comfortable with the President's values?

53% much more comfortable
28% somewhat more comfortable
6% somewhat less comfortable
8% much less comfortable

January 27 Survey

- Challenge states and school districts to set rigorous standards for their students by adopting national tests in the core subjects of 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. Would you be much more favorable, somewhat more favorable, somewhat less favorable, or much less favorable to the President if he did this?

81% more favorable (49% much more + 32% somewhat more)
17% less favorable (8% much less + 9% somewhat less)

This would be a: 39% major advancement, 29% medium advancement, 28% minor advancement

- Challenge every state to adopt higher standards for teachers and for schools.

88% more favorable (67% much more + 21% somewhat more)

10% less favorable (6% much less + 4% somewhat less)

This would be a: 63% major advancement, 22% medium advancement, 15% minor advancement

- Put into place a set of national standards and recommended tests in core courses and provide incentives to states to adopt them.

73% more favorable (40% much more + 33% somewhat more)

20% less favorable (11% much less + 9% somewhat less)

This would be a: 32% major advancement, 36% medium advancement, 24% minor advancement

- Put in place a national high school graduation standard and test and provide incentives to states to adopt them.

75% more favorable (47% much more + 28% somewhat more)

20% less favorable (10% much less + 10% somewhat less)

This would be a: 46% major advancement, 28% medium advancement, 23% minor advancement

- Call for an end to "social promotions" -- where kids are sent to higher grades even if they haven't mastered the appropriate skills -- and call on every state to institute graduation exams so that high school diplomas mean something.

81% more favorable (58% much more + 23% somewhat more)

16% less favorable (11% much less + 5% somewhat less)

This would be a: 59% major advancement, 23% medium advancement, 16% minor advancement

January 7th Survey

- Do you think that in addition to the current grading and promotion system in our schools, we should also have national educational standards?

78% yes/19% no

- Some people say we need national educational standards so parents can know that the learning expectations for their kids stack up well against what

kids in other states and communities are learning and what colleges, universities, and employers will demand. Other people say that national standards cannot be implemented successfully without imposing them in an intrusive way on states and local school districts. Which is closer to your view?

65% standards for context / 27% too intrusive

- Suppose the federal government were to try to implement higher national education standards by setting goals of achievement for schools that include what students should be taught at each grade.

70% support (42% strongly support + 28% somewhat support)
26% oppose (16% strongly oppose + 10% somewhat oppose)

- Suppose the federal government were to try to implement higher national education standards by establishing tests at key grades that measure educational achievement so we can determine the progress we are making.

74% support (49% strongly support + 25% somewhat support)
24% oppose (13% strongly oppose + 11% somewhat oppose)

- Should educational goals for grades and schools be set on the local, state, or national level?

43% national
29% state
25% local

- Should educational tests be developed and administered by the local school board, the state, or the federal government?

33% local school board
43% state government
21% federal government

- Suppose the federal government appointed a commission to determine national education standards and to create a test that could be given to the states to administer on a voluntary basis. Would you strongly support this decision, somewhat support it, somewhat oppose it, or strongly oppose it?

75% support (40% strongly support + 35% somewhat support)
23% oppose (9% strongly oppose + 14% somewhat oppose)

- Some people say a national test is too much intrusion into local school boards' educational decisions; other people say this is too important a tool to

pass up and we need it to measure our national educational progress or we will fall behind other countries. Which is closer to your view?

35% too much intrusion / 59% too important

- Suppose President Clinton required each state to adopt a standardized test or create its own so that each state has at least some clear uniform measure of the educational achievement of its students

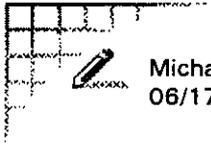
75% support (44% strongly support + 31% somewhat support)
21% oppose (11% strongly oppose + 10% somewhat oppose)

- Suppose the President announced a test project in educational testing where several states will participate in uniform standards and testing.

76% support (41% strongly support + 35% somewhat support)
21% oppose (12% strongly oppose + 9% somewhat oppose)

- What is the most important area for students to have standardized tests?

48% reading
36% math
2% science
1% history



Michael Cohen
06/17/97 04:33:27 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP
cc: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP
Subject: Washington Post story on testing initiative

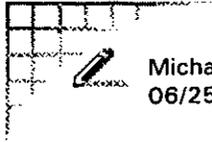
Rene Sanchez, Post education reporter is doing a story on the testing initiative, and is trying to reach me. He has already talked to ED staff, and to NGA staff. I expect he will ask me why we only have 6 states signed up.

I basically want to convey that (1) we are proceeding on course and on schedule; that this is a long-run effort because of the nature of how states and education systems work, rather than a few lightening strikes that will nail down all 50 states; and (2) that these tests should not be seen as stand-alone -- they are an integral part of a larger education reform strategy designed to help prepare kids to meet the standards, including initiatives such as America Reads, technology, an interagency math strategy under development, etc.

More specifically, I intend to make the following points:

1. The first order of business for us is getting the tests developed, and that is moving on schedule (e.g., RFP for test contract is on the street, group developing test specifications is at work and will complete its job at end of summer, etc.). However, we are still in the early stages of developing the test.
2. We are satisfied with the pace of state sign-ups in the 4 months since the testing initiative was announced:
 - The states that have stepped forward demonstrate bipartisan support, and demonstrate that these tests can fit into ongoing state standards/testing/reform efforts in a variety of ways.
 - We know that there are a number of other states in which participation in the test is under active consideration (if pressed for examples, I will give NY, VT, CO, UT, MO, and possibly NJ -- they are all pretty safe, and I can steer them to the right people in each state)
 - the council of chief state school officers unanimously endorsed the testing initiative at its March meeting; a good indicator of the breadth of state interest and support -- so have major business groups
 - deciding which test to use is a big decision for a state, most states don't rush in to this kind of thing.
 - Many will want to see more information (e.g., test specifications, who the test developer will be). Especially since the tests aren't yet developed, many states will wait until we are further along before signing on.
3. The President will continue to use the bully pulpit to encourage states to sign on for the tests, and to help the public understand that these tests help set higher standards, provide kids, parents, teachers, the public, etc. with critical information, and are tools to focus efforts to prepare kids to meet the standards.

Educ - standards



Michael Cohen
06/25/97 04:27:21 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP
cc: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP
Subject: San Antonio signed up for the test

At the family conference today, the Superintendent of San Antonio signed up for the tests! That's one urban district down, several more to go.

Education - Standards

Management Expert Picked To Be I.R.S. Commissioner

By DAVID CAY JOHNSTON

After a frustrating search to find someone willing to take on the political and technological problems of running the Internal Revenue Service, the Clinton Administration has persuaded the chief executive of a Virginia computer company, Charles O. Rossotti, to accept the job, Government officials said yesterday.

Mr. Rossotti, 56, is the founder and chief executive of American Management Systems, a Fairfax, Va., computer consulting company that says it specializes in working "with clients to achieve breakthrough performance through the intelligent use of information technology."

The current I.R.S. Commissioner, Margaret Milner Richardson, announced in January that she planned to resign.

Mr. Rossotti founded American Management Systems in 1970 with Ivan Selin, who later became Under Secretary of State for Management in the Bush Administration.

Calls to Mr. Rossotti's business and his Washington home were not answered last night, but Government officials said that he had agreed to accept the job and that his name had been sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a background check.

The I.R.S. has become a lightning rod for criticism, especially by House Republicans, for its treatment of taxpayers, from unanswered telephone calls and bad advice to armed raids on businesses wrongly suspected of criminal tax fraud.

The Clinton Administration has acknowledged serious problems in management of the service for more than a year.

A senior Government official said last night that Mr. Rossotti has the combination of proven management experience on working with culture change for customer service and deep knowledge of information technologies that were top priorities in searching for a new I.R.S. commissioner. Mr. Rossotti's job, the official said, "is to change the culture and the technology to make the I.R.S. an effective organization in interacting with taxpayers."

American Management Systems has offices in 53 cities around the world and employs 6,800 people.

Mr. Rossotti owns nearly 1.4 million shares of American Management Systems, or 3.4 percent of the company, which are worth \$36.5 million based on yesterday's closing price of \$26.25 a share.

He was paid \$250,000 in salary and no bonus last year, a modest salary for the head of a company with \$812 million in revenue.

His wife, Barbara M. Rossotti, 57, is a lawyer with Shaw, Pittman, Potts & Trowbridge, a Washington law firm that last year was paid \$2.9 million as the outside general counsel to American Management Systems, filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission show.

What Works In Education? Republicans Go Find Out

By ADAM CLYMER

LOUISVILLE, Ky., May 28 — When a group of Republican Congressmen travels the country to talk about education, the predictable topics include tuition vouchers, Federal paperwork and how the best decisions are always the local decisions.

But when the Republicans on the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Education and the Work Force go on tour as they did last week (with only a single Democrat along), they hear other concerns — from the defense of Federal programs for children at risk to warnings against writing off all public schools because of grim conditions in some cities.

In hitting the road from Los Angeles to the Bronx, the inelegantly named panel has several clear goals. One is to contradict the Democratic argument, made tellingly in the elections, that the Republican Party doesn't care about education.

In the hearing here, Representative Van Hilleary of Tennessee cast his party as thoughtful reformers, unfairly attacked: "People who want to keep it the way it is say, 'They're against education.'"

But there is also genuine curiosity behind the hearings called "Education at a Crossroads: What Works? What's Wasted?"

The committee contends that there are 760 Federal education programs. But the hearings devote much more effort to identifying successful reform programs in schools, than to some Federal efforts.

Representative Pete Hoekstra of Michigan, the committee chairman, said he hoped to avoid "legislation by anecdote" and find ways the Federal Government's modest spending could be used to help states adopt proven educational techniques. He said he hoped to reach agreement with the Clinton Administration and House Democrats; otherwise, "it won't go anywhere."

One topic that gets a lot of attention is the Republican proposal to use vouchers to help parents send their children to private schools. In the Bronx last month, John Cardinal O'Connor came to a hearing at Cardinal Hayes High School to describe parochial school efforts to teach pupils "how to combat the downward deviancy in the world; how to combat drugs; how to make a decent living."

The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 1997

Reed
We have to
try to put our
focus on
public schools
on July
Reed

In Cincinnati, students at Mother of Mercy High School stood in line to ask about vouchers, the most controversial of the committee's proposals, even though Mr. Hoekstra warned the Mercy High School students that he didn't think the Government would be offering vouchers soon.

Also at the hearing, Nancy Schlemmer, secretary of the National Parent Teacher Association, said the subcommittee paid too much attention to parochial schools, while 90 percent of children go to public schools. Vouchers, she warned, "siphon limited public dollars away from public schools and are not accountable to the public."

Tom Mooney, president of the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, felt vouchers were relevant, saying that at private schools, parents were more involved.

In Cincinnati, the committee seemed impressed with the state-of-the-art electronic capabilities of the Mayerson Academy, a teacher-training institute outside the school system — part of a business effort, led by the Procter & Gamble Company, to revitalize Cincinnati schools.

In Louisville, as in Cincinnati, there were pleas for more education money from Washington. Edward Reidy, deputy commissioner of education in Kentucky, said that even modest help was important because the "Federal Government is focusing on making sure that the youngsters who are least well-served in our society get help." He said that as a result, "poverty is no longer the primary determinant of what kids will learn" in Kentucky.

Kentucky is implementing a 20-year program to overhaul the education system. Representative Hoekstra said he could not understand how the state could wait so long.

Carolyn Witt Jones, of the Partnership for Kentucky Schools, a business group backing the overhaul, explained, "We didn't get to the pits as a state in education in five years and we can't fix it in five years."

Mr. Hoekstra said, "I find people much more patient with solving this issue than I think they should be."

Copied
Reed
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Education - Standards

June 13, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRUCE REED
MICHAEL COHEN

SUBJECT: Long-Term Strategy for National Standards and Tests

Tuesday's TIMSS announcement of 4th grade progress in math and science was front-page news across the country. This memorandum provides an update on our efforts to sign up states and cities for the testing initiative, and outlines a long-term plan to secure broad support.

I. TEST DEVELOPMENT

The test development process is on track to be ready for administration as a pilot in Spring 1998 and nationwide in Spring 1999.

A contract has been awarded to the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to develop the detailed specifications for the reading and math tests. This involves, for example, determining the balance of multiple choice and open-ended items for each test.

CCSSO has performed this same role for the development of NAEP, and this step is one signal to the education community that the new tests will in fact parallel NAEP as promised. As it did with NAEP, CCSSO has also established several advisory committees of subject matter specialists, testing experts and the education community to help guide the development of test specifications.

The Request for Proposals for the test development contracts has been let, and the contracts will be awarded before September 30. The Education Department is on schedule to award additional contracts for related research, development and evaluation necessary for the development and validation of the tests.

II. STATE PARTICIPATION

The success of this initiative is largely dependent on the voluntary efforts of states to incorporate the 4th grade reading and 8th grade math tests into their state testing programs. We have focused most of our efforts toward building a critical mass of states, with governors of both parties, to commit to participate in the testing program. We continue to believe that if we can achieve this objective over the next several months, we will pave the way for most remaining states to sign up over the course of the next school year.

Over the last four months, we have waged an intensive retail campaign to solicit every state's participation. Secretary Riley has written to every governor and chief state school officer, and he and Mike Cohen have worked closely with scores of state officials on ways to incorporate our tests into their state's approach to standards, testing and reform. The Vice President and Secretary Riley met with more than 40 chief state school officers in April, and secured their organization's endorsement.

We have made steady but slow progress to date. Half a dozen states are on board; another dozen are within reach of the next few months, as outlined below. But even states with leaders strongly committed to participating in the test are reluctant to commit publicly without first building the necessary support within the state. A number of factors are making officials in many states cautious. These include financial and political investments that states have already made in their own state standards and tests; skepticism from the education community about "yet another test"; concern about stimulating opposition from the far right, especially in states which experienced serious battles over state reform efforts or over Goals 2000; short-term distractions during the legislative sessions; limited understanding among governors about NAEP and the relationship between the new national tests and NAEP; and diffuse governance arrangements and tensions between governors and other state education officials. In each state we have to overcome these hurdles and take advantage of strong public support for national tests in reading and math,

States Signed Up: As you know, 6 states -- Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, West Virginia, Massachusetts, and Kentucky -- have pledged to participate in the test, with support in each case coming from the governor, the chief state school officer and the state board of education. In addition, the Department of Defense schools have also pledged to participate in the testing initiative.

In a seventh state, California, State Superintendent Delaine Eastin has pledged her support, though Gov. Wilson and the State Board of Education (Wilson appointees) have withheld theirs. They have not opposed participation in the test, but instead have chosen to oppose Delaine's independent action. These 7 states represent approximately 24% of the nation's 4th and 8th graders.

Next Target States: A number of additional states are within reach in the near future, based on our discussions with governors and chief state school officers. Over the next several weeks we will work to nail down as many of these states as possible. If possible, we would like to hold a multi-state sign-up event with 4-8 states at the White House in mid-July. ***Alternatively, we will find opportunities to announce states as they make the commitment, most likely 1-2 at a time.***

Our most promising current targets are 14 states with about 20% of the 4th and

8th grade population:

Tennessee The Commissioner of Education (a gubernatorial appointee) has asked if it would be possible for Tennessee to announce its participation in the testing initiative the day before the Vice-President's Family Conference, when the Vice President returns to the state. She is reconfirming Gov. Sundquist's support for participation, and we are working with the Vice President's office to schedule an event.

Colorado Gov. Romer has indicated his intention for Colorado to participate. We are working with him to determine how soon he will be prepared to announce publicly.

Nevada Gov. Miller has indicated that he wants Nevada to participate. We are also working with him to determine the timing of the announcement.

Vermont Gov. Dean wants Vermont to participate; he is working to secure the support throughout the state for Vermont's participation. One critical step in this process is a mid-July meeting of a state task force on student achievement. No official decision will be made until after this meeting.

Missouri Gov. Carnahan and his chief state school officer are prepared for Missouri to participate in the 4th grade reading test. They have just completed the development of an 8th grade state math test (at a cost of \$6 million) and do not believe they can move forward with a separate national math test as well. We are working with Carnahan to determine the timing of an announcement.

Delaware Gov. Carper is heavily leaning toward participating in the national testing initiative; he is planning on working to secure the support of his state board of education and legislature. We will work with Carper to determine how soon he will be prepared to make a public commitment.

Utah Gov. Leavitt has expressed tentative interest in having Utah's participate, pending consultation with his chief state school officer. We are following up directly and working with Romer to secure Leavitt's support.

Wyoming Gov. Berringer participated in a conference call with Secretary Riley, Mike Cohen, and a number of governors identified above. He expressed considerable interest, and we are now following up with him.

Oregon Gov. Kitzhaber and State Superintendent Norma Paulus are both interested in Oregon's participation, with the most active leadership coming from Norma. Norma has indicated they would be willing to make a public announcement after the legislature adjourns in late June.



Michael Cohen
06/13/97 10:48:08 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP
cc: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP
Subject: Quick revision to POTUS memo

Since I sent you the last version of the memo, I've talked with the commissioner in New Jersey. We are still in the running. Below is a substitute paragraph for NJ to put into the memo.

New Jersey Preliminary discussions with the New Jersey Commissioner of Education (a gubernatorial appointee) indicated clear interest from him and Gov. Whitman. However, within the past few weeks the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that the state's approach to complying with a court order to provide more equitable funding is itself unconstitutional. As a result of this decision, the attention of state education officials is now heavily focused on school finance issues. However, we are trying to determine if an announcement from New Jersey will be feasible in the near future.

New Jersey Preliminary discussions with the New Jersey Commissioner of Education (a gubernatorial appointee) indicated clear interest from him and Gov. Whitman. However, within the past few weeks the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that the state's approach to complying with a court order to provide more equitable funding is itself unconstitutional. We believe that this decision complicates our efforts with New Jersey in the short run, partly because the attention of state education officials is now so heavily focused on school finance issues. There may be further complications, because Whitman's now-defunct school finance proposal was built directly around the state's academic standards; school funding was to be based on the cost of preparing students to reach the standards. Because the court ~~through~~ out this approach, the state must determine if its system of standards and tests will remain stable or itself undergo some revision. This will affect the timing of bringing New Jersey on board. We will shortly resume our discussions to determine if an announcement from New Jersey will be feasible in the near future. ew

New York Commissioner Rick Mills is working to secure New York State's participation in your testing initiative. He has discussed this privately and publicly with the Board of Regents, has solicited input from education and business leaders in the state, and has discussed it with Gov. Pataki. There is no specific timetable for the Regents to take this issue up, but Rick is pushing to have the Regents consider this as soon as possible.

Wisconsin Gov. Thompson has moved from initial opposition (he wrote an op-ed piece in the New York Times in February) to tentative interest, in part due to several conversations with Secretary Riley which resolved some misunderstandings he had. We believe Thompson is interested in having Wisconsin participate in the tests, although a running conflict with his chief state school officer may make it difficult for Thompson to provide the necessary in-state leadership. We are reaching out to the chief state school officer in an attempt to resolve this problem.

New Hampshire Gov. Shaheen is inclined to support participation in the test, as is Commissioner of Education Betty Twomey. They are both currently preoccupied with enacting Shaheen's kindergarten initiative. Once the legislative session is over, we will approach Gov. Shaheen again.

Maine Both the Commissioner of Education and Gov. King have expressed preliminary interest in participating in the test. We are working with them to address concerns they have raised regarding how best to integrate the tests into their own standards and tests, and to explain participation in national standards and tests to the public after so much effort has gone into developing the state's own standards.

Next Steps: Secretary Riley and Mike Cohen have met with Govs. Bob Miller, Romer, Hunt, Thompson and Leavitt and discussed the possibility of a bipartisan effort between now and the NGA meeting, to reach out to and gain the support of as many governors as possible. *The Democratic governors are prepared to help; we are trying to determine over the next several days which of the Republican governors will also help. We will be sure to include Gov. Engler in this effort. We will then proceed to work with the governors to secure the commitment of as many states as possible to participate in the testing initiative.*

- **Democratic States:** We are making a special effort to reach out to the seven Democratic governor not already listed above (Knowles, Chiles, Zell Miller, O'Bannon, Nelson, and Locke) We have made preliminary contact with these states, and encountered difficulties with a few. In Georgia, responsibility for deciding state testing policy lies with the chief state school officer, an elected Republican who is openly hostile to every form of federal involvement in education. Gov. O'Bannon has indicated that the timing is not right in Indiana for him to pursue participation in national tests. And Gov. Locke's office has sent Secretary Riley a letter indicating that Washington will not participate in the testing initiative, because they believe it will disrupt their own efforts. We have asked Gov. Locke to reconsider that position, and to indicate so in writing.
- **Republican States:** We believe that this bipartisan approach will be the most effective way to reach a number of large-state Republican governors, including Govs. Rowland, Edgar, Carlson, and Ridge. We think it may be the only way we have of reaching out to Gov. Bush.
- **Unlikely States:** Finally, there are a number of states we think we are not likely to sign up unless there is a change of leadership or political climate. These include: Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Virginia.

We have also been exploring the possibility of securing an NGA endorsement for the testing initiative. However, this may prove impossible, due to the opposition of Gov. Voinovich, the incoming chair. Despite the close overlap between his agenda for education reform and yours, in recent years Gov. Voinovich has generally opposed federal involvement in education (it took nearly a year to persuade him to support Ohio's participation in Goals 2000). In addition, there are two civil rights issues pending between the Department of Education and Ohio. While Secretary Riley and the Education Department are trying to resolve these issues in a cooperative fashion, they complicate our ability to reach out directly to the governor. We have also asked for the assistance of the Ohio Business Roundtable and CEO's such as John Pepper and Joe Gorman. However, we do not anticipate that this will produce quick results.

LOCAL PARTICIPATION

We are also trying to sign up a number of urban school districts, where the need for reform is greatest. Cities that sign up will also be asked to share with us and with their communities the steps they will take to help prepare students for these tests (in most cases, this will create opportunities for cities to highlight, enlist new support for, and integrate efforts already underway). This will underscore that your testing initiative is about preparing students to meet higher standards, not simply testing.

We have identified a pool of approximately 20 large city school districts where we believe there will be strong interest in participating by the local superintendent and by mayors where they are involved heavily in the local schools. The Council of Great City Schools has made preliminary contact with each of the superintendents; at least half a dozen expressed strong interest (Boston, Broward County FL, Cincinnati, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and San Francisco) , and we will follow up with all 20 superintendents over the next few weeks. We anticipate being ready to announce the cities that will participate by mid-July.

We are working to assemble a package of assistance we can provide to cities that commit to participate in the testing program. For example, the Education Department and the National Science Foundation are identifying technical assistance resources, models of effective practices, and discretionary funds that can be directed toward assisting the cities. Enterprise Zones may have funds that can be directed to assist participating schools. The Office of Bilingual Education is planning an outreach effort to involve the Hispanic community in support of reading and math, and this effort will be targeted to participating cities. America Reads can help mobilize reading tutors, and NSF will help identify local partners from the mathematics and scientific communities.

IV. CONGRESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

As you know, Rep. Goodling has backed away from his earlier support for the testing initiative and has now signaled his opposition, including an attempt to add a rider to the supplemental appropriations bill that would have prohibited the Education Department from spending FY 97 funds on test development. If Goodling continues his opposition, we are likely to face a battle over continued funding for test development as part of the FY 1998 appropriations bill. If we can regain Mr. Goodling's support, we think it will be possible to assemble a bipartisan coalition that will ensure continued funding and the legislative authority we will need in the future.

At your request, Secretary Riley, along with Mike Cohen, met with Goodling this week, to explore his concerns. While no specific progress was made, and no specific commitments were made, Goodling's opposition softened over the course of the discussion. We will keep working on him.

Beyond Goodling and selected others on the Education and Economic Opportunities Committee, your national test initiative has received little attention from most members of Congress. Consequently, it is difficult to gauge the level of support we will receive if there is an appropriations battle.

We have launched a concerted effort to firm up Democratic support. First, the Education Department has begun to provide Members with information on the testing initiative on a targeted basis, starting with members from participating states. Second, we are identifying members who will actively promote the test, starting with the House. Reps. George Miller, Dale Kildee and Tim Roemer are especially strong supporters, and virtually every Democrat on the House Education and Economic Opportunities Committee starting with Clay can be counted on to support the testing initiative. In addition, Rep. Etheridge is preparing to introduce a sense of the House resolution in support of this initiative, and will work to secure broad support for it. On the Republican side, Reps. Frank Riggs and Mike Castle have been quite supportive. However, we suspect neither will want to split from Goodling on this issue if he remains firmly opposed.

V. CONSTITUENCY GROUP SUPPORT

We are working with the business groups that have endorsed your testing initiative (Business Roundtable, National Alliance of Business, Chamber of Commerce, as well as high-tech CEO's) to encourage governors to participate in the testing initiative, especially in the states we have targeted as most promising.

We are working with the AFT, which also supports the testing initiative, to encourage local union affiliates to support local district participation in the testing initiative. And we are working with the Council of Chief State School Officers to identify states that may be prepared to announce participation in the testing initiative.

We are working with other education groups to secure endorsements for the testing initiative. The American Association of School Administrators and the National School Boards Association are likely sources of support. The national organizations representing elementary and secondary principals are also potential sources of support, though they historically have not supported the idea of national tests. We will be meeting shortly with Bob Chase to discuss how best to enlist NEA's support; as you know, NEA has also not traditionally been a strong supporter of national or state testing initiatives.

Several constituency groups have expressed serious concerns about the testing initiative, especially civil rights groups. In general, their concerns focus on issues of: (1) test bias and test fairness; (2) concern that the tests will be used for high stakes purposes; and (3) the difficulties Hispanic and other students with limited

English proficiency will face on the 4th grade reading test if it is given only in English. Both White House and Education Department staff have met frequently with representatives of the civil rights groups, these discussions have not yet resulted in greater support for this initiative.

The national PTA organization has long been opposed to national tests. However, we believe strongly that parents ought to be among the strongest supporters of these tests. We have met with the incoming PTA president to discuss ways of building support for the testing initiative, and will be working with that organization and its leadership to generate parental enthusiasm for these tests.

VI. BUILDING SUPPORT AND SUSTAINING MOMENTUM

The idea of national standards and tests is quite popular -- with the public, parents, business leaders and, increasingly, with educators. But translating broad public support into specific state and local actions to participate in the tests is a challenge, since state and local officials have every incentive to continue existing testing programs rather than add a new one which will demonstrate low achievement levels in most education systems. Therefore, in addition to the strategies described above to "retail" the tests on a state-by-state, city-by-city, group-by-group approach, we need ways to focus broad public attention on the push for tests, and spur parents to apply public pressure at the state and local level. So far, the national press has shown little interest in the standards movement. It doesn't cost a lot of money, it doesn't involve a protracted legislative battle in Washington, it has bipartisan support, and it does not have an imminent deadline or obvious villain.

To maintain a high public profile on this issue, we will have to generate a sense of urgency and drama on our own -- and we should look for every chance we can to bypass the national press and appeal directly to parents, as you have done in your state legislative speeches and the West Virginia town meeting. We are looking at a variety of ways to raise the profile of this issue:

Creating a fight over the tests: At present there is no defining conflict over the tests in a way that would capture the interest of the press and the public, and raise the issue above the narrow confines of the policy community. This could change whether we want it to or not, especially if Goodling aggressively pursues his effort to use the appropriations process as a vehicle for stopping the development of the test. If so, we would have a clear battle over the test, and one in which you could fight for basic skills, hard work and accountability.

We could also take the initiative to create a more visible fight over this initiative in the Congress in order to create a vehicle for mobilizing support for the tests. For example, we could transmit legislation requesting specific authority to develop and implement the tests, to provide financial incentives for states to participate in the tests, or even to condition receipt of federal education funds on use of the tests.

Such a battle has some advantages -- it would attract press attention and *could* solidify Democratic support. But it has clear downsides as well. ***Such a battle will create uncertainty in all states about the nature of the initiative they are being asked to sign on to, the likelihood of the tests will be developed at all. In addition, a partisan, polarizing battle will make a number of Republican states harder to sign up.***

Pushing the policy envelope on standards: We can also attract public attention and debate on standards and testing by promoting new initiatives tied directly or indirectly to the tests. We have been considering several possibilities:

- ▶ **Proposing the development of a national high school test**, either by creating individual-level versions of NAEP, or by asking an independent group such as the College Board to work with the higher education and business community to develop high school assessments
- ▶ **Promoting "no social-promotion" policies** through steps such as developing guidelines for school districts. Chicago attracted enormous attention this week for requiring a quarter of its 8th graders to attend summer school before receiving their middle school diploma.
- ▶ **More vigorously promoting state and local intervention in failing schools**, through steps such as providing guidelines for state and local interventions or issuing new and tougher regulations for the interventions already required under Title I; providing new incentives for state and local efforts to close down failing schools by enabling them to use charter schools and community schools funds together, in order to reopen failed schools as charter schools that also stay open extended hours so that students can get tutoring and other forms of extra help.
- ▶ **Provide new financial aid for college to 6th graders in high poverty schools tied to meeting performance requirements.** As an alternative or complement to the proposal under consideration to provide a Pell Grant guarantee for elementary school graduates in high poverty schools, we could propose "education trust funds" for the same students, and provide \$500 - \$1,000 deposits tied to specific accomplishments, including graduating from elementary school, graduating from middle school, doing well on the national 8th grade math test, and graduating from high school. We could design this approach to fit with proposals for KidSave accounts currently under consideration. This approach would send a very powerful message to students -- and to the country -- that academic achievement counts and will be rewarded. We could also provide bonuses to school and/or teachers with high pass rates for Title I students.
- ▶ **Take a first step to linking college financial aid to meeting high standards, for future cohorts of students.** *In the Administration's proposed reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, which will be transmitted sometime this Summer, we could begin the process of making academic standards count by*

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requiring high school students to meet them as a condition of receiving financial aid for postsecondary education, such as Pell Grants or Direct Loans. This would have to be seen as a long term process, with the first step to design and then establish a system of standards and assessments, and subsequent steps, to be phased in over a period of years, to tie financial aid to meeting the standards. There will be a variety of difficult issues to consider in the design of such an initiative, including the provision of second chances for those who don't meet standards and provisions for older individuals seeking postsecondary education.

A steady pace of events that focus on standards and tests: We are planning a number of events over the next few months to highlight your testing initiative for the public. We are also working with the Education Department on a major Back-to-Basics, Back-to-School initiative, which will provide several opportunities starting in August and continuing through the early Fall for you to highlight the testing initiative and your entire Call to Action.

Specific plans for June and July include:

- ▶ **The Vice President's Family Conference** The conference this year will focus on families and learning. During the conference, the Vice President will announce a fund being established by John Doerr (who organized the high tech CEO's who endorsed your testing initiative) to support reforms in schools participating in the testing initiative. This will also be an opportunity to announce Tennessee's participation in the tests.
- ▶ **America Reads Event in Boston, or a state sign-up event in the region.** You will be in Boston on June 30. We are working to develop an event either to highlight your America Reads initiative at an appropriate Read Boston site, or to travel to a nearby Northeastern state (the best prospects are Maine or New Hampshire) to announce its participation in the testing initiative. Either event could also focus on Work Study tutors, since new work-study funds will be available July 1 (Gov. King is a strong proponent of literacy programs; his youngest son went through Reading Recovery).
- ▶ **Launch of Education Excellence Partnership/ Major League Baseball Public Service Announcements on Standards** The Education Excellence Partnership (the Business Roundtable, the National Alliance of Business, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Governors' Association and the U.S. Department of Education) have joined with Major League Baseball to produce a series of PSA's that use baseball players to reinforce the value of raising academic standards. The fulfillment materials for the campaign encourage parents to find out if their school will be participating in the national testing program. The PSA's will be launched in early- to mid-July at an event at

Camden Yards prior to an Orioles game. This is tentatively scheduled for July 2.

- ▶ **Multi-State Sign-Up Event** We anticipate holding an event in mid-July at the White House, to announce a group of 4-8 states pledging to participate in the testing initiative. *(Alternatively, this could be our news for the NGA meeting)*
- ▶ **Multi-City Sign-Up Event** We anticipate holding an event in mid July at the White House, to announce a group of 6-12 cities pledging to participate in the testing initiative.
- ▶ **Announcement of Interagency Math Strategy.** Prior to your speech to the Michigan legislature, you directed the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation to work with the DPC and OSTP to develop an interagency strategy to help States and local communities prepare students for the 8th grade math test. In line with this week's 4th grade TIMSS findings, the strategy will have a particular focus on improving middle school math. The strategy will address issues such as improving the knowledge and skills of teachers, expanding access to high quality instructional materials, maximizing the benefits of technology, and motivating students to take math seriously; the strategy will include recommendations for involving the math and science community in these efforts. Announcement of this strategy could be combined with the state or city sign-up events.
- ▶ **NGA Meeting** You will be speaking to the NGA Annual Meeting on July 28. This will be an important opportunity to make case for the testing initiative directly to governors.
- ▶ **NCSL Meeting** NCSL's Annual Meeting will be held in early August. This would be an opportunity to continue the crusade you brought to three state legislatures in the Spring to legislators from every state. While few state legislatures are in a position to effectively initiate state involvement in your testing initiative, most are in a position to block it if they choose. Making the case for the testing initiative could be an important step toward clearing the path for state participation.

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America Goes Back to School 1997

The Department of Education is planning the third annual America Goes Back to School effort, designed to encourage parents, community leaders, employers, employees and other community members to become more actively involved in improving education in their communities. The effort spans August through October; last year, more than 2,000 local events occurred during this time period.

This year's effort is led by a broad-based steering committee chaired by Secretary

Riley and co-chaired by Tipper Gore, former Governor Tom Kean, Michael Keaton, and Lois-Jean White, President of the National PTA. The campaign this year will be focused on your Call to Action. We are working with the Education Department and the Steering Committee to organize a series of local sign-up events, in which local schools and communities sign-up to respond to your call to action, including the testing initiative.

The Steering Committee is meeting this week to develop more specific plans and activities. After that, we will develop a more specific set of events appropriate for your participation. In addition, we expect that we will be asking for the entire Cabinet and others throughout the Administration to participate in high-profile Back-to-School events with a back-to-basics theme.

At present, we are considering the following as possible Back-to-School events for your involvement:

Nationally Televised Town Meeting on Education You have been invited to participate in a town hall meeting on education sponsored by PBS, which would be the culmination of a week-long series of shows devoted to education. The series will include one or two shows devoted specifically to standards. The town meeting would pose questions to you sent in by viewers in response to the first four shows. We can also organize one or more town meetings patterned after the one you recently did in Clarksburg West Virginia. You might also consider going back on the state legislative circuit.

Fifty-State Business Leaders Event We are working to organize a day in the fall when, in each state, high-tech and other independent CEO's who are supporting your education efforts join with CEO's involved in long-standing business/education partnerships through organizations such as BRT, NAB, and the Chamber of Commerce, to support a common agenda of higher academic standards, employer efforts to review academic performance in hiring decisions, and a call for state participation in the national tests.

Together, these steps should keep us on track to our interim goal of signing up 20 or more states this year, with another 20 to follow in 1998. At some point, we may need your help in making direct retail appeal to individual governors. But the most important challenge is to keep finding ways to sell the public on the value of national tests and the urgency of raising standards.

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