

**PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON
EXCELLENCE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**TRANSITION TASK FORCE
APRIL 30, 2002 // WASHINGTON, DC**

**DOUG HUNTT
OPENING REMARKS**

GOOD MORNING. I AM DOUG HUNTT. I CHAIR THE TRANSITION TASK FORCE OF THE PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON EXCELLENCE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION. I WELCOME YOU TO TODAY’S HEARING.

THE FOCUS OF OUR HEARING IS HOW YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND OTHER ADULT ACTIVITIES.

OBVIOUSLY, TRANSITION IS A VERY IMPORTANT TOPIC. IT GOES TO THE HEART OF PRESIDENT BUSH’S “NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND” EDUCATION AGENDA. WE MUST ENSURE THAT ALL CHILDREN – INCLUDING THOSE WITH DISABILITIES – ARE EDUCATED AND PREPARED TO BECOME PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS.

PRESIDENT BUSH ESTABLISHED THE COMMISSION LAST OCTOBER TO COLLECT INFORMATION AND TO STUDY ISSUES RELATED TO FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. THE COMMISSION'S GOAL IS TO RECOMMEND POLICIES TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

OUR WORK IS *NOT* DESIGNED TO REPLACE THE CONGRESSIONAL REAUTHORIZATION OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT. RATHER, THE REPORT WE PRODUCE AND ISSUE THIS SUMMER WILL NOT ONLY PROVIDE VITAL INPUT INTO THE REAUTHORIZATION PROCESS, BUT ALSO INTO THE NATIONAL DEBATE ON HOW BEST TO EDUCATE ALL CHILDREN.

THE COMMISSION'S EXAMINATION OF TRANSITION ISSUES IS PART OF ITS EXPANSIVE REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION. OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS, THE COMMISSION AND ITS TASK FORCES HAVE HELD HEARINGS IN HOUSTON, DENVER, DES MOINES, LOS ANGELES, CORAL GABLES, NEW YORK CITY,

NASHVILLE, SAN DIEGO, AND WASHINGTON. THE COMMISSION HAS LOOKED AT ISSUES SUCH AS TEACHER QUALITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, FUNDING, COST EFFECTIVENESS, PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT, IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES, RESEARCH, PAPERWORK, LITIGATION, AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS.

AS PART OF TODAY’S HEARING, THE COMMISSION WILL HEAR FROM EXPERTS AND EDUCATORS ON A VARIETY OF TRANSITION ISSUES.

OUR WITNESSES WILL DISCUSS THE CURRENT STATUS OF SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE PLANNING TO TRANSITION AND WHAT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED TO BETTER PREPARE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AS THEY MOVE FROM SECONDARY TO POSTSECONDARY AND ADULT ACTIVITIES. EACH EXPERT WILL PRESENT HIS OR HER FINDINGS, PERSPECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION CONCERNING TRANSITION SERVICES.

WE WILL ALSO HAVE A PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD DEDICATED TO TRANSITION ISSUES. WHAT WE LEARN FROM ALL OUR SPEAKERS TODAY WILL PROVIDE US WITH THE VALUABLE INPUT WE NEED TO DEVELOP OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THE COMMISSION. LET'S BEGIN TODAY'S HEARING.

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