

THE



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Spellings: Reward Teachers Who Get Results

“We must treat our teachers like the professionals they are,” U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings told more than 300 educators and others attending the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference on April 27 in Washington, D.C. “And that means we must reward teachers who make real progress closing the achievement gap in the most challenging classrooms.”

Citing studies that show the importance of strong teachers to a child’s educational achievement, Spellings explained, “That’s why *No Child Left Behind* requires that, by 2006, every classroom must have a highly qualified teacher. The president’s new budget includes almost \$3 billion to help states meet this goal.”

President Bush has also proposed the new \$500 million Teacher Incentive Fund, Spellings said. The fund would provide states with money to reward teachers who accept jobs in high-need schools and achieve real results.

Under the program, states would have the flexibility to design their own systems for rewarding teachers. A portion of the Teacher Incentive Fund would be reserved to help states and districts develop new performance-based teacher compensation systems that reward results rather than credentials and seniority.

In addition, Spellings noted that the nation’s public schools will need to hire an estimated two million new teachers over the next decade. “The president’s budget includes almost \$100 million to help schools meet this demand, including \$40 million for the new Adjunct Teacher Corps Initiative,” she explained. The initiative would help recruit professionals, particularly in the fields of math and science, into teaching.

For the full text of the secretary’s remarks, visit www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2005/04/04272005.html.

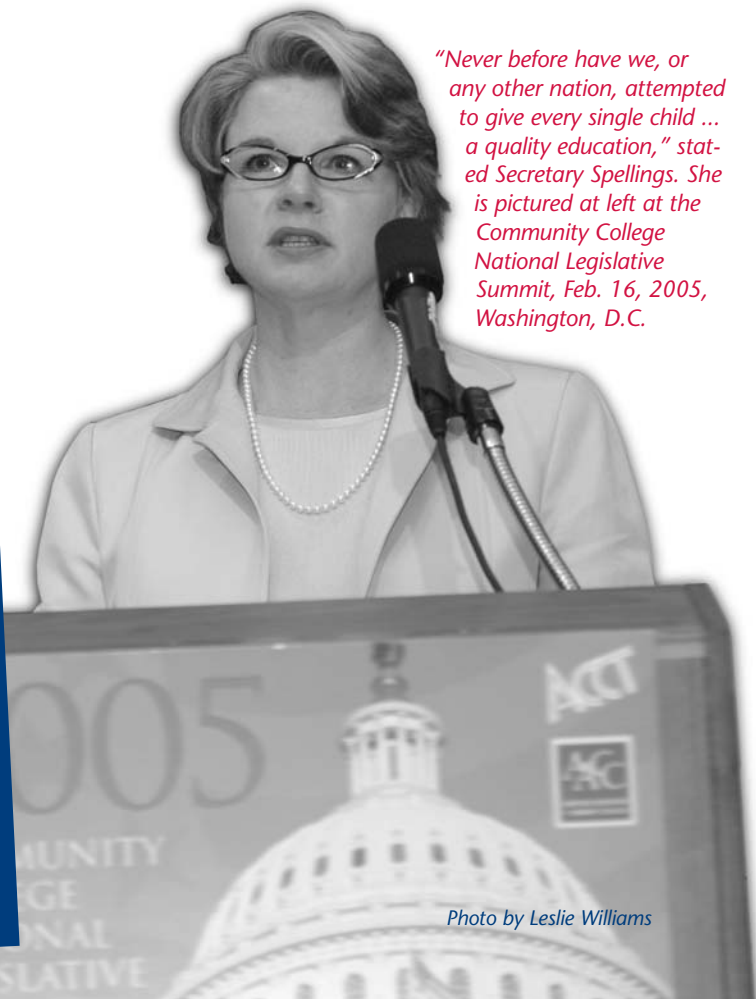
“Growing Pains” Won’t Sidetrack No Child Left Behind

The following is an excerpt from an editorial by U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings that appeared in the May 2, 2005, edition of USA Today. Reprinted with permission.

Three years ago, the stars aligned: The American people decided it was finally time to reform our public schools. Parents demanded accountability, taxpayers demanded value, businesses needed better-educated employees and children stuck in poor-performing schools needed change. The message was heard at the highest levels of government. And the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) law was born.

As any mom can tell you, a surprising amount of progress is made in the first three years of life: from learning to crawl all the way to learning a language. Like a child, this law has accomplished a lot in three short years. All 50 states now have accountability plans in place that have laid the foundation for continuous school improvement and student achievement from year to year. The groundwork is set—and rapid progress is being made.

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“Never before have we, or any other nation, attempted to give every single child ... a quality education,” stated Secretary Spellings. She is pictured at left at the Community College National Legislative Summit, Feb. 16, 2005, Washington, D.C.

Photo by Leslie Williams



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Some states, however, are experiencing growing pains. A few states in particular are testing boundaries, trying to see how far they can stray from the law without getting grounded and losing federal funds. Utah's Legislature has passed a law that may conflict with *NCLB*: It wants to continue to receive federal dollars while not following the law—specifically leaving some children behind. But this action could put more than \$75 million in federal funds at risk. And Connecticut is seeking to file a lawsuit so it can continue to receive federal dollars for annual student testing without—you guessed it—testing all students every year.

A must: 'Real annual progress'

I have pledged to take a commonsense approach to the implementation of *No Child Left Behind*, allowing flexibility where possible and necessary. But this

approach is conditioned on one overriding factor: ensuring that real annual progress is made toward getting every single child to read and do math at grade level. The only way to achieve that goal is to adhere to the law's bright lines of annual testing and breakdown of data by student subgroups. Without that information, parents will not know how their children are doing, and educators won't know what to adjust to best help their students. Quite simply, what gets measured, gets done.

But some don't want to reform. For example, the National Education Association (NEA) has tossed its lawyers into the ring, suing the Department of Education under the ironic premise that *No Child Left Behind* is forcing school districts to spend too much on education. After lobbying for nearly two years to find at least one state willing to sue, the NEA has finally settled on a handful of school districts.

It is interesting to note that six of the nine districts in the suit successfully met their accountability targets under the law—goals that are set by the state, not the federal government—and the ninth district in the suit apparently received no rating whatsoever. In other words, students have already benefited and their education is improving, thanks to the law. In addition, almost every district in the lawsuit has seen its federal funds increase significantly since *NCLB* was passed—one as high as 300 percent.

Despite claims to the contrary by special-interest groups that will never be satisfied with the amount spent on public education, the *No Child Left Behind* law is not financially burdensome. Most of the objec-

tions to the law have focused on the testing provisions, but most states already have the testing infrastructure in place. The bipartisan passage of the law was accompanied by a significant increase in federal spending, 40 percent during the past three years, to cover these and other costs.

As a nation, we spend more than \$530 billion for K–12 education, which is more than the gross domestic product of Russia. Of that amount, less than 1 percent is devoted to student assessment.

In spite of a few state politicians who insist it can't be done, teachers and students in classrooms across America say it can. This is a case of show and tell: Student achievement is up under *NCLB*, and the nation's stubborn achievement gap is finally starting to close. Our children and teachers are meeting the high expectations we've set.

Here we go again

It is worth noting that this has happened before—some states have chosen not to take part in federal education programs. For example, New Mexico opted out of the *Education of the Handicapped Act* (now called the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*) for six years. As a result, the state forfeited about \$23 million in federal funds for its disabled children. And five states initially chose not to participate in 1994's education reform act, called *Goals 2000*.

Is national school reform easy? No—nobody ever said it would be. Never before have we, or any other nation, attempted to give every single child—regardless of his or her background, skin color or neighborhood—a quality education.

The contrary actions of a couple of states and one teachers lobby do not constitute a "grassroots rebellion." The bottom line is that most respected, national education organizations are working with us to continue the unprecedented national progress that *No Child Left Behind* has begun. I will continue to partner with them and look forward to the day when all groups can put politics aside and focus on helping society's most vulnerable children receive the education that a nation such as ours is certainly capable of providing.

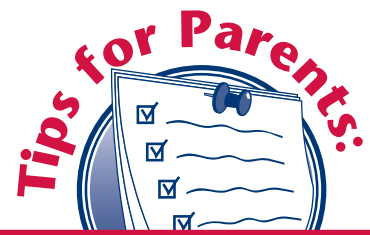
Spellings at the White House Easter Egg Roll, March 28, 2005.

Photo by Leslie Williams



“... I would bring used books from home that my children outgrew and would leave them in the waiting room. One day, one of my colleagues said, ‘I’m not going to bring them anymore because the children are stealing them.’ I said, ‘Well, maybe that’s good. They loved the books so much they’re taking them home.’ I made a joke that we should start giving [the books] to them, and that’s what we are doing.”

Barry Zuckerman, chairman of the department of pediatrics at Boston Medical Center and cofounder of the Reach Out and Read Program—which has grown to 2,300 sites nationwide since 1989—in his remarks during the April 19, 2005, broadcast of *Education News Parents Can Use*.



Readers interested in the public school choice and supplemental educational services provisions of *No Child Left Behind* are invited to sign up for a Listserv to receive periodic information on these subjects. To subscribe to this free service from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Innovation and Improvement, visit www.ed.gov/nclb/choice/help/signupform.html.

Teacher of the Year

Close-Up:



On April 20, at a ceremony in the White House’s Rose Garden, President George W. Bush, along with First Lady Laura Bush, announced the 2005 National and State Teachers of the Year.

“... Passion is a powerful word,” remarked President Bush, “and that’s why the teachers are here with us—because they have instilled a passion for somebody to go to class every day to learn. When young people become good students with big dreams, they become better citizens. Our country is better off as a result of our teachers instilling passion and hope.”

For his outstanding efforts to constantly engage his students, Jason Kamras was named 2005 National Teacher of the Year, marking the first time in the contest’s 53-year history that an educator from the District of Columbia received the top honor. Kamras, a mathematics teacher at John Philip Sousa Middle School for the past eight years, has worked diligently to raise math achievement at the school.

Kamras (photographed below with President Bush) successfully lobbied his principal to double the instructional time allotted for the subject and redesigned the math curriculum to emphasize the increasing use of technology. The curricular changes, piloted with his students in 2002, helped the percentage of students scoring below the basic level to fall from approximately 80 percent to 40 percent in one year. Additionally, his students have met the school district’s adequate yearly progress target for math every year since the *No Child Left Behind Act* was implemented.

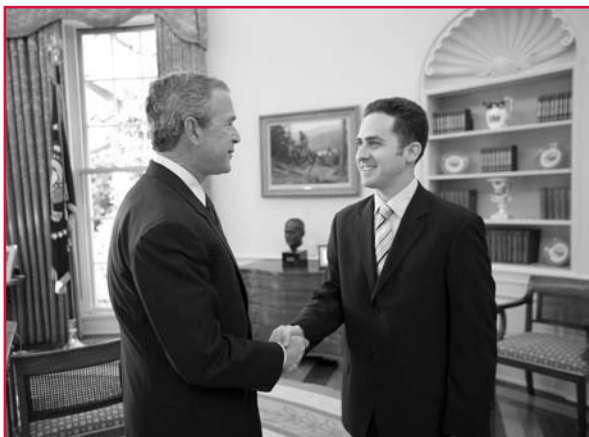
Kamras also co-founded in 1999 the EXPOSE program, in which Sousa students learn to use digital cameras as well as DVD-creation software to create autobiographical photo-essays, which have been displayed in public exhibits. Over the past four years, Kamras has received about \$65,000 in grants from various organizations for this program.

“I am privileged to be a member of a profession that is filled with so many extraordinary individuals,” said Kamras at the ceremony. “My colleagues work tirelessly every day, doing wonderful and challenging work. They lend their passion, creativity, intellect and love to children of all ages, and they do so almost always without recognition. There is simply no group of people that I would be prouder to represent.”

The National Teacher of the Year, a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers, is the oldest and most prestigious award program for teachers. A committee of representatives from 14 national education organizations chooses the National Teacher of the Year from among the State Teachers of the Year, which include those representing American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as the Department of Defense Education Activity and the District of Columbia.

For more information about the program, visit www.ccsso.org or call 202-336-7000.

White House photo by Eric Draper



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**PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS**



**“When it comes to
the education of our
children ... failure is
not an option.”**

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH



NEW RESOURCE! **Web Site Provides One-Stop Shop for School Data**

The National Education Data Partnership recently unveiled a new Web site that provides “consumer reports” on the quality of educational services for the nation’s public school system. **Schoolmatters.com** compiles data on schools, districts and states across the country from state departments of education, the National Center for Education Statistics, the U.S. Census Bureau and testing vendors.

- *Student proficiency results*, by subgroups and grades, on statewide reading and math tests, and on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP);
- *Student demographic information*, including socioeconomic, special education and English-language-learner populations;
- *Financial data*, including spending allocations, revenue streams, staff compensation and long-term debt;
- *Community demographic data*, such as income levels, housing values and adult education levels; and
- *Standard & Poor’s unique ratios* that examine academic and financial performance in demographic context.

The “Compare States” feature juxtaposes some of the above measures that are comparable across states, including college entrance examination performances. In addition, Schoolmatters.com provides parents, educators, and district and state leaders with testimonies of how the site has benefited various education stakeholders; offers suggestions for navigation; and gives detailed explanations of popular terms such as “adequate yearly progress” and “benchmarking.”

The National Education Data Partnership is a collaboration among the Council of Chief State School Officers, Standard & Poor’s School Evaluation Services, Achieve, Inc., and the CELT Corporation. It is funded by The Broad Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.