

**PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION
ON
EXCELLENCE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
RESEARCH TASK FORCE**

APRIL 18, 2002 // NASHVILLE, TN

**NANCY GRASMICK
OPENING REMARKS**

GOOD MORNING. I AM NANCY GRASMICK, MARYLAND’S SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION. I CHAIR THE RESEARCH TASK FORCE OF THE PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON EXCELLENCE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION. I WELCOME YOU TO OUR MEETING TODAY. THE FOCUS OF OUR HEARING IS RESEARCH IN SPECIAL EDUCATION. BEFORE WE GET STARTED, I WOULD LIKE TO BRIEFLY PROVIDE YOU WITH SOME BACKGROUND ON THE MISSION AND ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION.

PRESIDENT BUSH ESTABLISHED THIS 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 SO THAT NO CHILD WILL BE LEFT BEHIND – ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES.

THE COMMISSION'S WORK IS *NOT* DESIGNED TO REPLACE THE UPCOMING 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.

OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS, THE COMMISSION AND ITS TASK FORCES HAVE HELD HEARINGS IN HOUSTON, DENVER, DES MOINES, LOS ANGELES, CORAL GABLES AND NEW YORK CITY. THE COMMISSION HAS LOOKED AT ISSUES SUCH AS TEACHER QUALITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, FUNDING, COST EFFECTIVENESS, PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT, AND IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES. TODAY WE TURN OUR ATTENTION TO RESEARCH.

SOUND RESEARCH SHOULD BE THE FOUNDATION FOR ALL TEACHING AND

LEARNING – ESPECIALLY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION. THROUGH EFFECTIVE RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATION, CLASSROOM EDUCATORS AND PARENTS STAND A BETTER CHANCE OF BRINGING SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES INTO THE CLASSROOM FOR THE BENEFIT OF CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES. THIS ADMINISTRATION STRONGLY FAVORS THE USE OF SCIENTIFICALLY BASED RESEARCH IN EDUCATION, AND THAT INCLUDES SPECIAL EDUCATION, TOO.

TODAY WE WILL HEAR PRESENTATIONS FROM EXPERTS DETAILING HOW QUALITY RESEARCH CAN PROVIDE US WITH IMPORTANT INFORMATION SO THAT EDUCATORS CAN ...

- BETTER IDENTIFY CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES.
- ASSESS THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS OF EACH SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT TO ENSURE THAT NO CHILD IS LEFT BEHIND.
- CREATE SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT LIFE FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES.
- EVALUATE INFANTS, TODDLERS AND CHILDREN FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES.

- CREATE THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS.
- “BRIDGE THE GAP” BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE.
- CREATE ALTERNATIVE MODELS AND PROGRAMS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION.
- HELP STATES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS DETERMINE WHETHER SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE WORKING. IN DOING SO, RESEARCH CREATES AND SUPPORTS VITAL ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS FOR FEDERAL AND LOCAL EDUCATION DOLLARS.

TODAY, WE WILL HEAR FROM A VARIETY OF EXPERTS WHO CAN PROVIDE US WITH SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO CREATE THE BEST POSSIBLE RESEARCH AGENDA FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION.

WE ARE ALSO EAGER TO HEAR FROM YOU. WE NEED THE SUGGESTIONS OF EDUCATORS AND PARENTS TO ACCOMPLISH OUR WORK. WE WILL HAVE A PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THIS AFTERNOON TO ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO PROVIDE US WITH INPUT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THE COMMISSION. WE WILL NOW BEGIN TODAY'S HEARING.

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