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# THE ACHIEVER

March 1, 2003 • Vol. 2, No. 4

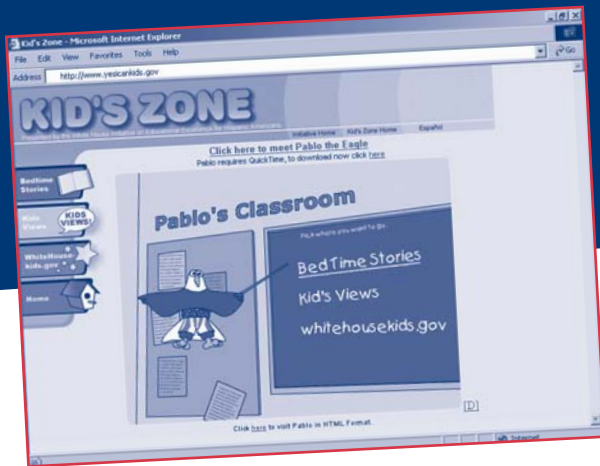
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**FIRST CLASS**



"When it comes to  
the education of our  
children . . . failure is  
not an option."

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH



## **JUST FOR KIDS!** Hispanic Web Site Provides Resources for Learning

**Y**esICanKids.gov—a Web Site created by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and its partners—is a colorful, interactive online connection for children. Also available in Spanish, the site links young users to a list of popular stories they can read, and the White House's own Web Site for children—

a showcase of artwork sent in by students from across the country, all under the direction of the initiative's own mascot, Pablo the Eagle.

Its parent site, YesICan.gov, is a one-stop center for bilingual information designed to help parents and their children navigate the education system from early childhood through college. It includes Myths and Facts about College Costs, 20 Questions to Ask Your Guidance Counselor, and Things You Need to Know About Paying for College. The initiative worked with collegeboard.com and Tormont Publishing to provide the content.

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans was established by President Bush to strengthen the nation's capacity to provide high-quality education, and increase opportunities for Hispanic Americans to participate in and benefit from federal education programs. For more information, visit [www.YesICan.gov](http://www.YesICan.gov) or call 202-401-1411.



# THE ACHIEVER

www.NoChildLeftBehind.gov • March 1, 2003 • Vol. 2, No. 4

## Bush's Budget Makes Education Top Domestic Priority

Despite the many priorities competing for tax dollars—protecting our homeland, fighting terrorism and recovering from recession—President Bush's budget request for 2004 provides \$53.1 billion for the U.S. Department of Education, an increase of 5.6 percent (or \$2.8 billion) above his 2003 spending plan and the largest dollar increase of any domestic agency.

The highlights of the 2004 budget request focus on:

**Reading First**—As another means to implement the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001, the president is asking for \$1.05 billion for Reading First State Grants and \$100 million for Early Reading First, two programs that support proven methods for improving the reading skills of young children.

**Teacher recruitment**—The spending plan also would increase the incentive for highly qualified math, science and special education teachers to work in low-income communities by raising the amount of loans that may be forgiven for such service from \$5,000 to \$17,500.

**Postsecondary education**—The 2004 request would support more than \$62 billion in grant, loan and work-study assistance to an estimated 9.2 million postsecondary students and their families. The cornerstone of this assistance is a \$12.7 billion request for the Pell Grant program, which would provide up to \$4,000 in grant aid to more than 4.9 million students.

**More choices for parents**—The president's request includes, among other items, \$75 million for a new Choice Incentive Fund to provide low-income parents with expanded opportunities for transferring their children to high-performing public, private or charter schools; and \$226 million in refundable tax credits for parents transferring a child from a public school identified for improvement (parents would receive a credit of 50 percent of the first \$5,000 in tuition, fees and transportation costs incurred).

At a press conference rolling out the 2004 budget request, Secretary Rod Paige also announced that all states have met the critical January 31 deadline for submitting their accountability plans to the department.

For additional 2004 budget highlights, please visit [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov).

### Raising the Limit

#### Inglewood Elementary School Advances Limited English Proficient Students in Reading

Being poor and an English language learner is not an excuse for—or a predictor of—failure, in Principal Norma Baker's view.

Her school, W. Claude Hudnall Elementary in Inglewood, Calif., where 96 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, is proving that disadvantaged minority children can learn to read—and read well.

Although almost half of Hudnall's 546 students are native Spanish speakers, a remarkable 67 percent of those who are limited English proficient scored at or above average in reading on last year's Stanford 9 exam, substantially higher than county (21 percent) and state (20 percent) results.

"We don't look at the fact that this child is an English language learner because he or she is held

*continued on page 2*

*"It's clear to me that this is a school that expects high standards. Students here are surrounded by a community that cares deeply about their education," said Secretary Paige, during his visit to Hudnall Elementary. Above, Paige listens to second-grader Edith Martinez read to him.*

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### Secretary of Education

Rod Paige

### Assistant Secretary

Laurie M. Rich

### Senior Director

John McGrath

### Executive Editor

Sarah Pfeifer

### Editor

Nicole Ashby

### Designer

Jason Salas Design

### Questions and comments

Editor  
The Achiever  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Room 5E217  
Washington, DC 20202  
Fax: 202-205-0676  
NoChildLeftBehind@ed.gov

### Subscriptions and address changes

ED Pubs  
P.O. Box 1398  
Jessup, MD 20794  
1-877-4ED-PUBS (433-7827)  
edpubs@inet.ed.gov

### Information on ED programs, resources and events

Information Resource Center  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20202  
1-800-USA-LEARN (872-5327)  
usa\_learn@ed.gov  
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to the same standards as an English-only speaking child," said Baker, who attained the rank of administrator in 1999 after working as the school's reading coach. "And we're not saying, 'This child is in a low socio-economic stratum so therefore he can only do this much.' That's never a thought. At Hudnall, we have only readers and non-readers. So it's our objective to get that non-reader to become a reader."

High expectations along with a structured reading program, intense teacher training, frequent testing and a commitment to parent and community involvement comprise the formula for Hudnall's success, said Baker, who stresses the "structured" label of her instructional program.

According to Baker, what makes a good reader is the use of a "systematic approach" that teaches children to learn how to read through phonemic awareness and phonics while building their skills in fluency, comprehension, writing and spelling.

By the end of the 1997-98 school year, when its research-based curriculum was fully implemented, only 49 percent of second- through fifth-graders assessed on the Stanford 9 met the basic reading level. Today, nearly three quarters (73 percent) of the students have tested at the 50th percentile and higher nationally.

Baker said that this is largely due to the curriculum being aligned with state content standards, which teachers track daily for her review as to whether they have been taught.

Baker, who considers herself "more of an instructional leader," believes her hands-on management style is the type of leadership needed to keep the school on course. When test scores arrive, she says she wants to know immediately which children are scoring below basic and far below basic, so she can work

collaboratively with her staff to keep those students from lagging behind.

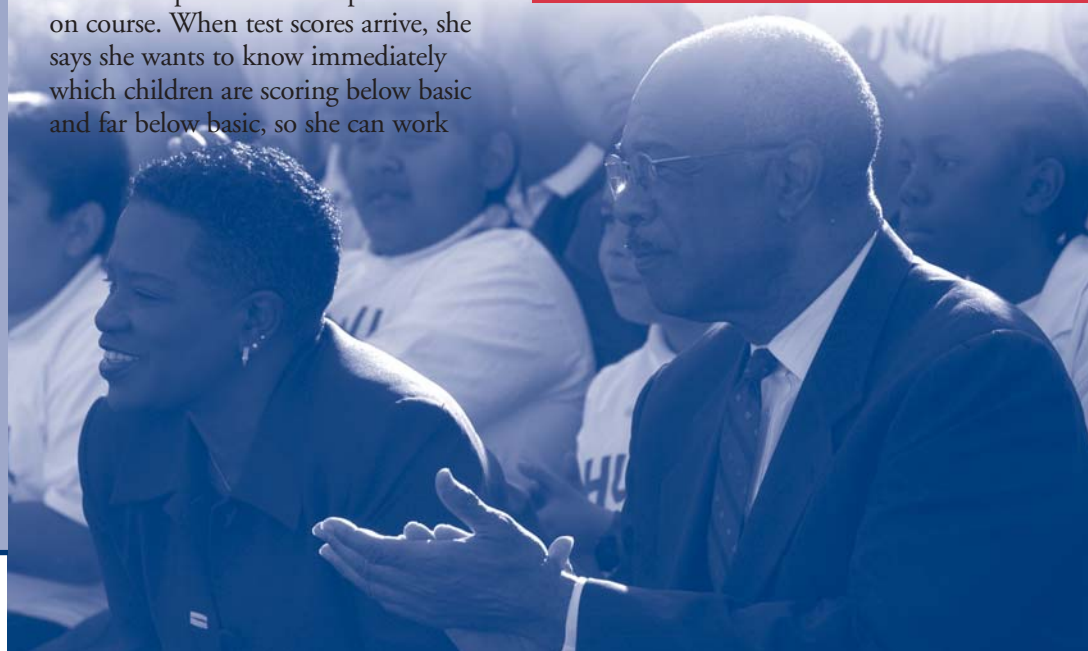
Hudnall's principal and teachers have developed several intervention strategies that benefit not only the school's bilingual students but also its second largest ethnic group of children, African Americans. The school has after-school tutoring programs, which Baker said draw 75 percent teacher participation. And to counter the achievement gap that widens when students move from third to fourth grade, Hudnall provides a special after-school program in both reading and math for fourth-grade students, whom Baker teaches herself.

Ensuring that these English literacy skills are practiced at home, the school also offers English classes in the morning and afternoon for its native Spanish-speaking parents so they can assist their children at home.

For Baker everything has a purpose in the matrix of student learning, from the after-school programs down to the classroom decorations. "Don't just put up bulletin boards that have no meaning just because it's cute," she said. "It has to correlate with what you're teaching."

For more information about Hudnall Elementary, visit <http://inglewood.k12.ca.us/iusd/schools/claude/claude.htm> or call 310-680-5420.

*"At Hudnall, we have only readers and non-readers. So it's our objective to get that non-reader to become a reader," said Baker, who is pictured below with Paige at an awards ceremony designating 20 students from limited English proficient to fluent English status.*



“Admissions quotas and double standards are not the answer. Fixing the problem at the front end, where it can do the most good, is the answer. And that’s the president’s purpose behind the *No Child Left Behind* law: to fundamentally change the way we educate our children in America—from a system that does a good job educating some children, to a system that does a good job educating all children, from all walks of life.”

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, in a Jan. 24 announcement of the Education Department’s plans to highlight race-neutral alternatives in higher education.



**March 18**  
**8:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m. E.T.**  
*Education News Parents Can Use* monthly broadcast will focus on teacher quality. Visit [www.ed.gov/offices/OIIA/television](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OIIA/television) or call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

**Close-Up:**



## No Child Left Behind Limited English Proficient Students

The Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students program, under Title III of the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001, assists school districts in teaching English to limited English proficient students and in helping these students meet the same challenging state standards required of all students.

The number of limited English proficient children attending American schools has grown dramatically, primarily because of immigration, with state education agencies reporting that limited English enrollment rose from 2.1 million in the 1990–91 academic year to more than 3.7 million in 1999–00. Although their numbers are increasing, their educational attainment remains low. A congressionally mandated study found that these students receive lower grades, are judged by their teachers to have lower academic abilities, and score below their classmates on standardized tests of reading and math.

The Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students program reflects the principles of the historic *No Child Left Behind* Act—

### Focus on what works:

- School districts are to certify that all teachers in a language instruction education program for limited English proficient students are fluent in English and any other language used in the program, including having written and oral communication skills.
- Language instruction curricula used to teach limited English proficient children are to be tied to scientifically based research.

### Increase accountability for student performance:

- States must establish standards and benchmarks for raising the level of English proficiency and meeting challenging state academic standards for limited English proficient students that are aligned with state standards.
- Annual achievement objectives for limited English proficient students must relate to gains in English proficiency and meet challenging state academic standards that are aligned with Title I achievement standards.
- Both Title I and Title III require annual state assessment in reading/language arts, mathematics, and eventually, science. States must include all LEP students in their assessment system.
- States must hold subgrantees accountable for making adequate yearly progress, as detailed in Title I, and for meeting annual achievement objectives.

### Empower parents:

- Parents must be notified by the local education agency about why their child needs a specialized language instruction program. Parents have the right to choose among instructional programs if more than one type of program is offered.

## Did You Know?

In English, rather than preserving one-letter-to-one-sound correspondences, we preserve the spelling, even if that means a particular letter spells several different sounds. For example, the last letter pronounced “k” in the written word “electric” represents quite different sounds in the words “electricity” and “electrician,” which makes the sound-symbol relationships more difficult to understand and poses a special challenge to those learning the language.

Source: National Research Council, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns and Griffin, editors).