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FIRST CLASS



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

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

NEW PROGRAM! **News You Can Use**



Signifying the start of a historic, new era in education with the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the U.S. Department of Education is airing a new television series to help parents understand the new law and all the important changes that it will bring. *Education News Parents Can Use* takes the place of the department's *Satellite Town Meeting* and will keep many of its predecessor's signature features—the live format, viewer call-ins and lively discussion.

The new program, however, features brief segments, including one-on-one interviews, "how-to" demonstrations, more video and graphics, and brief conversations with parents, educators, community, business and religious leaders, and education experts.

Education News will broadcast on the third Tuesday of each month during the school year. A schedule of topics for the entire 2002–03 school year is available at <http://registerevent.ed.gov>. In addition, live and archived webcasts of each show will be available at www.connectlive.com/events/edtownmeetings.

To find out how you can watch *Education News* in your community, e-mail Education.TV@ed.gov, or call 1-800-USA-LEARN (872-5327).



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New ED Offices to Support Parent Involvement

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige last month announced the formation of a new office at the U.S. Department of Education that will support the crucial role of parents in improving their children's schools.

The Office of Innovation and Improvement is intended to be an entrepreneurial arm of the department, making strategic investments in promising practices and widely disseminating their results. It will also lead the movement for greater parental options and information in education, and will free other offices to focus on their core missions.

The Office of Innovation and Improvement will consolidate programs related to parental options and education, including those for charter schools, magnet schools, public school choice, non-public education and family educational rights.

It will also coordinate with the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education to implement the public school choice and supplemental services provisions of the new *No Child Left Behind Act*.

Paige also announced the formation of the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, which will include, among other initiatives, activities related to building strong character and citizenship, and will take the leadership role in the Education Department's homeland security efforts.

For more information, visit www.ed.gov/PressReleases/09-2002/09172002.html or call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

"It bears emphasizing, that what we're offering parents is choice—an option, not an obligation. What they do with it is up to them and them alone," said Secretary Paige.

'The Freedom to Choose'

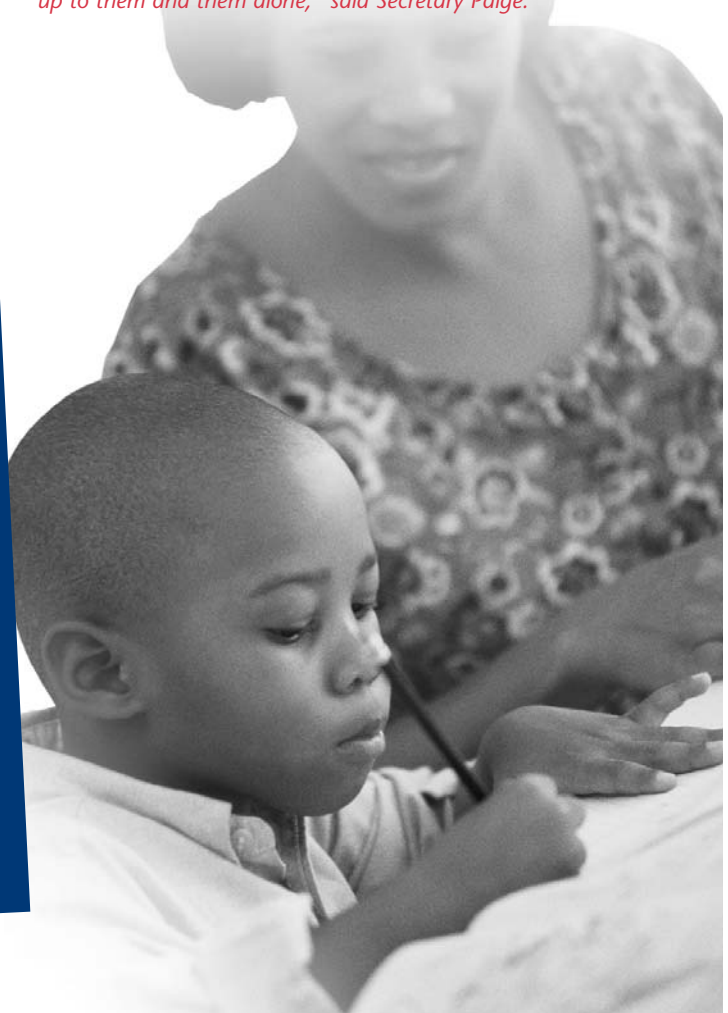
In his annual "Back-to-School" address delivered in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 9, Secretary Paige explained the improvements in education that are underway thanks to the No Child Left Behind Act, including changes affecting special education, reading instruction, teacher quality and school safety. Paige also addressed the need for increasing parents' options in the remarks excerpted below.

"... Even while building an international coalition to fight terror, the President was building a bipartisan congressional coalition to improve our schools.

The result was the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*—a remarkable consensus by both parties in both houses of Congress that *now* is the time for fundamental change—*now* is the time to break with the past and educate all of our children—no matter the color of their skin or the accent of their speech.

The *No Child Left Behind Act* gave us the framework to reform American education. The framework was built upon the great principles of accountability and results; local control

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U.S. Department of Education

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and flexibility; increased choices for parents; quality teachers in every classroom; and teaching methods based upon solid research.

And President Bush made sure we got enough resources to get the job done. He provided historic levels of funding. We have the largest education budget for disadvantaged children in U.S. history. And we have nearly \$1 billion in funding this year for the President's

Reading First initiatives. These are remarkable levels of funding to ensure that every child in America's schools learns the one skill on which all others depend: Reading.

Our new education reforms make the best use of every tax dollar spent on education by funding programs that follow good research, and by insisting on accountability and results. In that way, taxpayers know what they're getting for their money, and parents know if their children are learning. ...

The new education reforms expand parents' opportunities for choice. If children are not learning,

and schools do not improve, then moms and dads have new options.

They can choose one-on-one tutoring, or after-school help, or they can enroll their children in better public schools.

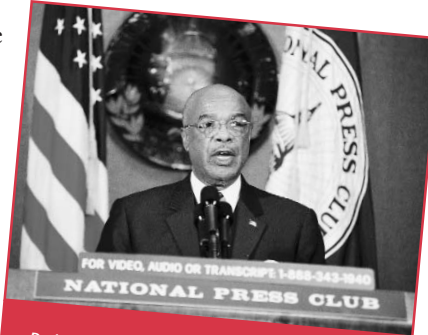
Many local parents in Cleveland chose vouchers. And the U.S. Supreme Court gave them—and families nationwide—a great victory by upholding their right to make that choice.

It bears emphasizing, that what we're offering parents is choice—an *option*, not an *obligation*. What they do with it is up to them and them alone. Parents

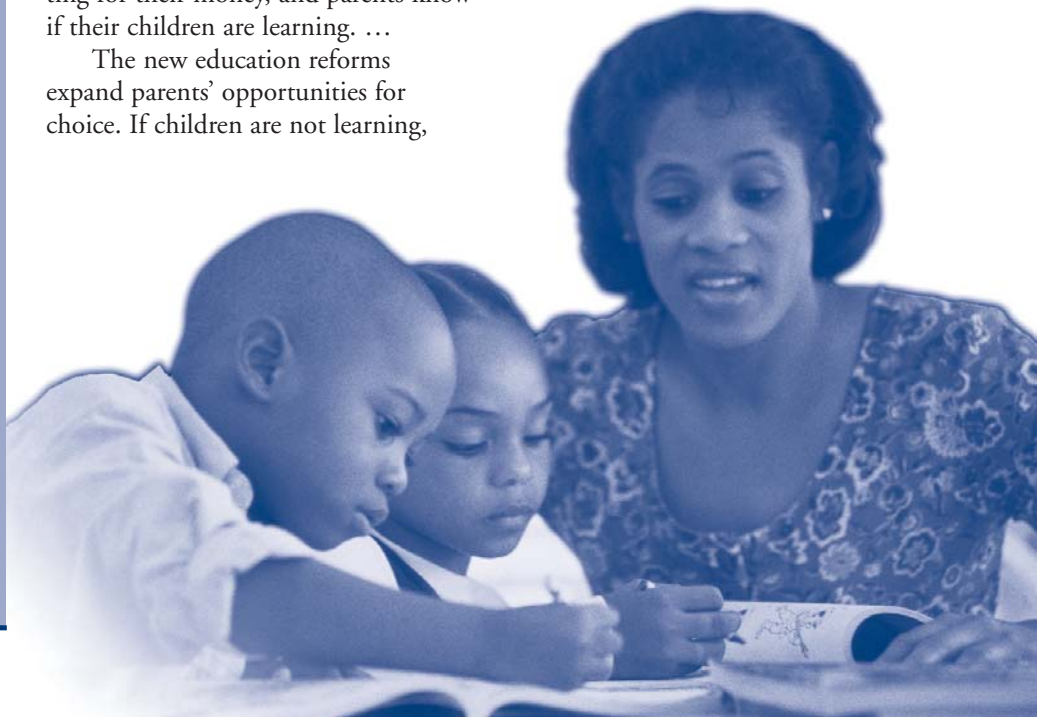
of children in low-performing schools, for example, may choose to transfer. Or they may choose to stay put, and work to make the school better.

It's their decision. What's important is that they have the freedom to choose. ..."

For the webcast or transcript of the Secretary's speech, visit www.ed.gov/Speeches/09-2002/09092002.html.



Paige at the National Press Club. He reported that the Education Department has the largest budget for disadvantaged children in U.S. history. Nearly \$1 billion in funding has been earmarked for the President's Reading First initiatives.



“By having a standardized test ... those parents who truly want to move their students to a better school, or want to examine the abilities of the school where their children attend, now have a tool to do so. It makes life easier for them and it has something they can take to the administration to use as a reason to move their students.”

Prince George's County, Md., parent Joseph Prudan, a guest panelist on the Sept. 17 broadcast of the Department of Education's new television program, Education News Parents Can Use.

Tips for Parents

Take advantage of parent-teacher conferences during the school year. Think of some questions and concerns you may have and write them down before your meeting. Keep track of your child's schoolwork to help you with your questions. You may ask:

- Is my child performing at grade level?
- What are my child's strengths and weaknesses in major subjects—reading, math, history and science?
- How much time should my child spend on homework?
- Are my child's assignments completed accurately and on time?
- Does my child have special learning needs? Are there special classes my child should be in?
- Do you keep a folder of my child's work? If yes, could you review it with me?

Close-Up:



No Child Left Behind Reading First

Far too many young people are struggling through school without having mastered the most basic skills in read-

ing. On the 2000 National Assessment for Educational Progress, more than 85 percent of all fourth-graders in high-poverty schools scored below the “proficient” reading level.

As part of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, President Bush launched a new comprehensive effort called *Reading First*, a five-year, \$5 billion state grant program. Reading First will provide assistance to state and local education agencies to apply scientifically based reading research—and the proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with this research—to improve reading instruction for K–3 students and to ensure that all children learn to read well by the end of third grade.

Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New Mexico and Utah have all received Reading First grants. State education agencies from all 50 U.S. states and territories are eligible to submit applications to receive a Reading First grant. Applications will undergo a thorough review by an expert panel, which have training, expertise and experience in the following areas:

- Training teachers how to teach reading using methods based on scientific research;
- Developing research-based curricula for effective reading instruction;
- Developing research assessments;
- Teaching reading in the early grades; and
- Promoting research based reading programs to policymakers on the local, state and national levels.

For more information, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/readingfirst.

Title I Appropriations



Source: House Education & the Workforce Committee