

THE

# ACHIEVER



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## Paige Resigns, Bush Appoints New Education Secretary

**A**t a White House ceremony on Nov. 17, President Bush nominated Margaret Spellings for the nation's top leadership position in education. If confirmed by the Senate, she would succeed current U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, who submitted his letter of resignation to President Bush on Nov 5. Although the resignation is effective Jan. 20, at the end of the president's first term, Paige has agreed to continue to serve until his successor is confirmed.

"The issue of education is close to my heart," said President Bush. "And on this vital issue, there is no one I trust more than Margaret Spellings." For the last four years, Spellings served as assistant to the president for domestic policy on issues ranging from education and health care to job train-

ing. Prior to her White House appointment, Spellings worked for six years as chief education adviser for then-Governor Bush, and was responsible for such projects as the Texas Reading Initiative and the Student Success Initiative to eliminate social promotion.

Accepting the nomination, Spellings said to President Bush, "More than 10 years ago, you gave me the opportunity to work with you on improving Texas schools. You said then that the government should do a few things and do them well, and that one of those few things is educating all children. ... Our schools must keep their promise to all of our children. And I pledge to do all I can to ensure that no child is left behind."

If confirmed, Spellings would serve as America's eighth secretary of education.

### Looking Back

**F**our years ago, Rod Paige accepted the position as U.S. secretary of education following an illustrious career in education as a teacher, football coach, college dean and superintendent of one of the largest school systems in the country. Last month, Paige resigned from his Cabinet post. In his resignation letter to President Bush, a copy of which appears below, Secretary Paige recapped the strides education has made during his tenure.

Dear Mr. President:

This letter comes to advise you of my desire to resign from the position of U.S. secretary of education effective at the end of your first presidential term. It comes also to express my deepest appreciation to you for the opportunity to serve you and the nation in such an important position.

I am very proud of the many accomplishments achieved by the talented and committed men and women of the U.S. Department of Education. Because of your strong and clear leadership, our work has been a labor of love. Of the many important accomplishments achieved by the Department during this short and intense four-year period, I believe the following are illustrative:

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*"The stubborn, and I believe unacceptable, academic achievement gap between minority students and their white peers...has begun to close," wrote Secretary Paige in listing the accomplishments achieved during his tenure.*

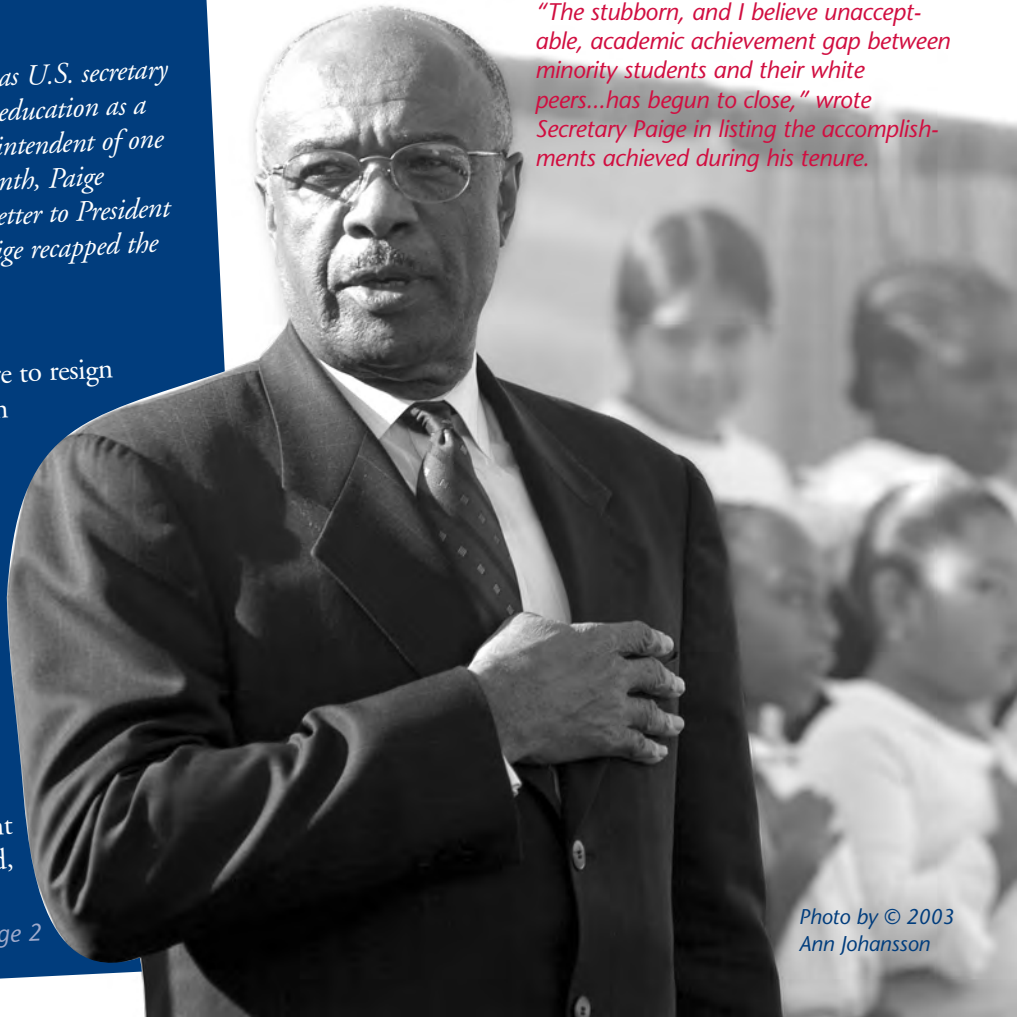


Photo by © 2003 Ann Johansson



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Department of Education (ED). Rod Paige, Secretary.

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—The Department's under secretary has advised us that by the middle of this month the Department of Education can expect official notification of its third consecutive clean annual audit by an outside "big six" audit firm. Prior to 2001, the Department had achieved only one clean audit in its history, and that audit was one conducted by the Department's Office of the Inspector General.

—As evidenced by the President's Management Agenda Scorecard, the Department's management and accountability improvements have been stellar. Consequently, the Department is now much sounder organizationally than before 2001.

—The *No Child Left Behind Act's*

(NCLB) reform initiatives have been well launched. Despite highly financed and organized opposition, a penchant for waiver requests, and other types of delays, all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have approved accountability plans, and all states are working vigorously to gain and maintain compliance with NCLB law and regulations. This is a sharp contrast to state compliance with the *Improving America's Schools Act* (IASA) of 1994. When you assumed the presidency in January 2001, only 11 states were in compliance with the IASA's accountability requirements.

—The Department has held the line on *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) compliance issues, and has, for the first time in the Department's history, exercised its authority to withhold administrative funds from states for clear failure to comply with the substance of the ESEA.

—The national education culture is changing. All across the nation, the educational dialogue is now about results and less about inputs.

—The Department's Web site has been transformed from a confusing, unattractive site to one of the best in the federal government. In September 2004, the Center for Public Policy at Brown University ranked the ED Web site third overall among 60 federal government sites and first among

Cabinet agencies.

—The Student Financial Aid National Cohort Default Rate is at an historic low.

—In 2001, the Department's research office, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), was reformed and reauthorized as the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), which sharpens the Department's research focus to better inform instructional practices.

—The stubborn, and I believe unacceptable, academic achievement gap between minority students and their white peers, essentially stagnant throughout the period between 1992 and 2000, has begun to close.

—Hispanic and African American test scores, especially in the big urban centers of our nation, are beginning to rise. The percentage of African American and Hispanic fourth-graders who know their reading and math basics increased substantially more between 2000 and 2003 than in the previous eight years combined.

Although the aforementioned accomplishments represent but a sample of the achievements of the talented and committed members of your U.S. Department of Education, I believe they represent a solid foundation from which to launch new and invigorated leadership for the Department. I believe that this is an appropriate time for me to return to Texas where I can devote attention to a personal project, which I began planning prior to assuming my present responsibilities.

Although my desire is to leave the office at the completion of your first presidential term, if my successor has not been confirmed by that time, I would be pleased to continue until such time as my successor is confirmed, if you so wish.

Sincerely,

*Rod Paige*  
Rod Paige

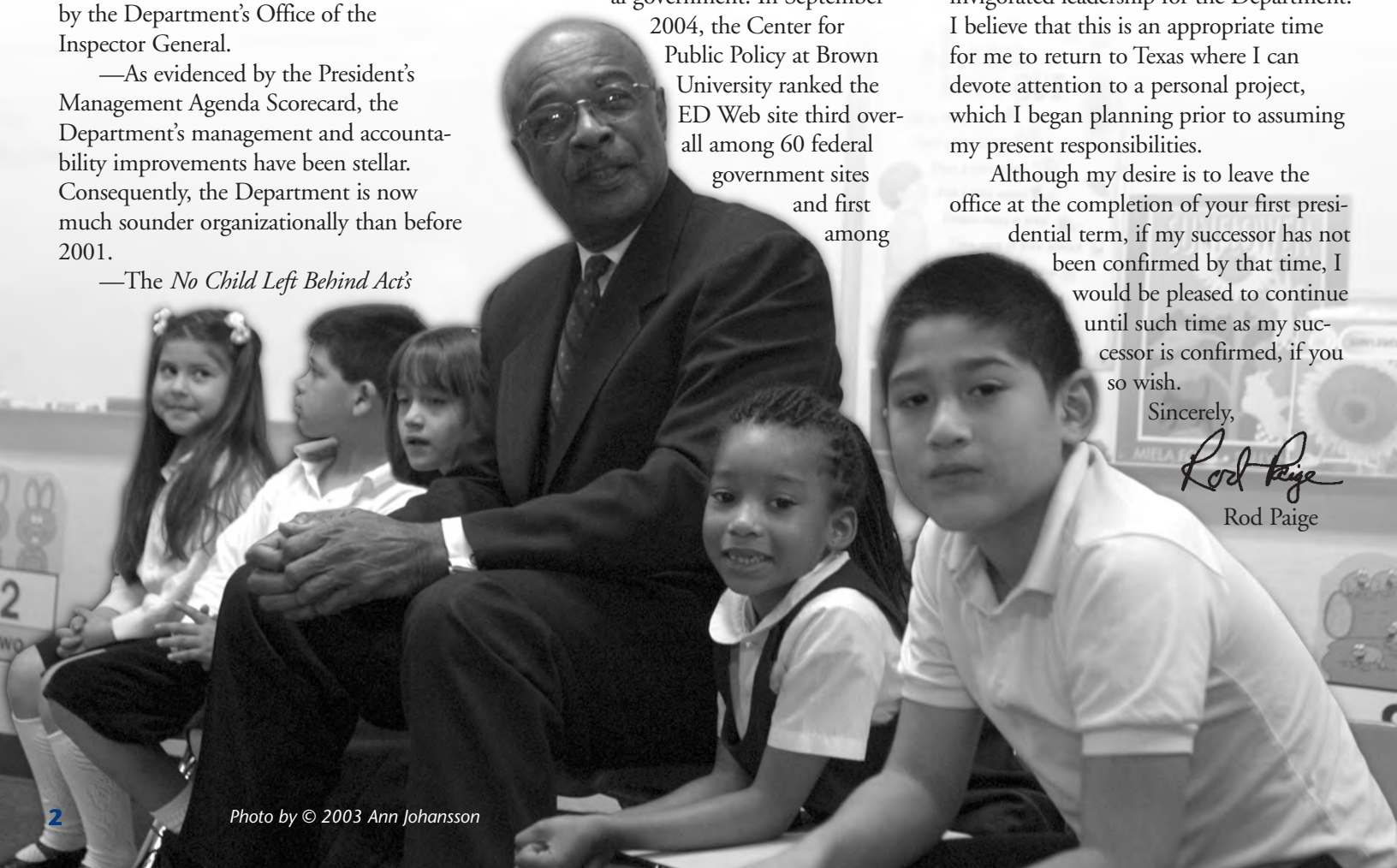
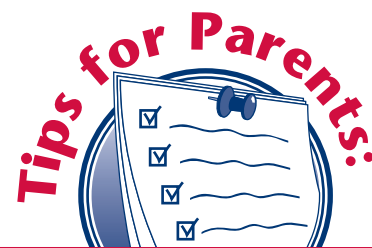


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“Rod Paige has been at the forefront of fundamentally reforming and improving our nation’s public education system so that no child is left behind in America. His passion for taking on the status quo and fighting for reform underscores his strong commitment to our country’s young people and his desire to give them a brighter future. Throughout his life, Rod has overcome great obstacles and achieved great success. He represents the best of America.”

President Bush, in a statement thanking Rod Paige for his four-year service as U.S. secretary of education, Nov. 15, 2004.



Parents can help children develop confidence in their math abilities by helping them to understand the following concepts:

- 1. Problems can be solved in different ways.**  
Learning math is more than finding the correct answer; it’s also a process of solving problems and applying what you’ve learned to new problems.
- 2. Wrong answers can sometimes be useful.**  
Ask your child to explain how she solved a math problem. Her explanation might help you to discover if she needs help with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, or with the concepts involved in solving the problem.
- 3. Don’t be afraid to take risks.**  
Give your child time to explore different approaches to solving a difficult problem. As he works, encourage him to talk about what he is thinking. This will help him to strengthen math skills and to become an independent thinker and problem solver.
- 4. Being able to do mental math is important.**  
Doing math “in your head” (mental math) is a valuable skill that comes in handy as we make quick calculations of costs in stores, restaurants or gas stations. Let your child know that by using mental math, her math skills will become stronger.
- 5. It’s sometimes OK to use a calculator to solve mathematics problems.**  
Let your child know that to use calculators correctly and efficiently, she will need a strong grounding in math operations; otherwise, how will she know whether the answer she sees displayed is reasonable?

Source: Adapted from *Helping Your Child Learn Mathematics*, U.S. Department of Education, 2004.

Close-Up:



## No Child Left Behind What Works Clearinghouse

The U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences created the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) in 2002 to provide educators, policy-makers, researchers and the public with a central and credible source of scientific evidence about what works in education, thus facilitating decisions about which strategies for learning to implement in schools. Through a series of databases and reports, the WWC provides ongoing reviews of the effectiveness of educational interventions—programs, products, practices and policies—designed to improve student outcomes.

To ensure the quality of these efforts, a technical advisory group composed of research experts helps to establish the standards for reviewing research, outlines the methodological aspects of the evidence reviews, and provides guidance to WWC contractors. The clearinghouse is administered through a contract to a joint venture of the American Institutes for Research and the Campbell Collaboration.

Recently, the WWC reviewed research available on mathematics programs for grades six through nine. It concluded in a report released last month that only a small number of the nation’s middle school mathematics curricula have scientific evidence of effectiveness. A review of more than 800 studies of math programs identified 10 evaluations that met evidence standards developed for the Department by the WWC. These evaluations covered five math curricula, two of which showed significant improvement in student learning. The WWC is keeping its review of mathematics programs open to consider new studies, for which it will provide updates reflecting later reviews.

Additionally, clearinghouse officials stressed that the absence of scientific evidence of effectiveness does not mean that a curriculum is ineffective; rather, it indicates the lack of documentation for how well the curriculum works. Please note that the Department does not endorse curricula.

Future clearinghouse reviews to be released in the coming months will focus on beginning reading and character education. For more information about the What Works Clearinghouse, visit <http://whatworks.ed.gov/>.

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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 GUIDE!** Creating Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification

**T**raditional teacher preparation programs cannot by themselves meet the growing demand for K-12 educators. As a result, states and communities are creating alternative pathways into the teaching profession to attract talented candidates—from the mid-career professional to the middle-aged retiree—who are already well-versed in the content they want to teach. These alternative programs are designed to prepare individuals who have at least a college degree to become teachers and obtain a state teaching license. The provisions on “highly qualified teachers” in the

*No Child Left Behind Act* require every teacher to have a bachelor’s degree, subject-matter competency and full state certification. How alternative teacher certification programs are expanding the education workforce is the focus of a new publication from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Innovation and Improvement. **Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification**, which features six case studies, outlines four action areas that emphasize the elements of a promising alternative program: (1) recruit widely, select carefully; (2) design a coherent, flexible program; (3) provide extensive support; and (4) engage in continuous reflection and improvement. Also included are samples of an interview form and a position description.

The six programs profiled in the guide are: the Alternative Certification Program, Hillsborough County, Fla.; the Educator Certification Program, Region XIII, Austin, Texas; the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program, Northwest Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) and Metro RESA, Ga.; the New York City Teaching Fellows program, New York, N.Y.; the Northeastern California Partnership for Special Education, Chico, Calif.; and the Wichita Area Transition to Teaching program, Wichita, Kan.

For a free copy of *Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification*, while supplies last, contact the Department’s publication center at 1-877-4ED-PUBS with identification number EU0115P. Or visit [www.ed.gov/admins/tchrqual/recruit/altroutes/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/admins/tchrqual/recruit/altroutes/index.html).