The Department of Education's Mission

To ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation

Preface

The American people consistently rank education as a top national priority; they recognize that education is crucial to helping people reach their full potential, secure jobs, and become responsible, productive citizens. The role of education has expanded beyond providing all children with a challenging academic experience to teaching children to avoid illegal drugs and alcohol, preparing a skilled workforce for our growing technology sector, and offering safe and supervised before- and after-school enrichment programs for children. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is continually striving to improve its education programs. Two key pieces of Federal legislation have been reauthorized—the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) under the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, and the National Education Research Act of 2000, which replaces the Educational Research, Development, Dissemination, and Improvement Act of 1994. Reauthorizing the ESEA allows the Department to continue its commitment to improve teaching and learning, primarily for economically disadvantaged students. The National Education Research Act of 2000 will allow ED to provide leadership in the conduct and support of scientific inquiry into educational processes and to provide an opportunity for improving education for students at risk of educational failure.

President Clinton's fiscal year 2001 budget request seeks to strengthen the Nation's ability to deal with these growing responsibilities. Built on previous successes, this budget would allow ED to continue to help states and communities move academic standards for all students into the classroom; create partnerships between schools, families, businesses, and community organizations; and greatly expand financial support for college students and their families. Initiatives and programs in fiscal year 2001 would help to renovate, modernize, and promote safe schools as well as reduce class size for all schools including high schools. Goals include providing professional development to superintendents, principals, prospective principals, and teachers, as well as ensuring that there are well-trained professionals for young children in preschool and daycare. Promoting healthy students, strengthening support for community services, implementing standards-based accountability, and further investigating ways to provide information on student achievement are additional goals. Still other programs would help to provide access to technical assistance, encourage entry into the teacher profession, and continue to make college more affordable.

ED has established four main goals:

- Help all children reach challenging academic standards so they are prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment.
- Build a solid foundation for learning for all children.
- Ensure access to postsecondary education and lifelong learning.
- Make ED a high-performance organization by focusing on results, service quality, and customer satisfaction.

This report and its companion, *Volume II: Individual Programs,* is the Department of Education's 1999 Performance Report and 2001 Plan submitted under the requirements of Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). It reflects ED's progress toward these four goals and provides a concrete description of the strategies it is employing to achieve them. These documents are both a report to Congress and the Nation and a guide to help ED continuously improve its performance.

Facts about the Department of Education
Fiscal Year 2000

❖ **Staffing.** The U.S. Department of Education is the smallest Federal department, with fewer than 5,000 staff members. Our full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing ceiling in fiscal year 2000 is 4,717.

❖ **Programs.** Approximately 174 programs are being administered in fiscal year 2000.

❖ **Federal Funding.** We will provide or oversee an estimated $84 billion in aid to education in fiscal year 2000. This figure includes program funding, new student loans, and Federal administration. It breaks down as follows:

  ➢ *Total appropriations for program activities:* $42 billion. These funds are used for grants to state and local agencies, higher education institutions, and other entities; contracts; and subsidies for direct and guaranteed student loans.
  ➢ *New student loans:* $41.5 billion. Postsecondary education student loans are made by ED, guaranteed by ED, and issued by banks and other financial institutions, or, under the Perkins loan program, issued by postsecondary educational institutions.
  ➢ *Federal administration:* $1.1 billion for ED salaries and expenses total 2.5 percent of the fiscal year 2000 Department mandatory and discretionary appropriations for aid to education.
  ➢ *Total loans:* ED is responsible for a portfolio of outstanding student loans that will total about $221 billion at the end of fiscal year 2000, one of the largest loan portfolios in the world.

❖ **Proportion of Federal Funding.** Funds from all Federal agencies represent a small but important proportion of K-12 education funding and postsecondary general institutional funding, but they provide or guarantee a large share of student financial aid. For fiscal year 2000, it is estimated that Federal education funds will represent
  ➢ 9 percent of all education funding (public and private)
  ➢ 6 percent of K-12 funding (public and private)
  ➢ 12 percent of funding for postsecondary institutions (excluding student financial aid)
  ➢ 75 percent of all student financial aid awarded to postsecondary students

Introduction

The American public consistently rates education among its top national priorities. The public rightly expects the U.S. Department of Education (ED), in partnership with states, communities, institutions, and other Federal agencies, to carry out its responsibilities to effectively and efficiently support educational excellence and equity for all children. This two-volume plan and document is the first official report, under GPRA, on the agency's performance for the fiscal year 1999. It describes progress in meeting educational goals as outlined in our Strategic and Annual Plans; in addition, it presents our plans for fiscal year 2001. These documents also describe the key strategies and performance measures that we have chosen to meet the public's high expectations and fulfill our obligation to become a high-performance organization. The strategies were built from the Department's mission, *"To ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation,"* and the performance measures were developed to assess progress in meeting our mission. The reports help to identify Department-wide issues and those in each program that need to be addressed. In our effort to improve the agency's performance, we have implemented the following new approaches:

New Approaches to Performance Reporting

- **Making GPRA Real.** As part of the Department's efforts to make the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) tangible, several new approaches were devised to improve old systems.
    - Senior officers now are required to develop performance agreements with the deputy secretary, aligning their individual goals and objectives for their offices with the goals and objectives presented in the Strategic and Annual Plans.
    - The Department has included the introduction of the Strategic Plan as a part of the New Employee Orientation. This gives each person a chance to become aware of his or her office's role in achieving the agency's goals.
    - In the Office of the Under Secretary, Planning and Evaluation Service, a special team has been created to work with the Department's managers and staff to develop and provide guidance, training, and reports on strategic planning and related data systems.
- **Improving the Annual Plan/Report**. This year's plan has been altered to improve its quality and for readers and to meet the requirements set forth by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). We have strengthened our emphasis on performance and targets, inserted more detailed information on the quality of data, and highlighted inter-agency and other coordination efforts.
- **Developing More Efficient and Effective Data Systems.** The Department is striving to address the challenges of data collection for program outcomes by examining the quality of data provided by existing systems and studying new approaches to developing a modern electronic program data system based on coordination with state education agencies.

These new approaches, combined with the performance information in both the Strategic Plan and the Annual Plan, will help the Department become more performance-driven.

How to Read the GPRA Reports

Assessing and planning for the Department of Education's performance includes four components:

- The Strategic Plan
- Volume 1 of the Annual Plan/Report: Agency-Wide Objectives
- Volume 2 of the Annual Plan/Report: Individual Program Plans
- Evaluations

The first three components constitute a report trilogy: the Strategic Plan and the Annual Plan, Volumes 1 and 2. The fourth component involves the ongoing use of evaluations in assessing program performance. All four components are coordinated by the Office of the Under Secretary, Planning and Evaluation Service. Exhibit 1, below, shows how these four components are continuously evaluated and used as planning and assessment tools for meeting the diverse needs of the public and Congress. The Strategic Plan emerged from the mission statement and is used by the leaders and managers in ED to guide longer-term strategies. From the Strategic Plan, the Planning and Evaluation Service developed a two-volume annual plan and report that assesses the agency's performance in more detail. Volume 1 describes overall Department-wide objectives and summarizes the strategies for and success in achieving each objective. Volume 2 presents the detailed program-by-program plans that are based on those objectives. These program indicators are developed and used by the programs to assess their progress. The evaluations of ED programs and activities support the entire planning process.

Exhibit 1

Each of these four areas—the Strategic Plan, Volumes 1 and 2 of the Annual Plan, and the Planning and Evaluation Service's evaluations—are discussed in greater detail below.

The Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is a five-year plan that lays out the Department's long-term directions. It is structured around four major goals that support the agency's mission (see Exhibit 2):

1. *Help all students reach challenging academic standards so that they are prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment.*
2. *Build a solid foundation for learning for all children.*
3. *Ensure access to postsecondary education and lifelong learning.*
4. *Make ED a high-performance organization by focusing on results, quality service, and customer satisfaction.*

These are ambitious goals that reflect areas in which the Department can influence outcomes, even where the Department does not have direct control. Under each goal, the plan identifies objectives (see Exhibit 3), supported by core strategies and performance indicators. These objectives feed directly into Volume 1 of the Annual Plan and Report.
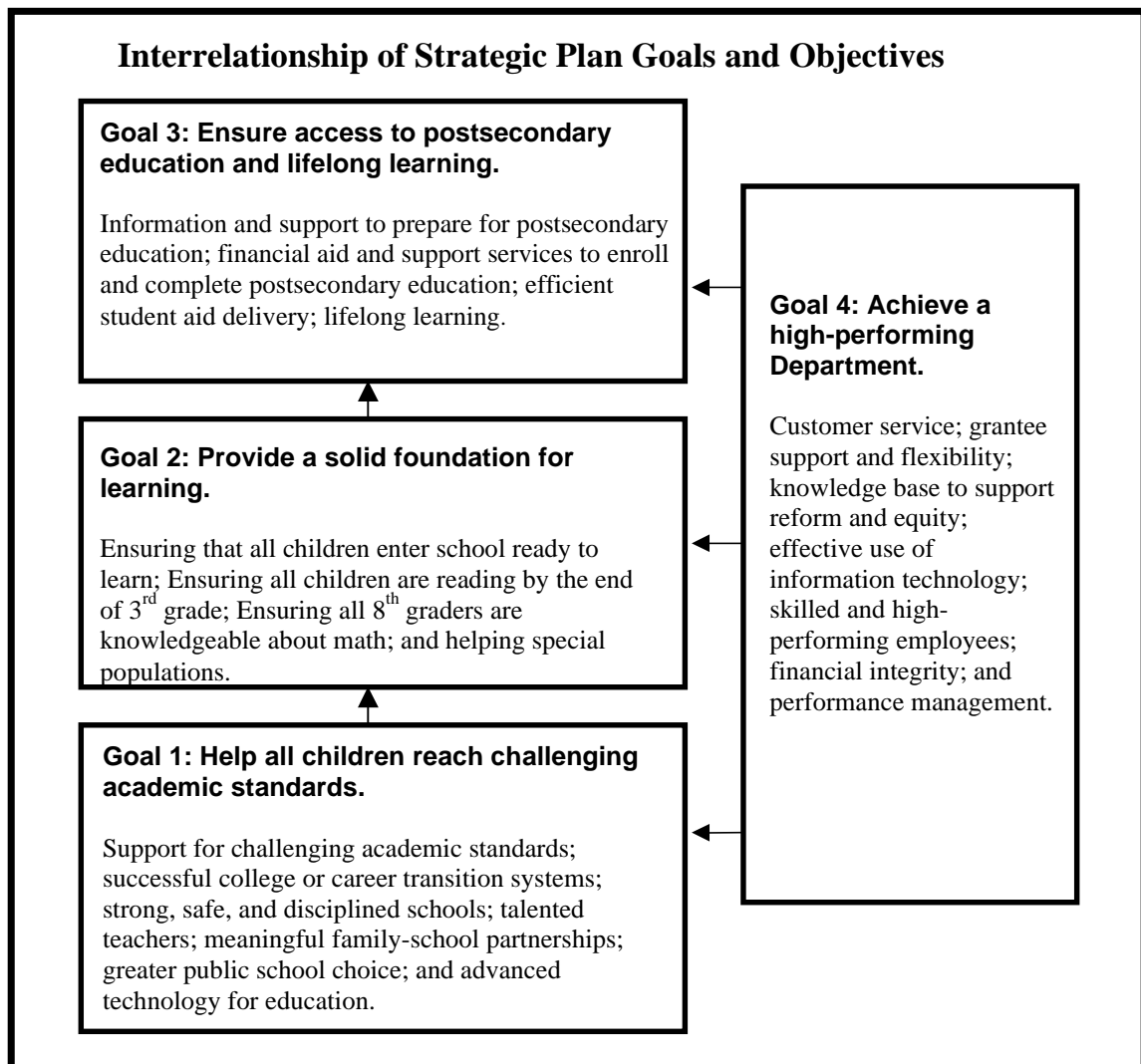
Exhibit 2

Interrelationship of Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

Goal 3: Ensure access to postsecondary education and lifelong learning.

Information and support to prepare for postsecondary education; financial aid and support services to enroll and complete postsecondary education; efficient student aid delivery; lifelong learning.

Goal 2: Provide a solid foundation for learning.

Ensuring that all children enter school ready to learn; Ensuring all children are reading by the end of 3rd grade; Ensuring all 8th graders are knowledgeable about math; and helping special populations.

Goal 1: Help all children reach challenging academic standards.

Support for challenging academic standards; successful college or career transition systems; strong, safe, and disciplined schools; talented teachers; meaningful family-school partnerships; greater public school choice; and advanced technology for education.

Goal 4: Achieve a high-performing Department.

Customer service; grantee support and flexibility; knowledge base to support reform and equity; effective use of information technology; skilled and high-performing employees; financial integrity; and performance management.

Exhibit 3

Framework of Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives
U.S. Department of Education

Mission: To ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation.

Goal 1. Help all children reach challenging academic standards, so that they are prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment.	Goal 2. Build a solid foundation for learning for all children.	Goal 3. Ensure access to postsecondary education and lifelong learning.	Goal 4. Make ED a high-performance organization by focusing on results, service quality, and customer satisfaction.
Objectives 1.1 States develop challenging standards and assessments for all students in the core academic subjects. 1.2 Schools help all students make successful transitions to college and careers. 1.3 Schools are strong, safe, disciplined, and drug-free. 1.4 A talented and dedicated teacher is in every classroom in America. 1.5 Families and communities are fully involved with schools and school improvement efforts. 1.6 Greater public school choice will be available to students and families. 1.7 Schools use advanced technology for all students and teachers to improve education.	**Objectives** 2.1 All children enter school ready to learn. 2.2 Every child reads well and independently by the end of the third grade. 2.3 Every eighth-grader masters challenging mathematics, including the foundations of algebra and geometry. 2.4 Special populations participate in appropriate services and assessments consistent with high standards.	**Objectives** 3.1 Secondary school students get the information, skills, and support they need to prepare successfully for postsecondary education. 3.2 Postsecondary students receive the financial aid and support services they need to enroll in and complete a high-quality educational program. 3.3 Postsecondary student aid delivery and program management is efficient, financially sound, and customer-responsive. 3.4 All educationally disadvantaged adults can strengthen their literacy skills and improve their earning power over their lifetime through lifelong learning.	**Objectives** 4.1 Our customers receive fast, seamless service and dissemination of high-quality information and products. 4.2 Our partners have the support and flexibility they need without diminishing accountability for results. 4.3 An up-to-date knowledge base is available from education research to support education reform and equity. 4.4 Our information technology investments are sound and used to improve impact and efficiency. 4.5 The Department's employees are highly skilled and high-performing. 4.6 Management of our programs and services ensures financial integrity. 4.7 All levels of the agency are fully performance-driven.

The Annual Plan/Report

The Annual Plan and Report lays out the goals of the Department for the year to come. This year's plan lays out goals for 2001. It also gives a report on the past year's performance. This year we report on 1999 performance. The Annual Plan consists of two volumes:

Volume I. This volume is structured around 22 Department-wide education objectives. It gives information about the efforts put forth in each of the objective areas, the importance of each, and

the challenges faced. The volume also communicates the role the Department has in meeting the national concerns in education as well as some of the collaborative efforts taking place.

Volume II. This volume looks at each of the Department's programs or program areas. It provides detailed information regarding the work being done in each of the programs, and on future directions. It gives specific information on collaboration efforts, proposed budgets, and the quality of data supplied in each program.

Relationship Between the Annual Plan (Volumes I and II) and the Strategic Plan. Volumes I and II are supporting documents for the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is a five-year projection, while the Annual Plan/Report looks at the Department on a year-to-year basis. The Strategic Plan gives a broad view of the agency's performance, while the Annual Plan/Report contains performance indicators and strategies for achieving each objective. All three documents provide planning and reporting information on the agency's performance. The reports present themselves as a three-level tier. The top tier is the five-year Strategic Plan, with its four goals that directly support the Department's mission. The middle tier, Volume I, is structured around the 22 objectives that are in direct support of the four goals presented in the Strategic Plan. The bottom tier, Volume II, is organized according to the Department's programs, and each program's goal supports one or more of the 22 objectives presented in Volume I.

Evaluation

The fourth component is evaluation. These are independent studies conducted periodically to assess the operation and effectiveness of programs. Evaluations provide a more complex and rigorous analysis of the impact of a program than can be obtained through routine reporting. Evaluations can also provide external benchmarks to validate regularly reported performance information and detailed descriptions of program operating and performance. They are designed to create a feedback process to improve the quality and use of program information. Evaluations work in conjunction with the other three components to aid in the decision-making process in the promotion of educational excellence.

Key Features of This Year's GPRA Report

This year's GPRA Plan/Report incorporates numerous significant improvements over last year's. These improvements were made as a result of several influential factors, such as benchmarking to the private sector, studying performance reports from other agencies, addressing major criticisms from internal and external sources, complying with new regulations, and making overall improvements as a result of experience in the strategic planning process.

How This Year's Plan/Report Differs From Last Year's Submission:

- **Reduces the number of indicators by one-fifth**. This year's submission tries to keep the focus on outcome indicators and quality intermediate indicators, while retaining many indicators for internal management purposes.

- **Places more emphasis on performance**. Volume I has been restructured to present the performance indicators and an assessment of our progress on those indicators in the beginning of each chapter. Volume II has also sharpened the focus on performance by designating a column to illustrate performance data and a column to discuss the progress made by the specific program.

- **Provides more detailed information on the quality of data**. Data presented in both Volume I and II of the plan are accompanied by a new section entitled "Validation Procedure." This information helps in judging the rigor and reliability of the data.

- **Provides more information on coordination**. In each program plan discussed in Volume II, a new section describes how that particular program coordinates with other Federal activities. In Volume I, the coordination section in each objective plan chapter is more detailed, to give the reader a clearer idea of the collaboration.

- **Clarifies targets**. Both volumes seek to clearly present Departmental and program-level targets for 2001 and beyond.

- **Acknowledges indicator changes and adjustments**. Volume I contains a special section and a new appendix that clearly details any changes made to indicators since the fiscal year 1999 plan submission. Volume II also includes a section devoted to indicator changes in each program.