

To: Members of Congress

From: Secretary of Education Rod Paige

Date: July 8, 2003

Re: No Child Left Behind Update

Today marks 18 months since President Bush signed the landmark No Child Left Behind Act. I am pleased to inform you that, in partnership with the states, we are making tremendous progress turning the vision of this law into a reality for every child in every public school in every state.

On June 10th, the President announced that all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia had approved accountability plans under No Child Left Behind. This was truly a watershed moment in the history of American education.

To put it in perspective, when President Bush took the oath of office in January 2001, only 11 states were in compliance with the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Today, *every single state* is implementing No Child Left Behind. Every state has made a commitment that every child counts.

This tremendous achievement could not have been accomplished without the leadership of the President, the bipartisan support of Congress, and the tireless efforts of state and local leaders across the country. I thank you for your efforts and support.

During my four decades working in education, I have never seen such meaningful and effective cooperation between federal, state, and local officials – all working together toward the common goal of educating every child.

Every State is Committed to No Child Left Behind

In just 18 months:

- Every state has developed a plan to improve student achievement across the board and to close the achievement gap.

- Every state has developed a plan to test every child in reading and math in grades three through eight and at least once in high school.
- Every state has developed a plan in which public school choice will be offered to parents of children attending schools in need of improvement.
- Every state has designed a plan in which tutoring and other supplemental services will be offered to low-income students attending schools in need of improvement.
- Thirty-five states have already received \$680 million in Reading First grants (part of a \$1 billion total investment in FY2003) to ensure that every child reads by the third grade, and more grants are being awarded every month.

Historic Levels of Funding

As part of No Child Left Behind, funding for K-12 programs has already increased significantly. In fact, thanks to the record spending in No Child Left Behind, federal discretionary spending on education has more than doubled since 1996. In the last two fiscal years, key No Child Left Behind programs have seen dramatic increases. For instance:

- Total K-12 federal spending has already gone up \$5.25 billion, or 30.4 percent, under No Child Left Behind.
- Title I funding has already increased \$2.9 billion, or 33 percent, under No Child Left Behind.
- Funding for programs focused entirely on teacher quality has already gone up \$1.02 billion, or 45.8 percent, under No Child Left Behind.

In addition, No Child Left Behind funds the development and implementation of the new assessments required by the law. Unlike the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which provided no money for required assessments, No Child Left Behind provides more than \$1.1 billion in state formula grant funding over three years before states are even required to put the new assessments into place in the 2005-2006 school year.

Issues on the Horizon

As we head toward a new school year, I want to take a moment to provide you with information on some of the key issues we will be focusing on in the coming months.

While we continue to work with states on all aspects of their implementation efforts, three key issues have emerged that are of primary importance: (1) helping states place a highly qualified teacher in every classroom; (2) expanding the opportunities for qualified students to receive tutoring and other supplemental services; and (3) identifying schools in need of improvement and making sure they are getting the assistance they need to get back on track.

Highly Qualified Teachers: Studies have shown that teachers are key to student success, and No Child Left Behind calls for schools to place a highly qualified teacher, as defined by each state, in every classroom by the 2005-2006 school year. States were also required to ensure that *new* teachers in Title I schools met these requirements starting in the school year after the bill was enacted.

No Child Left Behind provides a variety of new tools and historic levels of funding for states and local districts to recruit, retain, and develop strong teaching staffs.

President Bush's proposed budget for FY 2004 calls for more than \$3.7 billion for programs and initiatives dedicated to teacher quality, and there is broad flexibility for how these funds can be used.

Tutoring and Other Supplemental Services At No Additional Cost to Parents: Under the No Child Left Behind accountability plans developed by each state, schools in need of improvement for two years must offer low-income students additional services such as tutoring or summer school programs at no additional cost to parents. These services, which are designed to offer a lifeline to students as the schools they attend work to improve, are paid for through federal Title I funds, which have increased dramatically under No Child Left Behind.

States approved a record number of supplemental service providers in May 2003. Nationwide, there was a net increase of 177 new approved providers - an 18 percent increase in just one month. Overall, states have approved more than 1,100 supplemental service providers, including 777 individual providers.

Schools in Need of Improvement: For the first time in history, every state is identifying schools that need to improve, offering new options to parents, *and* providing assistance to help schools get back on track. When a school is found to be in need of improvement, school officials are required to work with parents, school staff, the local education agency, and outside experts to develop a plan to turn the school around.

The local education agency must also ensure that the school receives needed technical assistance as it develops and implements its improvement plan. Examples of technical assistance can include everything from help identifying problems in instruction or curriculum to help analyzing and revising the school's budget so that resources are more effectively targeted to activities most likely to help students learn.

In addition, the Reading First program provides grants to states to help schools and districts improve reading programs for young children through scientifically proven methods of instruction. Already, 35 states have received funding and more is on the way. Funds are targeted to schools and districts with the highest percentages of students reading below grade level. President Bush's budget for next year calls for more than \$1.1 billion in funding for Reading First.

News From the States

While No Child Left Behind has made high standards and high expectations for every student a national priority, it allows states and communities the flexibility and freedom to tailor implementation to the needs of local communities and their schools.

The results to date provide much cause for optimism. Parents, teachers, principals, state school chiefs, and elected officials are embracing what Roger Sampson, the Alaska Commissioner of Education and Early Development, recently referred to as “an extraordinary opportunity to build real excellence in our schools and finally fulfill the promise of a quality education for all children.”

Following is a brief snapshot of just *some* of the No Child Left Behind news in states and local communities across the country:

- “From Charlotte to Hoke County, school districts in North Carolina are reporting sharp increases in performance on tests of reading and math given this spring to students in third through eighth grades. ... Elementary grades show the biggest improvements. Education leaders see a clear link between the jump in test scores and the federal mandate to push schools to look past their overall score averages to the performance of their lowest-scoring students. ... Tandra Batchelor-Mapp, principal of Glendale-Kenly Elementary School in Johnston County, said her school stepped up efforts to encourage parent participation while requiring more extra help and tutoring for struggling students. ‘No Child Left Behind was a major factor,’ Batchelor-Mapp said. ‘We want our students and parents to be proud of our school.’” (*Raleigh News & Observer*, 6/18/03)
- “‘We’re a very big supporter of No Child Left Behind in Oklahoma,’ [state schools Superintendent Sandy Garrett] said. ‘We think it’s time we are accountable for every single child and their progress.’” (*The Associated Press*, 5/31/03)
- “South Dakota should embrace the new federal education-improvement law as a way to make sure every child gets the best possible education, Gov. Mike Rounds said Tuesday. ... A conference this fall will help 500 or so teachers from across the state become leaders in implementing the federal education law, Rounds said. Those teachers will help others in their school districts understand the law, he said.” (*The Associated Press*, 6/3/03)
- “Colorado schools are aggressively wooing Latino moms and dads in an effort to boost test scores and meet tough learning standards required by the 2-year-old ‘No Child Left Behind’ federal education law. Teachers and principals at Hanson Elementary in Adams County District 14, for instance, go to the homes of parents to deliver school supplies and talk to them about the school. The Commerce City-based district, where 22 percent of the students come from Spanish-speaking homes, also gives homework assignments to parents and students to improve reading and writing skills. The effort may be paying off, as the percentage of students with proficient scores have grown by 9 percentage points on the third-grade reading CSAP (Colorado Student Assessment Program) test in Adams 14. Some schools, including Hanson Elementary, saw the percentage of students with proficient third-grade reading scores climb by 20 points.” (*Denver Post*, 7/7/03)
- “In the wake of the state’s announcement last week that more than 400 Minnesota elementary schools may soon be tagged as needing improvement under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, schools are focusing on how to stay off that list -- or how to get

off it. For most, it means unprecedented attention to individual students and reaching those who struggle. Whether that includes summer school, after-school programs or outreach to parents depends on the school and the kids who go there, officials said.” (*Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 6/1/03)

- “About 800 slots have been set aside for summer programs at Whitaker Middle School, and Jefferson, Roosevelt and Marshall high schools. Any student who attends one of the schools and who qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch is eligible. ... The six-week sessions, which start this month, are required by the federal No Child Left Behind law. ... Unlike typical summer programs, the sessions aren’t just for students who have failed classes and need to earn credits. Any qualified student who wants help with reading, writing, math or study skills may sign up.” (*Oregonian*, 6/16/03)
- “This spring, the [Hartford] city school district held meetings for parents, sent letters home with students and even used Spanish-language radio to try to get the message out about the No Child Left Behind Act. ... So far, 55 students at Milner, Moylan and Kinsella schools have applied to transfer and 500 students have requested supplemental services, said Jerry Clapis, who works in the district’s communications department.” (*New York Newsday*, 6/27/03)
- “The mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act assures that every child will learn at high levels. This law requires all schools to teach every child and holds everyone accountable for student achievement. We will guarantee that these policies are implemented. The administration and this board are hard at work. But, we must hasten our work. Student achievement is our primary goal. I expect 90 percent of our students to become proficient in reading, math, science, the humanities and the arts by the end of this decade.” (Remarks by Peggy Cooper Cafritz, President of the District of Columbia Board of Education, *Washington Post*, 1/16/03)
- Roger Sampson, the commissioner of Alaska’s Department of Education and Early Development, recently wrote: “While we have a big job ahead to successfully implement [No Child Left Behind], Alaska is ahead of the game because we began school reform in the early 1990s. A lot of what NCLB requires is already in place - a focus on academic achievement, student and teacher standards, student testing, and an emphasis on community and parent involvement. Now we need to instill within our schools and ourselves a constant vigilance for finding better ways to achieve increasingly better results.” (*Juneau Empire*, 6/26/03)
- “[Brad Pepper, principal of Jefferson Elementary in Wichita, Kansas] said No Child Left Behind has helped his school. Jefferson Elementary faces challenges similar to those at other Wichita public schools, with a wider range of pre-school preparation among students putting greater demands on the educational system. The testing, he said, has allowed the school to isolate which sections of classes need improvement. With that information, the school forms plans for improvement, then executes them. Jefferson’s preliminary 2003 numbers show improvement, Pepper said, a tribute to the federal

prompting as well as the local response of parents, teachers and the district. ‘The school district’s done a good job putting this forward,’ he said.” (*Wichita Eagle*, 6/11/03)

- “Kentucky schools will get more than \$89 million over the next six years to help poor and struggling students learn to read under President Bush’s Reading First initiative, U.S. Department of Education officials announced yesterday. As many as 70 schools across the state will share nearly \$14 million annually to improve reading instruction in kindergarten through third grades -- more than three times what the state currently spends on special reading programs. ... ‘This is huge -- it’s going to make a difference,’ Kentucky Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit said during a news conference at South Louisville’s Jacob Elementary attended by local, state and federal officials.” (*Louisville Courier-Journal*, 4/29/03)
- “One of the most valuable aspects of the new accountability plan, [Maryland School Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick] said, is that educators will be forced to confront problems facing specific groups of students. ‘No children will be hidden behind the averages for each school,’ she said.” (*Baltimore Sun*, 4/2/03)
- “Thousands of youngsters in Polk and Volusia counties will return to school this fall to find their elementary schools equipped with new reading programs and better-trained teachers. Polk and Volusia are the first school districts in Central Florida to be awarded grant money under the federal Reading First initiative, a six-year, \$300 million effort aimed at boosting the reading skills of children in kindergarten through third grade.” (*Orlando Sentinel*, 2/8/03)
- “The [Reading First grant] money also will be used to provide professional training opportunities for reading teachers across the state and for other programs. ‘We will really work to make sure we truly leave no child behind,’ state schools superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster said at the ceremony at Goodland Elementary School.” (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 5/13/03)
- “Changes to federal education funding formulas will net city schools an extra \$120 million next year, officials announced yesterday. The feds are no longer allowing districts to keep receiving Title I money for low-income students who do not enroll in schools - payments that were previously made to some districts under a ‘hold harmless’ provision in the old law. The change, part of the No Child Left Behind law, means that more Title I money will be flowing to high-need, high-poverty areas like New York City, officials said.” (*New York Daily News*, 5/2/03)
- “‘We believe very strongly in Arkansas in the No Child Left Behind legislation,’ Ray Simon, director of the Arkansas Department of Education, said following a White House ceremony where the [approval of the state’s accountability plan] was announced. ... Simon said the state’s current education programs, including the Smart Start and the Smart Step initiatives, already fulfilled the No Child Left Behind requirements in part. ‘We didn’t have to start over,’ Simon said. ‘We just had to expand what we were already doing.’” (*The Morning News of Northwest Arkansas*, 5/1/03)

- “During the next two weeks, all of Atlanta’s 81 elementary and middle schools will be given books, and students’ reading will be monitored over the summer. U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige tapped Atlanta public schools as the launch site of the president’s reading program, ‘No Child Left Behind Summer Reading Achievers,’ in March. If successful, the program would expand to schools nationwide next year. ‘The Summer Reading Achievers program will encourage our students to devote a part of their time away from school to continue developing their reading skills,’ said Atlanta Superintendent Beverly L. Hall. ‘This is the type of reinforcement that our students need to help them come back to school in the fall, ready to continue raising their achievement levels in not only reading but in all of their studies.’” (*The Associated Press*, 5/15/03)
- “‘What that means is that Wyoming schools have promised - we promised you, we promised your parents, we promised the federal government - we promised everyone that we’re going to work very, very hard to make sure that no children in Wyoming get a bad education,’ [Superintendent of Public Instruction Trent Blankenship told the Arp Elementary School students].” (*The Associated Press*, 5/22/03)
- “When Mignon Davis read the flyer her 10-year-old daughter, Nykia, brought home from Philadelphia’s Shaw Middle School, she could hardly believe it. A company called Best Education Partners was ready to tutor her child for free. The program included 30 hours of instruction, a 5-1 student-teacher ratio, and a curriculum combining intensive phonics with books written for multicultural, urban students. All she had to do was tell the district. For Davis, an administrative assistant who knew her daughter needed extra help, it was a no-brainer. ... More than 100,000 academically struggling Philadelphia students are eligible for free tutoring because the 178 low-performing schools they attend haven’t shown the year-to-year improvement that No Child Left Behind requires.” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7/7/03)
- “South Carolina is getting nearly \$14 million in federal funds this year through the Reading First program. The money is the first phase of a nearly \$90 million grant the state will get as part of President George W. Bush’s No Child Left Behind education program. While all South Carolina schools will see some of the money, Governor Mark Sanford says the money will allow 36 schools in South Carolina to start research-based reading programs for students from kindergarten through third grade. Sanford says the money is a big help during the state’s budget problems.” (*WIS-TV*, 5/22/03)
- In anticipation of the release of West Virginia’s list of schools in need of improvement the West Virginia Board of Education, State Schools Superintendent, and Regional Education Service Agency representatives launched “West Virginia Achieves,” the state’s plan for action showing what they will do to improve achievement under No Child Left Behind. The initiative included a tour of school districts where state education officials held town hall meetings with teachers, parents, community leaders and media on how the state is implementing No Child Left Behind and how it will directly affect them. (<http://wvachieves.k12.wv.us/>)