

## Goal 1: Create a Culture of Achievement

### Performance Goals

#### State Accountability Systems in Compliance

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* placed new requirements on state accountability systems, requirements designed to improve student achievement. After three years of working within the provisions of the law, Secretary Spellings announced a [“more workable, sensible approach”](#) that remains true to the law’s mission while taking into account each state’s unique situation. The new flexibility guidelines are captured in [Raising Achievement: A New Path for No Child Left Behind](#).

#### Local Flexibility for Targeting Federal Funds

A collection of federal programs gives states, school districts, and schools the authority to target identified federal program funds to unique local education needs. These programs include the following:

- [Funding Transferability for State and Local Educational Agencies](#).
- [State-Flexibility Demonstration Program](#).
- [Local-Flexibility Demonstration Program](#).
- [Rural Education Achievement Program](#).

#### Customer Satisfaction With Department

To measure how well our products and services meet the needs of the people we serve, the Department surveyed state-level education leaders who direct federal programs in their states. [Results of the survey](#) indicated an [American Customer Satisfaction Index](#) score of 63, which we will benchmark against businesses and other federal agencies.

#### Expansion of Choice Options for Parents

Parents of public school children who attend a Title I school designated by the state to be in need of improvement have [choices](#) under the provisions of *No Child Left Behind*. They may send their child to another public school, and, if the school’s status remains “in need of improvement” for more than one year, families whose children stay in the home school may enroll their children in [supplemental educational services](#) (tutoring). Parents’ options within the public school system have increased with the growing numbers of [public charter schools](#) that create alternatives to the traditional public school.

#### Evidence-Based Approaches to Instruction

The *No Child Left Behind* goal—all students proficient in reading and mathematics by SY 2013–14—has the best chance of being met if classroom instruction is built around what works. The Department’s [What Works Clearinghouse](#) just released research findings on what works in middle school mathematics interventions.

## Goal 2: Improve Student Achievement

### Performance Goals

#### Reading Achievement

Reading is the keystone of learning. [Reading First](#) is the *No Child Left Behind* national initiative to improve kindergarten through third grade student reading by supporting state and local educational agencies in establishing reading programs that are grounded in scientifically based reading research. The National Assessment of Educational Progress reports an improvement in reading achievement: the average reading score at age nine was higher in 2004 than in any previous assessment year.

#### Mathematics Achievement

To raise the number of highly qualified teachers in mathematics and science and the number of students reaching proficiency in those subjects, school districts use federal resources from the [Mathematics and Science Partnership program](#). The program connects university professors, business leaders, and staff from nonprofit or for-profit organizations with educators from high-need school districts to improve science and mathematics learning. The results from a [descriptive analysis](#) of successful applications to the program indicate that this partnership program is on track in meeting its goals.

#### High School Completion

“How can a nation that invented the light bulb, created vaccines to eradicate polio, put a man on the moon and conceived the Internet not have a good handle on how many of its students drop out of high school?” says Deputy Secretary Ray Simon. A consensus for high school reform exists among governors, business leaders, for-profit and nonprofit leaders, and the Department, and reform “must start with an honest calculation of graduation rates.”

The Department has adopted [an interim formula](#) for calculating states’ high school graduation rates, and we will post these rates on our Web site along with state-reported graduation rates.

#### Academic Proficiency

In a nationally representative sample of high school sophomores, 72 percent of teenagers expect to graduate from a four-year college program. Most students (87 percent) said getting good grades was important or very important to them, with blacks (62 percent) and Hispanics (53 percent) more likely than whites (47 percent) to affirm the importance of getting good grades. In response to this and additional evidence of high expectations reported in [A Profile of the American High School Sophomore in 2002](#) by the National Center for Education Statistics, Secretary Spellings said, “This report shows that we as a society have done an excellent job selling the dream of attending college, but we have to make sure that we are preparing high school students to succeed once they get in the door.” The Department has begun a reform initiative that will extend the accountability provisions of *No Child Left Behind* to high schools.

### **Advanced Placement Participation**

Advanced Placement courses are typically considered among the most rigorous high school classes in the curriculum. In 2005, over 15,000 high schools offered Advanced Placement classes, a 36 percent increase in the last decade. Students took over 2 million Advanced Placement exams in May 2005, a 12 percent increase over last year and 66 percent more than five years ago. Growth of the program has been accelerated by a growing national interest in Advanced Placement classes and by provisions in *No Child Left Behind* that support state programs to increase [Advanced Placement participation](#).

### **Teacher Quality**

*No Child Left Behind* defines “highly qualified teacher” and requires that all public school teachers of core academic subjects meet the qualifications outlined in the definition by SY 2005–06. For the first time, the Congress legislated that teachers in every core academic class have a bachelor’s degree, have a state license or a certificate, and be competent in the subjects they teach. The recently reauthorized *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* also addresses [teacher qualification](#) and requires all special educators who teach core academic subjects to be highly qualified.

Resources provided to states to meet the goal of a “highly qualified teacher” in every class include the \$3 billion Improving Teacher Quality State Grants and the \$68 million [Teacher Quality Enhancement](#) program.

## **Goal 3: Develop Safe and Drug-Free Schools**

### **Performance Goals**

#### **Drug Use**

Drug-free schools are associated with healthy antidrug norms among students, and contribute to the healthy physical and social development of each student. The positive school climate of drug-free schools gives students the chance to focus on learning. Results from the 2003 survey of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System show slight declines from 2001 with respect to drug use on school property.

#### **Violent Crime**

Safe schools are essential for healthy student development and academic achievement. Secretary Spellings said, "In order for our children to learn well and excel, they need to feel safe." When violent crime takes place on school property, it disrupts the learning environment and creates obstacles to student achievement and physical safety. Department programs address drug use and violence by helping districts and schools implement prevention programs and strategies that foster positive norms and behavior among students. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System data for fighting on school property and carrying weapons to school show significant reductions in these risky behaviors from 1993 to 2003, but reductions were not significant during the last two years of that period.

## **Goal 4: Transform Education Into an Evidence-Based Field**

### **Performance Goals**

#### **Quality of Education Research**

The Department demonstrated a thorough commitment to research quality this year by expanding the use of scientifically based procedures for the evaluation of Department programs, training a new generation of education researchers in rigorous methodologies, and improving the quality of data collections.

In FY 2005, 100 percent of newly funded research proposals were deemed to be of high quality by an independent review panel of qualified scientists.

#### **Relevance of Education Research**

The Department prioritizes the needs of education practitioners and policymakers to ensure that we are providing germane information for the improvement of education. In FY 2005, we published relevant research on reliable practices that support learning, improve academic achievement and increase access to educational opportunities for all students; the condition and progress of education in the United States; and the effectiveness of federal and nonfederal education programs.

In FY 2004, the most recent year for which we have data, half of the Department's newly funded research projects were deemed to be of high relevance by an independent review panel of qualified practitioners.

## Goal 5: Enhance the Quality of and Access to Postsecondary and Adult Education

### Performance Goals

#### Postsecondary Enrollment

The Department's programs have contributed to significant [improvements in postsecondary access](#). As of 2003, the overall college-going rate for high school graduates stood at 63.9 percent, with more than 16 million students enrolled at degree-granting postsecondary institutions. Furthermore, college enrollment figures for TRIO Talent Search, a program designed to support the college enrollment of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, surpass the national average for all high school graduates.

#### Postsecondary Persistence and Completion

The Department provides services to ensure that increasing numbers of Americans gain access to a postsecondary education, persist in school, and complete their college education. Successful completion of [postsecondary education increases future employability and wages](#). The most recent data available for persistence and completion rates for students in the aggregate and for students from disadvantaged backgrounds show general trends of improvement.

#### Student Financial Assistance Award Accuracy

One of the key determinants for ensuring access, persistence, and completion in postsecondary institutions has been the extensive support of [financial aid](#) to low- and middle-income students. The Department administers more than \$400 billion in direct loans, guaranteed loans, and grants to postsecondary students and their families. Recent achievements include the removal of student financial assistance programs from the Government Accountability Office's high-risk list in January 2005 and a declining Pell Grant overpayment rate.

#### Strengthening Institutions That Serve Underrepresented Populations

The Department's institutional aid programs strengthen and improve the quality of programs in hundreds of postsecondary education institutions that serve low-income and minority students, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Historically Black Graduate Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, and Hispanic-Serving Institutions. By expanding and enhancing academic quality, institutional management, and financial stability at these institutions, the Department reduces gaps in college access and completion among differing student populations, improves academic attainment, and strengthens accountability.

#### Vocational Rehabilitation

Over the past year, the Department has made significant progress in improving the timeliness of its vocational rehabilitation data. The FY 2004 Case Service Report database was completed within five months of the close of the fiscal year, a 10-month improvement compared to FY 2002 and prior years. Reviews of state performance data to correct

problems and improve services to customers have also been completed more promptly in FY 2005 than in prior years.

The Department measures state vocational rehabilitation agencies' progress by monitoring the percentage of individuals receiving services who achieve employment. In FY 2004, about two-thirds of state vocational rehabilitation agencies achieved the outcome criteria set by regulatory indicators.

### **Adult Learning**

In an age of rapid economic and technological change, lifelong learning can provide benefits for individuals and for society as a whole. New data on adult learners this year show steady increases in the success rates of adults in meeting high school completion goals and in English literacy acquisition.

### **Expanding Global Perspectives**

The Department's international education and graduate fellowship programs have helped thousands of students, particularly at the graduate level, prepare for careers in areas of national need, including foreign languages and area studies. Departmental support for foreign languages, area studies, and international studies at American colleges and universities ensures a steady supply of graduates with expertise in less-commonly taught languages, geographic areas, and international issues. The Department measures progress by the expansion of critical languages taught at National Resource Centers, employment of center Ph.D. graduates in targeted areas, and improved language competency. FY 2005 was the first year in which targets were set for these measures.

## **Goal 6: Establish Management Excellence**

### **Performance Goals**

#### **Financial Integrity and Management**

The Department of Education's annual financial statements have earned an unqualified or "clean" opinion for four consecutive years, after having achieved only one clean opinion previously. We demonstrate to the American public that we account accurately for the dollars supporting federal education programs.

#### **Strategic Human Capital Management**

The Department is ensuring that a highly skilled work force will carry out the responsibilities of managing federal education programs for years to come through participation in federal activities to speed the hiring process and the implementation of performance standards for employees based on strategic plan objectives. A human capital deployment index established during 2005 sets a robust benchmark against which our future work force development efforts can be measured.

#### **Information Technology Management**

The Department is playing a leading role in federal initiatives to extend the use of electronic communication in delivering public services to Americans. These efforts include the increasing use of electronic applications in our discretionary grant competitions.

#### **Customer Service for Student Financial Assistance**

The Department is committed to enabling access to a quality education for all Americans, and the provision of financial aid to help millions of citizens complete a postsecondary degree is a particularly important customer service function. We are sustaining previous success in meeting the needs of aid applicants and recipients, and we are preparing improvements to service functions that have not produced expected levels of customer satisfaction.

#### **Budget and Performance Integration**

The Department is improving performance measures and management functions in order to demonstrate effectiveness across the majority of Department programs. Our progress on ensuring effectiveness was slower than anticipated for FY 2005, emphasizing the urgency of the task at hand.

#### **Faith-Based and Community Organization Grantees**

The emergence of faith-based and community organizations among the pool of grant applicants has reinforced the need for the Department to treat all applicants equitably, regardless of their level of experience in the application process. Novice applicants, many of whom represent these emergent organizations, are proving to be successful in winning grant awards in programs most amenable to their participation.