
Summary of Inspector General And Government Accountability Office Reports

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The previous pages of this document have explained in detail how the Department is doing in meeting its *Strategic Plan* performance goals. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) promotes the efficiency, effectiveness and integrity of the Department's programs through independent and objective audits, among other activities. These activities, along with reports from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), allow the Department to focus its attention and resources on areas of particular importance in meeting the *Strategic Plan* performance goals. Additionally, program evaluations enhance efforts towards accountability in meeting the Department's goals and objectives and promote ongoing program improvements in meeting key performance measures.

Below is an abbreviated list of the FY 2007 Inspector General and Government Accountability Office reports presented by Strategic Plan Goal as well as a synopsis of the Department's program evaluations.

Goal	Report Name Organization	Issue	Department's Response
2	The Department's Administration of Selected Aspects of the Reading First Program Final Audit Report (ED-OIG/A03G0006) February 2007	The Department did not have controls in place in its administration of the Reading Leadership Academies to ensure compliance with the <i>Department of Education Organization Act</i> and the <i>No Child Left Behind (NCLB)</i> curriculum provisions. It also did not adequately assess issues of bias and lack of objectivity when approving individuals to be technical assistance providers.	The Department generally concurred but did not agree with all findings. The Department stated the report did not present a balanced summary of the activities.
5	Review of Federal Student Aid's Monitoring of Guaranty Agency Compliance with the Establishment of the Federal Fund and the Operating Fund: Final Inspection Report (ED-OIG/I13H0001) September 2007	The work performed by Federal Student Aid (FSA) on the 27 guaranty agencies not previously audited by OIG provides no assurance that the Federal and Operating Funds were established in compliance with the <i>Higher Education Act</i> . The Department should perform onsite program reviews to examine supporting records to quantify as erroneous payments any lost revenue and identify any improper purchases.	FSA will ensure that independent onsite reviews of the remaining 27 guaranty agencies not previously reviewed by OIG are performed by individuals with the requisite accounting knowledge. It will also report as erroneous payments any lost revenue, identify any improper payments, and require full repayment to the Federal Fund.

Goal	Report Name Organization	Issue	Department's Response
5	Federal Family Education Loan Program: Increased Department of Education Oversight of Lender and School Activities Needed to Help Ensure Program Compliance, GAO-07-750 , July 31, 2007	While the Department has some processes to oversee compliance in FFELP, it has no oversight tools to detect potential instances of lenders providing improper inducements to limit borrower choice.	In June 2007, the Department issued proposed regulations that address improper inducements and limitations on borrower choice. These regulations could become effective in 2008. Additionally, the Department has developed procedures to support reviews of both lender inducement and limitations on borrower choice.
5	Higher Education: Including Public, Nonprofit, and For-Profit Institutions in a Single Definition Is Unlikely to Immediately Affect Federal Spending, but Long-term Effects Are Unclear, GAO-07-857 , July 31, 2007	The <i>Higher Education Act</i> (HEA) includes two definitions of “institution of higher education.” The second narrower definition excludes for-profits from access to aid.	A single definition could increase federal spending by increasing access to some special postal rates and tax benefits.
5	Federal Family Education Loan Program: Eliminating the Exceptional Performer Designation Would Result in Substantial Savings without Adversely Affecting the Loan Program, GAO-07-1087 , July 26, 2007	The exceptional performer program has not materially affected loan servicing and default claims have not declined in the years following the first exceptional performer designation.	The Department concurred with the recommendation to eliminate the exceptional performer program.

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5	Higher Education: Information Sharing Could Help Institutions Identify and Address Challenges Some Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Students Face, GAO-07-925 , July 25, 2007	Asian Americans and Pacific Islander subgroups, while in high school, face challenges that may affect their ability to persist in college, and they differ in their levels of academic preparedness, ability to pay for college, and needs to balance academic, employment, and family obligations. The Department should facilitate the sharing of information among institutions about strategies that foster low-income postsecondary student recruitment, retention, and graduation and also share information about strategies to reach out to Asian American and Pacific Islanders beginning in high school.	The Department currently shares information about minority-serving institutions' successful practices on its Success Stories Web site. The Department will explore options for encouraging more grantees to report successful practices related to recruitment, retention, and graduation rates, including strategies related to Asian American and Pacific Islander students.
5	Vocational Rehabilitation: Improved Information and Practices May Enhance State Agency Earnings Outcomes for SSA Beneficiaries, GAO-07-521 , May 23, 2007	The Department should revise its performance measures to account for economic differences between states, make better use of incentives for VR agencies to meet performance goals, and create a means for disseminating best practices.	The Department disagreed on when economic conditions and state demographics should be considered in assessing performance but takes these into account when monitoring agency performance results.
2	No Child Left Behind Act: Education Should Clarify Guidance and Address Potential Compliance Issues for Schools in Corrective Action and Restructuring Status, GAO-07-1035 , September 2007	The Department should provide guidance on when schools in corrective action may continue previously implemented corrective actions rather than implementing new ones, direct states to report information on activities taken by each school in corrective action or restructuring, and take additional steps to ascertain whether states are ensuring that districts provided the required assistance to schools.	The Department concurred with the recommendations. The Department will explore options for sharing guidance on when schools may continue a corrective action. The Department will consider options for gathering additional evidence on how states ensure that districts are complying with corrective action and restructuring requirements and will consider ways for revising its monitoring procedures to obtain more information on how states determine whether districts are providing appropriate technical assistance.

Goal	Report Name Organization	Issue	Department's Response
2	Teacher Quality: Approaches, Implementation, and Evaluation of Key Federal Efforts, GAO-07-861T , May 17, 2007	The Department could improve its assistance to states on their teacher quality efforts under both NCLB and HEA.	The Department is working to provide better assistance and improve its evaluation and oversight efforts by disseminating more information on teacher quality requirements and improving how it measures the results of teacher quality programs by establishing performance targets.
2	No Child Left Behind Act: Education Actions May Help Improve Implementation and Evaluation of Supplemental Educational Services, GAO-07-738T , April 18, 2007	The Department should clarify guidance and provide information on promising practices, consider expanding flexibility and clarify state authority, provide evaluation assistance, and collect information on district SES expenditures.	The Department is working to improve federal and state monitoring of SES by requiring that all states submit information on the amount of funds spent by districts to provide SES. The Department is also taking action to provide states with technical assistance and guidance on how to evaluate the effect of SES on student academic achievement.
2	No Child Left Behind Act: Education Assistance Could Help States Better Measure Progress of Students with Limited English Proficiency, GAO-07-646T , March 23, 2007	The Department has provided a variety of technical assistance to states to assess students with limited English proficiency, but has issued little written guidance on developing English language proficiency tests and should expand flexibility to ensure that program measures track the academic progress of LEP students.	The Department is developing a framework on English language proficiency standards and assessments, the development of guides for native language and simplified assessments and the development of a handbook on appropriate accommodations for students with limited English proficiency. Regarding flexibility, the Department issued a blueprint for strengthening NCLB that calls for greater use of growth models.

Goal	Report Name Organization	Issue	Department's Response
2	Reading First: States Report Improvements in Reading Instruction, but Additional Procedures Would Clarify Education's Role in Ensuring Proper Implementation by States, GAO-07-161 , February 28, 2007	The Department should establish control procedures to guide Department staff and contractors in their interactions with states, districts, and schools to ensure compliance with statutory provisions and should disseminate clear procedures governing its monitoring process.	The Department provided written guidance to all Department staff on the importance of impartiality in carrying out their duties and in not misconstruing program statutes to mandate or control curriculum and instruction. Additionally, guidelines to states are being developed outlining the goals and purposes of its monitoring protocols as well as timelines and responsibilities for states to address monitoring findings.
2	No Child Left Behind Act: Education's Data Improvement Efforts Could Strengthen the Basis for Distributing Title III Funds, GAO-07-140 , December 7, 2006	The Department should provide clear instructions to states on how and when to provide data required by NCLB on the number of students with limited English proficiency, develop a methodology for determining which is the more accurate of the two allowable sources of data, and seek authority to use statistical methodologies to ensure data veracity.	The Department agreed with the recommendations and is revising the Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR) data collection form for the 2005-06 school year and proposing changes to the 2007 CSPR form and will develop a methodology to compare the accuracy of the two data sources when the quality of state data improves.
5	Capital Financing: Department Management Improvements Could Enhance Education's Loan Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, GAO-07-64 , October 18, 2006	The Department has not established effective management controls to ensure that it is communicating with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in a useful and timely manner; complying with statutory requirements to meet biannually with an advisory board; and monitoring the performance of the program's contractors.	The Department held two meetings with the HBCU Capital Financing Program's Advisory Board during FY 2007 to discuss a wide variety of topics. Additionally, the Department developed a tip sheet for prospective borrowers and customer satisfaction surveys that are sent to new borrowers. The Department communicates with institutions using a variety of methods such as telephone calls, e-mails, and letters. An independent audit of the program's Designated Bonding Authority (DBA) has been completed.

**Summary of Major Evaluations of Department of Education Programs
Undertaken by the Program Policy and Studies Staff and the Institute for
Education Sciences for FY 2007**

Goal	Report Name	Issue	Outcomes/Actions
1	Evaluation of Flexibility Under No Child Left Behind, Volumes 1-4 (July 2007)	This four volume set examines three of the flexibility options allowed under the <i>No Child Left Behind Act</i> —transferability, Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP-Flex), and the Local Flexibility Demonstration Program (Local-Flex).	Districts that chose to participate in the flexibility programs did so in order to focus funds on achieving their goals of making adequate yearly progress by targeting particular areas of need. While REAP-Flex is widely used by eligible rural districts, they were less likely to participate in transferability and Local-Flex.
1/2	State and Local Implementation of the <i>No Child Left Behind Act</i> , Volume I – Title I, School Choice, Supplemental Educational Services, and Student Achievement (July 2007); Volume II – Teacher Quality Under NCLB: Interim Report (August 2007)	<i>The No Child Left Behind Act</i> provides parents with options for transferring their children to another school in the district from Title I schools that are identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring and have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward meeting state academic standards for two or more years. Volume II presents findings from two national studies that describe the progress that states, districts, and schools have made implementing the teacher and paraprofessional qualification provisions of the <i>No Child Left Behind Act</i> through 2004-05.	Students who participated in supplemental educational services scored higher in both reading and math in the first year and even better in the second and subsequent years. Supplemental educational services produced positive and statistically significant average effects in both reading and math, and students participating for multiple years experienced gains twice as large as for those participating for one year. The percentage of teachers who are not highly qualified under NCLB is higher for special education teachers, teachers of LEP students, middle school teachers and teachers in high poverty and high minority schools.

Goal	Report Name	Issue	Outcomes/Actions
2	Private School Participants in Programs under the <i>No Child Left Behind Act</i> and the <i>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</i> : Private School and Public School District Perspectives (August 2007)	This report describes participation of private school students in federal education programs, the consultation process between private schools and public school districts, and public school district allocation of federal funds for services for private school participants under the rules of the <i>Elementary and Secondary Education Act</i> (ESEA) as reauthorized by the <i>No Child Left Behind Act</i> (NCLB) and the <i>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</i> (IDEA).	Key findings from the report include: 44 percent of private schools had at least one participant under ESEA. 40 percent of private schools with no ESEA participants reported not participating in ESEA programs because they had no knowledge of these programs. IDEA had the highest percentage of private schools with participants. For ESEA, the most common services were professional development, while for IDEA, the most common services were speech and language therapy.
2	National Evaluation of Early Reading First: Final Report to Congress (May 2007)	This final report of the national evaluation as mandated by the <i>No Child Left Behind Act</i> presents the impacts of the Early Reading First program on the language and literacy skills of children and on the instructional content and practices in preschool classrooms.	The findings of the evaluation indicate that the program had positive, statistically significant impacts on several classroom and teacher outcomes and on one of four child outcomes measured. The program showed improved outcomes on print and letter knowledge but not on phonological awareness or oral language.
2	Transition to Teaching Program Evaluation: An Interim Report on the FY 2002 Grantees (May 2007)	This report presents the findings of the Transition to Teaching (TTT) Program's interim evaluation at the three-year interim point of five-year grants awarded in FY 2002.	The Transition to Teaching Program has increased the pool of highly qualified teachers by recruiting nontraditional candidates into teaching. The program improves the retention rate of new teachers through mentoring programs and includes a three-year teaching requirement for high-need schools in high-need districts.

Goal	Report Name	Issue	Outcomes/Actions
2	State Strategies and Practices for Educational Technology - Volume 1: Examining the Enhancing Education Through Technology Program (February 2007); Volume 2: Supporting Mathematics Instruction with Educational Technology (February 2007)	This report is part of a multiyear evaluation of the National Educational Technology Trends Study (NETTS). The Enhancing Education Through Technology Program is dedicated to the integration of educational technology in high-poverty elementary and secondary schools. Volume 1 analyzes state educational technology policies and related programs, including the Enhancing Education Through Technology Program in state efforts. Volume 2 examines the degree to which technology is used for mathematics instruction in fourth- and eighth-grade classes and compares differences across states.	Forty-two states reported having technology standards for students in place by fall of 2004. Many states have put in place minimum standards for teachers' use of technology. In volume 2, relatively few students were found to have teachers who integrated technology into mathematics instruction at least once a week. Few teachers used technology for student assessment in mathematics.
2	Migrant Education Program Annual Report: Eligibility, Participation, Services (2001-02) and Achievement (2002-03) (December 2006)	This report provides information about migrant children and youths who were eligible and who participated in Migrant Education Program-funded services during 2001-02. It provides comparison data from 1998-99 through 2000-01 and academic achievement data for migrant students in 2002-03.	The population of eligible migrant children and youths aged 3-21 grew by 11 percent between 1998-99 and 2001-02. Migrant students lagged behind other students in third-grade and tenth-grade reading and mathematics achievement on state assessments in 2002-03.
2	Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Impacts After One Year (June 2007)	This report describes the first-year impacts of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP). This evaluation was mandated by the District of Columbia School Choice Incentive Act of 2003 to assess the impact of private school choice for low-income students in the District of Columbia.	The collection of evaluation data demonstrating evidence of achievement between students who were offered an OSP scholarship and students who were not is currently ongoing. There has been an increased demand for scholarships in each year of the program. Scholarship demand rose by 5.5 percent for the 2007-2008 school year over the previous year. Four hundred families currently are on a waiting list for a scholarship. Parents report a high level of satisfaction with their children's schools of choice, citing positive changes in their children's attitudes about learning.

