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ABSTRACT

This document presents eight papers prepared for a conference that examined the federal role in elementary and secondary education. The purpose of the meeting was to share ideas and proposals that could be helpful to the Congress and the Administration as they addressed education policy in 2001. Some of the questions addressed here include "What are the fundamental interests of the federal government in elementary and secondary education that should be preserved?," "What is the appropriate role of the federal government in standards-based reform?," and "What is the right balance between flexibility and accountability in federal programs?" Topics discussed include an education agenda for the federal government, federal aid to education since World War II, the new federal roles in education, rethinking the federal role in elementary and secondary education, the federal role in an era of standards-based reform, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and standards-based reform, refashioning the federal role in education, and Title I and the relationship among politics, poverty, and knowledge. Interspersed throughout the document are suggestions that might have broad appeal among people from various sectors and with different political views. (RJM)

The Future of the Federal Role in Elementary and Secondary Education.

February 2001

The Future *of the* Federal Role *in* Elementary & Secondary Education

A Collection of Papers Published by the Center on Education Policy

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On December 4, 2000, the Center on Education Policy sponsored a day-long meeting to discuss what the federal role should be in elementary and secondary education and how that role might be improved and reshaped. The purpose of the meeting was to share ideas and proposals that could be helpful to the Congress and the Administration as they address education policy in 2001. A related goal was to identify suggestions that seemed to have broad appeal among people from various sectors and with different political views.

Forty-two people attended the meeting. Participants included professors of education, researchers, think tank representatives, congressional staff, U.S. Department of Education officials, representatives of teacher associations and parents, representatives of state and local education organizations, advocates for private schools, business and foundation officials, consultants, test developers, and the media. Appendix A includes the full list of participants.

As a starting point for discussion at the meeting, the Center on Education Policy asked several scholars and practitioners to write papers on various aspects of the federal role in education. These papers, which are published in this volume, were circulated in advance to all the meeting invitees and formed a basis for organizing the conversation.

Discussion at the December 4 meeting ranged across several topics. Among the many intriguing issues explored were the following:

- What are the fundamental interests of the federal government in elementary and secondary education that should be preserved?
- What lessons can be learned from the past 35 years of experience with federal education programs?
- What is the appropriate role of the federal government in standards-based reform?
- What could the federal government do to raise academic achievement for all students, especially low-performing students?
- What could the federal government do to promote equity of opportunity for all students and to improve education in poor schools?
- What is the right balance between flexibility and accountability in federal programs?
- Are there too many federal programs? If so, how should they be reduced or grouped?
- How should federal aid be distributed?
- What should the federal role be with respect to private schools?
- What could the federal government do to improve the capacity of schools and teachers to deliver effective curriculum and instruction?

This volume opens with an essay by Jack Jennings, which emphasizes the opportunities for a bipartisan consensus on the federal education role and lays out the Center's recommendations for what that role

should include. Although this essay was shaped in many helpful ways by the December 4 conversation, it represents the ideas of the Center alone. It is not meant to either summarize the meeting discussion or imply agreement by any of the meeting participants.

The remainder of this volume consists of papers by Carl Kaestle, Richard Rothstein, Margaret Goertz, Paul Barton, Elizabeth Pinkerton, David Cohen and Susan Moffitt, and Paul Hill (who could not attend the meeting but submitted an advance paper). We extend our appreciation to these authors for stimulating a productive discussion and our thanks to all of the meeting participants for contributing to an engrossing and important conversation that we hope will continue in the coming months.

An Education Agenda for the Congress and the New Administration

By Jack Jennings, Director, Center on Education Policy

During the next two years, our national leaders have an opportunity to help improve our schools and increase children's learning — an opportunity that they can seize or squander. Much could be accomplished if President George W. Bush and the Congress, and the Republicans and the Democrats, put an end to the divisive and energy-consuming squabbling that has characterized recent education debates in Washington and made a serious bipartisan effort to refashion the federal government's role in education.

Core Principles for an Improved Federal Role in Education

1) The federal government should continue to encourage high academic standards, but should also demand meaningful accountability from the states for increased student achievement and accept national responsibility to help in the proper use of tests.
2) Title I funding should be doubled to help provide all students with a fair chance to learn.
3) The numerous federal education programs that exist now should be consolidated into fewer categories, but separate programs should be retained if they are fulfilling an important national purpose which can only be addressed by targeted aid. The three conditions that must exist in any consolidation are that there is a clear purpose and accountability, that there is an assurance of increased appropriations, and that the funds are distributed to school districts based on the number of low-income children they are serving.
4) The federal government should continue the principle of equitable participation for private schoolchildren in federal education programs, but should not get caught up in divisive battles over vouchers. Instead, a reasoned dialogue ought to take place between the public and private school leaders of the country.

The public wants its leaders to make education a priority. That is why George Bush and Al Gore talked so much about education during the presidential campaign and made so many proposals, some of which overlapped one another. An immediate opportunity for bipartisan agreement is here because the major federal programs aiding the schools expire during the next two years, and the Congress must take action to renew them. So the elements are in place for political leaders to reshape federal education programs in a coherent and positive way that builds on what we've learned from past experience.

Whether this will happen will depend on the choices our leaders make. Since the Republican and Democratic parties are equal in strength in the country, as reflected in the near equal balance of power in the Congress, the president and the congressional leaders can view this situation in one of two ways. They can take hard positions on issues with the expectation of losing in the short term but hoping to win in the next election. Or, they can seek agreement on issues where commonality exists.

As regards elementary and secondary education, our leaders should adopt the second course of action — seek agreement. For nearly three decades through work in the Congress, I helped to fashion many of the federal education programs, and more recently have closely followed federal actions in education through the Center on Education Policy. Based on these experiences, I believe that this is the time to reach bipartisan agreement on the federal role in education. Each side will have to compromise — the Democrats will have to agree to merge many current programs, and the Republicans will have to agree to put aside tuition vouchers for private schools, but the winners will be millions of children who will be given the chance to learn more through better focused and supported efforts to improve education.

Any agreement on the federal education role should be based on four fundamental principles: excellence, equity, accountability for results, and respect for the primary roles of state and local governments. President Bush's proposal, Senator Lieberman's bill, and all other ideas for federal legislation affecting elementary and secondary education ought to be evaluated in light of these principles.

As the overall goals, the federal role in education should strive for excellence in education by encouraging improvements in academic achievement while securing greater equity in schooling by helping those who are having the most difficulty in mastering academic content. Beginning in the 1960's, a paramount federal goal was to achieve equity in education. Since the 1990's, pursuing excellence through raising academic standards for all children has emerged as the more predominant national goal. Today, we must reconcile these two goals. All students should learn more, but the greatest challenges are faced by children in the schools with the largest numbers of poor students.

As the overall goals, the federal role in education should strive for excellence in education while securing greater equity in schooling.

Excellence cannot be attained while equity is ignored; these two objectives are interdependent. For a historical perspective on the federal government's efforts to promote educational equity, excellence, and other objectives, see Carl Kaestle's paper in this volume.

Simply put, our country cannot raise educational achievement for the population as a whole without substantial improvements among low-achieving children. The students who are having

the greatest academic difficulties include a disproportionate share of children from low-income families and from racial/ethnic minority groups. Therefore, we cannot attain excellence without ensuring equity for these children. To underline this point, we need look no further than the recent decennial census, which shows how dramatically the racial and ethnic composition of the country is changing.

While pursuing excellence and equity, the federal government must assure that there is accountability. Taxpayers need to be assured that the money that the federal government is spending on their behalf is in fact producing results, no less in the area of education than in every other area. As discussed below, accountability should be more comprehensive than just imposing more tests on students.

The last principle undergirding federal programs must be respect for the way that education is structured in the United States. The states have the constitutional responsibility for education, but in effect many major decisions are made at the local level. What matters the most is what happens in schools and classrooms. The federal government can have an impact on teaching and learning, but only if it is modest about what it can require in light of the limited amount of aid it provides. The greatest impact is likely to come from federal objectives that are clearly defined, reasonable in scope, and structured as simply as possible.

These last two principles create tension in fashioning any federal program. How far can the federal government go in demanding results for the funds it makes available, while respecting the primary role that states and local governments play? This tension is especially high in the area of education because of our longstanding respect for local control and because the federal contribution to total education funding is so small — about 6% in the aggregate for all school districts and 12% for the poorest districts.

To carry out these broad principles, the Center on Education Policy makes several specific recommendations for federal policies in education. These are discussed below. Although we have gained valuable input from many people, especially those who attended our December 2000 meeting on the federal role in education, we emphasize that the recommendations outlined here are our own. Some of the same ideas, however, have been made by other organizations and individuals, and hopefully this indicates that broad agreement may be emerging on a more focused and more effective federal role in education.

Accountability should be more comprehensive than just imposing more tests on students.

1. The federal government should continue to encourage high academic standards, but should also demand meaningful accountability from the states for increased student achievement and accept national responsibility to help in the proper use of tests.

The federal government must continue to encourage states and local school districts to raise their academic standards. In 1994, amendments to Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act created a framework for promoting this improvement, and the experiences since then have shown that federal advocacy for challenging standards is invaluable in moving states toward coherent systems of standards, assessments, and accountability. But those same experiences also show the limits of such national action and the need for enhanced capacity and knowledge to help these systems succeed.

The states are all at different points in this journey, and each is moving in accordance with its own history and unique forces. Papers in this volume by Margaret Goertz, Paul Barton, and David Cohen and Susan Moffitt document both the strengths and weaknesses of federal support for state standards-based reform since 1994. This past January, *Education Week* released its annual survey of the states which reinforced what these observers have concluded: progress has been made in raising standards and in writing tests (although both need improvement), but the support side for the improvement of schooling — training teachers, providing additional aid for students, making available curriculum guides — has received far less attention.

In seeking greater accountability for results, President Bush and the Congress should draw several key lessons from these experiences. First, the federal requirements should be few and simple — and they must be enforced. Paul Hill's paper in this volume describes the history of the lax interpretation of the comparability requirement in Title I. If the new law insists on greater accountability, then the federal government must stick to that requirement.

Furthermore, the accountability must be meaningful. In the last Congress various proposals were made that claimed to demand greater accountability for results, but those demands were weak. Under those proposals, states would have determined their baseline levels of student achievement and established their goals for increasing achievement, and then they lost a little bit of federal funding for hiring administrators, e.g. 1% of a state's Title I grant, if they did not achieve most of their goals. States could have set low goals and mostly met them without repercussions, or they could have easily absorbed the loss of federal administrative funds if they did not mostly meet the goals.

The federal government should consider other ways to achieve greater accountability that could be enforced while respecting state and local control. For example, an objective national group, such as the National Academy of Sciences, could work with states to determine each state's baseline levels of student achievement by income and racial/ethnic group, using a combination of state assessments and other appropriate measures. Each state could then establish three-year goals for increased achievement for all students and for students by income and racial/ethnic group. If states did not meet their goals, they could agree to make available additional state-level funding targeted on the students who fell short or provide real assistance to local school districts to reconstitute failing schools. Having a state agree to take action if it does not raise student achievement makes more sense than withdrawing a little federal money from a state that does not succeed.

Another lesson learned from recent experiences concerns the lack of capacity at the state level to set proper standards, to create good assessments, to educate people about appropriate test use, and to help educators use standards and assessments to improve teaching and learning. Even if the federal law helps states to establish clear expectations, and even if the federal government encourages states to carry out these agreements, standards-based reform will not succeed unless administrators and teachers have the capacity to carry it out.

If the nation, acting through the new president and the Congress, wants more testing of schoolchildren, then the federal government must be willing to help the states and districts develop better assessments, build the expertise to use them appropriately and fairly, and implement effective strategies to increase learning for students who are low-achieving. Our leaders and national government must also accept some of the responsibility for improving understanding among policymakers, teachers, administrators, and the public about

such issues as effective ways to interpret and report test data and the need to use multiple measures for high-stakes decisions. Perhaps most importantly, the federal government must help states and school districts do the hard work of translation between standards and assessments on one hand, and real changes in curriculum, teaching, and learning on the other. Higher standards and better assessments must be seen as tools to improve student learning.

In short, demands must be accompanied by assistance to build capacity and knowledge. The paper by David Cohen and Susan Moffitt proposes national strategies for providing that assistance through a public-private partnership. Paul Barton and Margaret Goertz, in their papers, suggest various kinds of support and policies that could help make standards-based reform work. In addition to those ideas, we describe below how current federal programs could be refashioned to assist in this task.

Perhaps most importantly, the federal government must help states and school districts do the hard work of translation between standards and assessments on one hand, and real changes in curriculum, teaching, and learning on the other.

2. Title I funding should be doubled to help provide all students with a fair chance to learn.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ought to be retained and its funding doubled. Since 1965, that program has signaled that achieving equal educational opportunity is a national purpose. The nation must recommit itself to that goal, especially if federal legislation places demands on schools to improve the academic performance of low-achieving and poor children, as President Bush and others have proposed.

This commitment must include additional financial resources for school districts and schools serving large numbers of disadvantaged children. The General Accounting Office has shown that current federal aid, especially Title I, has been more successful than state aid in targeting additional resources on low-income students. Greater flexibility can be embedded in Title I — for example by expanding school-wide projects — but the requirements to target aid to the school districts and to the schools attended by disadvantaged students must be retained. In fact, greater targeting of resources ought to be the goal.

If the federal government is demanding greater accountability from educators for the performance for all students, including disadvantaged students, it is only fair that the federal government should provide more resources to help do the job. In the last several years, the federal government has enacted various categorical programs to assist poorer schools, such as the Reading Improvement Act and the Class Size Reduction Act, but has kept appropriations for Title I relatively stagnant in terms of inflation-adjusted dollars. If the number of federal categorical programs is reduced, as we next recommend, Title I will remain as the primary vehicle for aiding schools with disadvantaged children, and it therefore must grow. Currently, Title I is funded at about half the level of its authorization, and therefore we propose fully funding the main federal effort to assist disadvantaged children.

As part of a meaningful, new accountability system, states should be encouraged to provide state-level funding for Title I programs if they do not meet their goal of raising the achievement of

low-income children. Title I funds are the monies which can be used to help disadvantaged low-scoring students to meet more demanding state academic standards, and therefore if states fail to raise the test scores of those children, states could agree to target more funding on that purpose. That is a far more productive way to bring about greater educational achievement than the threat to take away from a state some federal administrative funds.

3. The numerous federal education programs that exist now should be consolidated into fewer categories, but separate programs should be retained if they are fulfilling an important national purpose which can only be addressed by targeted aid. The three conditions that must exist in any consolidation are that there is a clear purpose and accountability, that there is an assurance of increased appropriations, and that the funds are distributed to school districts based on the number of low-income children they are serving.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) contains many other programs in addition to Title I, including some new programs created during the last few years. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act exists separately from ESEA with its own major state grant program and several smaller programs. There are too many federal education programs, and this has made the jobs of local school administrators and teachers even more complex than they already are. In addition, the purposes of federal aid to education have become blurred, as representatives of business and charitable foundations observed at our December meeting.

The number of federal programs should be reduced; instead of many programs, we should have a few major categories of aid, focused on a limited number of clear goals. In her paper appearing in this volume, Elizabeth Pinkerton offers a useful starting point for a discussion on how to consolidate federal programs. Ms. Pinkerton, a leader in both the California and national associations of state and local administrators of federal programs, proposes that the federal K-12 role be reduced to four main categories, as a way of both easing administrative complexity and raising educational achievement. Her categories include programs (1) to aid children of poverty; (2) to help educate children with special needs; (3) to recruit and train teachers and other staff; and (4) to improve academic achievement. President Bush and Senator Lieberman have proposed somewhat similar categories.

In deciding which programs should be folded into a broad category of aid, the following question needs to be asked: Is the purpose of this program important to the nation, and would that purpose be adequately addressed if federal aid was not targeted on it? This is the crucial question because the federal government ought to concentrate on meeting national needs which are not being adequately addressed by state and local governments.

Once programs are identified for consolidation, then three other questions need to be asked. The first question is: Will the consolidation have a clear purpose, and how will states be held accountable for achieving that purpose? All too frequently, current federal programs are imprecise about their purpose, and very often there is no accountability burden on the states to show progress in achieving a stated goal. I make these assertions based on my own experiences in drafting federal legislation and guiding bills to enactment over the course of nearly three decades. Proposals for consolidations of programs and

block grants, both in the far past and in the recent past, have also suffered from the same imprecision. Today, in this era of demands for increased accountability, Congress and the President ought to state much more clearly what is to be achieved by federal aid, and how the states will be held accountable for securing progress in reaching that goal.

The second question which must be asked about any proposed consolidation is: Is there any assurance that this consolidation will receive increased funding to carry out its purpose? The so-called Title VI education block grant, which was created in the early 1980's, has shrunk in appropriations, as measured against the programs consolidated and even against the initial sums appropriated when it was created. That experience is common among block grants across the federal government. If the strategy of combining programs is meant to assist teachers, principals, and superintendents in doing a better job of educating children, then there must be some assurance that the funding will be there to perform that task.

Lastly, the question of how the funds are distributed must be addressed: Will this consolidation distribute funds to school districts based on the number of poor children they are educating? The General Accounting Office has clearly documented that current federal aid is better targeted on poor children than is state aid, and this ought to continue as a primary federal objective. Poor children are those who are most frequently having the greatest difficulty achieving well in school, and teachers and principals in poor schools ought to be given the resources to assist them to do better, as greater accountability is demanded. Richard Rothstein's paper calls for a much stronger federal role in equalizing funding disparities across the states than is happening now. At the minimum, his paper is a reminder not to backslide in any consolidation of programs on the equalization of resources achieved to date.

4. The federal government should continue the principle of equitable participation for private schoolchildren in federal education programs, but should not get caught up in divisive battles over vouchers. Instead, a reasoned dialogue ought to take place between the public and private school leaders of the country.

President Bush and congressional leaders ought to put aside any proposals for tuition vouchers for private schools. No such proposal will survive congressional consideration, and the battle to secure passage will threaten the spirit of bipartisan cooperation necessary to make the other major improvements in the federal role outlined above. Expanding students' choice among public schools is a realistic national goal, but arguments over the constitutionality of tuition vouchers for private schools cannot be resolved as the Congress is now constituted.

The question of aid to private school children, though, ought not to be ignored. Title I should retain the principle of federal aid following disadvantaged children to the schools they attend, whether public or private. This provision has been an integral part of that program since 1965. Furthermore, any consolidation of programs should incorporate the principle of equitable participation of private schoolchildren and teachers, which has long been a part of most of the programs to be consolidated.

We also recommend the creation by legislation of a National Forum on Public and Private Education. In a democracy, reasoned dialogue ought to be encouraged among all parties involved in an issue, even those issues which are very contentious and emotional. For that reason, we believe that an independent national forum composed of an equal number of public and private school representatives, appointed equally by Republican and Democratic congressional lead-

ers, ought to be formed to discuss matters of mutual concern. Topics could include improving teacher training and creating more demanding curricula for students. It is a common practice for teachers to work in private schools and then to move to public schools, and vice versa; and, likewise, students often will attend a public and then a private school, or the reverse. Leaders of both sectors must strive to find ways to improve education for all students.

We also propose that this Forum consider the difficult issues, beginning with the effects of some recent changes in state tax law that may affect both public and private schools. Four states have recently enacted tax credits and deductions for aid to private schools, and several more states are poised to do the same. The implications of these policies for both public and private schools should be examined jointly by public and private school leaders.

CONCLUSION

Now is the time for Republicans and Democrats to reach agreement on a refashioned federal role in education. The beginning of a president's term in office is the best time to forge bipartisan legislation; as election time approaches, the task becomes more difficult as the political parties jockey for advantage. This opportunity for bipartisan agreement to seek both excellence and equity in education must be seized before the moment passes.

President Bush and his congressional supporters should put aside their advocacy of tuition vouchers, and should agree to retain Title I with increased funding to show their commitment to helping schools raise the achievement of students with the greatest needs. The Democrats should put aside their commitment to a variety of individual categorical programs, and agree on consolidations of programs with clear purposes and real accountability.

Working together, Democrats and Republicans can help to instill greater accountability for educational results, raise achievement among children who are having the most difficulty, and bring more clarity to the federal purpose in education. The nation would gain better schools for all children.

Federal Aid to Education Since World War II: Purposes and Politics

By Carl F. Kaestle

Hundreds of essays have been written about it, thousands of hours of Congressional testimony devoted to it, dozens of campaigns focused on it; yet the origins of federal aid to elementary and secondary education are murky, its present status controversial, and its future uncertain. In an attempt to sort out the complicated history of the issue, this essay focuses on the purposes that have been asserted for federal aid in education, and the politics that have surrounded those purposes. The federal role in elementary and secondary education of course extends far beyond legislation that provides financial *aid* to schools. Federal courts and agencies regulate education in many ways; and the President, the Secretary of Education and others use their "bully pulpit" to convene discussions, to frame issues, and to set agendas. Many agencies outside of the Department of Education carry on educational programs, not only providing money but disseminating innovations and evaluating programs. This paper, however, focuses on the major bills for federal aid to schools, a prominent topic of debate and a matter of great concern to states and to localities. It is not a chronological narrative but rather an examination of purposes and politics.

CONTEXT: AMERICA AFTER WORLD WAR II

Most people seem to agree on at least one thing about federal aid to education: there wasn't much of it before World War II. In the first 150 years of the country's history, the Congress occasionally announced that education was in the national interest and from time to time devoted some resources to improve education, notably through land grants to colleges, vocational education programs run through the states, and various bills to support the education of native Americans. Nonetheless, the federal role in education was neither very controversial nor very consequential for most Americans and their politicians. To be sure, there were advocates of more substantial general aid to elementary and secondary education, but they were regularly trounced in Congress.[1]

Indeed, the drubbing continued in the 1940's and 50's — but by then the context was different. The Depression and the War had changed the face of federalism in America. In response to the economic crisis President Franklin Roosevelt had engaged the federal government in welfare and the

economy on a scale hitherto unknown. Federal construction projects, welfare programs, and social security raised people's expectations about what the federal government could do for people. These expectations were reinforced by Roosevelt's enunciation of the Four Freedoms in 1941, including the freedom from "want" and "fear." He embellished these in his last annual message in 1944, setting out an "economic bill of rights" that included health, education, shelter, and employment. As David Kennedy points out, Americans in 1944, with the distractions of war and the security of a booming wartime economy, were much less attentive to this message than they had been earlier.[2]

Still, Roosevelt's rhetorical expansion of Americans' rights reflected a growing reality of governmental activism. Federal grants in aid programs, ranging from agriculture to welfare, rose from three percent of the states' total revenues in 1932 to ten percent in 1952.[3] Liberal attitudes toward welfare and social security survived assaults on the New Deal and made gradual progress in both Democratic and Republican administrations in the 1950's.[4] President Harry Truman embraced the expansion of rights and expectations and put more emphasis on civil rights, which met with modest success.[5] Although the venerable tradition of local and state control entered the post-War world in robust health, the New Deal had challenged state governments by showing what government could do.[6] Meanwhile, the Supreme Court of the 1930's began to press the role of the federal judiciary in civil rights. Led by Hugo Black, the Court increasingly applied the Fourteenth Amendment and the Bill of Rights to the states.[7]

America's entry into World War II entailed a massive mobilization of technology, organizations, and human beings. The federal government created a defense infrastructure — planning, organizing, recruiting, training, producing, transporting, storing, and deploying the goods and personnel of war. The federal government thereby entered into the lives of its citizens at home and abroad with unprecedented scale and authority.[8] The momentum of the War mobilization carried into the years beyond. In the immediate aftermath, there was the huge job of relocating men and women from the armed forces back into the civilian economy. One of the results of manpower planning discussions occasioned by this looming transition was the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, passed in 1944. This "GI Bill of Rights" was intended in part to reward service to the country and in part to ameliorate the negative effects unemployment might have on the economy. The bill provided unemployment compensation, grants for education and training, and loans for home purchases.[9]

While the GI Bill addressed the sacrifices made by individuals, a second piece of legislation recognized the costs of the War to communities. As the War deepened, the federal government had built more and more defense plants and supply depots in the United States. These federal properties were exempt from local taxation. Thus, many communities were faced with housing shortages and with children in their public schools for whom they had no matching tax revenues. Congress addressed the housing problem in the Lanham Act of 1940, providing construction money. When that bill was reauthorized in 1941, the lawmakers tackled the education problem, providing funds for both the construction and operation of schools in federally affected areas. The legislation sternly promised that the federal government would exercise no "supervision or control" over schools thus assisted.[10] Although these programs were seen as temporary, the federal impact on localities did not cease with the War. New "impact" legislation was passed in 1950, PL 815 for construction and PL 874 for operating expenditures.[11] Like the GI Bill,

impact legislation proved uncontroversial and popular. Both of these forms of federal aid survived well beyond the 1940's.

The War also created momentum for liberal changes in employment conditions and civil rights. It raised expectations among unionized workers, who had achieved some bargaining gains during the War, among black Americans, who had fought for and won some modest civil rights gains in the military, and among women, many of whom were reluctant to give up the jobs they had assumed during the War. Thus, there were forces for change in post-War America, and there were new expectations about what the federal government could do.

Yet there were equally potent forces for a return to "normal." Many wanted a respite from change after the successive crises of depression and war. They did not want more government innovation and intervention. They wanted, in the words of Senator Robert Taft, to return to the "traditional American heart of things — liberty."[12] Many years earlier Alexis de Toqueville had worried that the pursuit of equality in America would centralize the government's power at the expense of liberty. Politics in America after World War II were still tempered by this polarity. Many preferred liberty to more government because the economy had recovered nicely, and for many, standards of living were up. Big manufacturing firms responded to some of labor's raised expectations, offering more benefits and job security in return for a truce between labor and management.[13] And many people focused their attention not on the government but on the innovations coming out of appliance factories, the entertainment industries, and auto showrooms. Speaking of anti-New Deal sentiment, Eric Goldman wrote in 1955, "no nation can go through such rapid changes in its domestic life without backing up an enormous amount of puzzlement, resentment, and outright opposition. ...No group is more annoyed by reform than those who have benefited from it and no longer need it."[14] Thus, when proponents of federal aid to elementary and secondary schools like Democratic Senators Elbert Thomas of Utah and Lister Hill of Alabama revived their pre-War efforts, there was no shortage of opponents.

Opposition to Federal Aid

Until the late 1930's opponents had clung to a constitutional argument about the Tenth Amendment, stating that the Constitution reserved to the states all powers not specifically granted to the federal government in the Constitution, and that therefore the federal government had no constitutionally defensible role in the provision of education. From 1937 onward, the Supreme Court endorsed the federal government's authority more expansively, essentially rejecting the strict "enumerated powers" argument.[15] Still, opponents of federal intervention in local public schools argued that it violated a valuable tradition. It was valuable because local control worked better. It worked better because local officials knew local problems and local people and could forge local solutions that worked. Why, then, did not the local school boards and their Chambers of Commerce oppose *state* authority in education, which, during the course of the twentieth century, had increased greatly? One would think that state government posed the same threat of strangers interfering with local schools; faceless bureaucrats in the state capital making cookie-cutter solutions, the same for all communities. Indeed, localities *had* opposed the states' role in elementary and secondary education in the first half of the nineteenth century, on just these grounds.[16] But public opinion gradually swung toward state involvement. At first it was limited to required reports, a modicum of state aid, some rudimentary regulations upheld by county agents of the state, laws encouraging the consolidation

of small districts into town-wide systems, and pressure for communities to mute or abandon distinct religious doctrines in public schooling. But by the mid-twentieth century, states were providing substantial aid to local school budgets, and in return they were in many states regulating curriculum content, teacher certification, and the length of the school year.

One benefit of this shared funding and shared governance was that the states could make modest attempts to ameliorate the harsh inequalities of district-level school finance. Somewhat uncomfortable partners, united by regional preferences and a shared apprehension of federal control, opponents of federal control drew from both the local control and the states' rights traditions and tried, successfully if incongruously, to weld them together.

The first argument against a federal role — that it was unconstitutional — had waned (but not disappeared) by the 1950's. The second argument — that decisions about local schooling were best left to local decision-makers — was central. Although it was often challenged by civil rights advocates from the 1950's on, it has many supporters to this day. The third argument was that federal intervention was not needed because localities, with help from their states, could provide good education for their children. Thus, Robert Taft, opposing "emergency" assistance for schools in 1943, argued that states did not lack the resources to do the job, and for Taft such a lack of state capacity would have been the only justification for federal aid. Two things are noteworthy about this argument. First, it represents an early version of the equal opportunity argument, but the unit of analysis is the state, not localities or individuals. Second, this criterion allowed the possibility that in the future such an incapacity *would* be demonstrated. And that is exactly what happened. In 1946 Taft changed his mind, having again studied the state data on school finance. He joined with Democrats in the Senate to propose a bill guaranteeing a minimum per pupil expenditure across the country.[17] But many of his colleagues thought he had lost his much-vaunted Republican mind and abandoned the principles of fiscal restraint and limited federal intervention. Indeed those principles were the core of the opposition. They were well expressed by Sylvia Anderson, a citizen of Leurstown, Montana who wrote to the Secretary of Health Education and Welfare, Marion Folsom, in 1956. Like a lot of Republicans, she was dismayed at the endorsement of federal aid by President Eisenhower's White House Conference on Education. With clarity and force she expressed the arguments that have held so much sway on this issue over the decades and are thus worth noting in detail:

> My husband and I are against any Federal aid to education because: 1.) Federal aid means federal control, 2.) No one will be able to stop the snowballing effect once it got started... 3.) Uncle Sam is $280 Billion in debt — I'm ashamed to tell my kids that — they will have that mess to clean up. 4.) A certain amount of money will be lost in the shuffle from State to Federal and back to State. 5.) Federal aid means more people on federal payroll, therefore more centralization of government which we are absolutely against. 6.) Our state can take care of itself. 7) Catholics will want Federal aid too which will lead to a State-Church government, which we are against. 8.) We feel there is a conspiracy to undermine and bankrupt the U.S.A... . This was evident at the White House Conference on Education... 9.) Pressure put upon you by professional educators may be sincere, but we feel too many of them are not practical minded — they're idealists. 10.) If you raise taxes any more you'll defeat our economy — we already feel the pinch of years of pork-barrel socialism.[18]

The national Chamber of Commerce and its local affiliates echoed Mrs. Anderson's sentiments. The Detroit Board of Commerce wrote Folsom, "We believe that citizens of a community are best able to determine what type of educational program they wish to support" and that "citizens will recognize the folly of asking for financial assistance from a government that is operating at a deficit."[19]

This positive affirmation of the capacity of localities and states to provide education, and the positive wisdom of leaving decisions closer to the communities, had their negative corollary in distrust and apprehension of big, centralized government. These negative associations flowed from two related sources: anti-New Deal sentiment, and the conviction that big government was a step toward totalitarianism. Those who rejected the New Deal argued that it was a wrong-headed departure from Jeffersonian principles of limited government. These views became reinforced and linked with two international contexts, in swift succession: the fight against fascist nations in World War II and the struggles with Communism in the Cold War. In the 1950's, arguments against federal aid as a big-government menace ranged from the long-standing, calmly stated positions of the national Chamber of Commerce, to the more extreme views of the radical right. In his regular radio broadcast on Mutual Broadcasting System, John T. Flynn editorialized,

> There has been a powerful element in this country promoted mainly by the socialist elements. It is part of the general scheme to take power away from the states and give it to Washington... The scheme has been promoted for a number of years by the National Education Association.... [It] is a movement to enable the federal government to take over the job of turning out a whole generation of little socialists and pinkoes of various hues.[20]

Thus the anti-centralization argument had a particular anti-Communist twist in the 1950's. When Alabama Congressman Carl Elliott, an ardent New Dealer, talked about the obstacles to federal education aid in the 1950's, he named the "3 R's," which included Race, Religion, and "Reds." This mantra of three "R's" has lived on, repeated again and again by historians: federal aid bills failed because of a combination of religion (aid to parochial schools), race (the threat that federal aid would be coupled with demands for racial desegregation), and traditional anti-centralization arguments, including the anti-Communist version.[21]

However, if we look at the work of scholars who have closely dissected the failure of federal aid to education legislation from the 1940's through the early 1960's, we find that there were more than three obstacles. In a famous article, Hugh Price used the phrase "3 R's" but instead of "Reds," he substituted the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives, referring to the stranglehold that the Rules Committee and its chairman could employ to block legislation.[22] To this nondemocratic aspect of House procedures could be added the powers of committee chairmen more generally, as in the example of Congressman Graham Barden, Democrat of North Carolina and chair of the House Committee on Education and Labor, who exercised every wile and every procedural power he had to delay or defeat federal aid to education bills he did not favor.[23] In their useful monograph Frank Munger and Richard Fenno discussed a few important additions to the list of obstacles. Before they got to the "3 R's," they pointed out that people disagreed strongly about whether federal aid should be largely across the board or strongly equalizing in its allocation formulas. A certain level of reallocation can be a positive factor in gaining support (fairness, share the wealth), but strongly reallocative legislation is

a tough sell, because opponents always do a chart of the winners and losers (which, in this case, are states). Second, lest we forget, Munger and Fenno noted that people disagreed strongly about what the purposes of federal aid should be (the leading candidates in the 1940's and 50's were per pupil expenditures, school construction, and teacher salaries). After reminding us of these additional obstacles, Munger and Fenno turn to a chapter about the usual triumvirate: federal control (the centralization issue), parochial schools, and racial segregation.[24]

In one of the best monographs on educational legislation in the 1950's and 60's James Sundquist lists the three traditional factors as key, but substitutes fiscal restraint for the centralization issue. Fiscal restraint is related to the anti-centralization theme but flows more from concern with balanced budgets than from devotion to local control.[25] One further obstacle, so obvious that analysts don't list it, is party politics. Bipartisan cooperation was sometimes achieved on federal aid to legislation, but it was transitory, and, at some crucial points (as in President Eisenhower's last year) election-year politics scuttled cooperation on federal aid bills. A further obstacle is mentioned by Gordon Ambach, who worked in the Office of Education on higher education issues during the early 1960's. After 1958, when higher education began to get significant help in the form of scholarships, construction and other assistance, there arose competition between the higher education community and those still pressing for substantial aid to elementary and secondary schools.[26] Finally, lack of Presidential leadership has been charged against President Truman, President Eisenhower and President Kennedy for the failure of education aid legislation during their administrations.[27] The obstacles to passage of federal aid to elementary and secondary education are therefore insufficiently summarized by the "three R's." A more comprehensive list might be called the Ten Gremlins:

Anti-centralization
The politics of equalization
Fiscal restraint
Lack of consensus on purposes
Parochial school aid
Party politics
Segregation
Competition with higher education
The power of committee chairs
Presidential inattentiveness

It is no wonder that one of the liveliest books on this topic is called Obstacle Course on Capitol Hill.[28] Prior to discovering that book, I had settled on a similar metaphor. I imagined two slalom ski runs, next to each other, both with icy surfaces and hairpin turns. One is the House Slope, the other the Senate Slope. In order to secure passage of a bill for federal aid to schools, two teams, one on each slope, must ski down to the bottom of the hill. The upper reaches are called the Subcommittee Run, after which comes a series of turns known as the Committee Run. On the House Slope there is also a treacherous area known as the Rules Run. Then both slopes have bumpy, lower reaches called the Floor. If skiers from both teams make it that far, the two slopes merge in a final dizzying downhill straightaway through Conference Pass. Then the paths separate briefly again, for the Second Floor Run. At every turn, all the way down, opposing teams are allowed on the ski slope to set traps, trip the skiers, or throw gravel on the ice. At the very bottom, where the trails meet again, an official called the President has the opportunity to close the ski run with a key called the Veto.

STUDYING LEGISLATION: A REVIEW OF SOME MODELS

Given this impressive list of obstacles to federal aid, proponents continually failed, and their failures continually inspired them to innovate. The obstacles played out differently depending upon how the federal aid was defined and explained, so advocates kept pursuing the elusive bill that could make it all the way down the slalom. In doing so, they fashioned categories and theories about the purposes and politics of legislation, and some of those have persisted as analytical categories today. They can be helpful or mischievous, depending upon how they are used. Four sets of terms are discussed in the remainder of this paper. Specifically, they are: first, the familiar dichotomy between "general" and "categorical" aid to schools; second, my distinction between "episodic" and "incremental" factors in the development of the federal role, which resonates with Nelson Polsby's distinction between "acute" policy innovation and "incubated" policy innovation; third, Theodore Lowi's venerable distinction between "developmental," "regulatory," "redistributive," and "constitutive" legislation; and fourth, a set of terms devised for this paper, distinguishing between the "original," the "discretionary," and the "mandatory" purposes of a federal role in elementary and secondary education. In every case, as we shall see, the terms are not as precise or as mutually exclusive as they superficially appear. Their usefulness depends upon recognizing that in the real world of legislation there will be hybrid proposals and gray areas, and thus there will be participants who have different perceptions of the same proposal.

"General" versus "Categorical" Aid

The big debates about school aid in the period from the 1940's to 1957 were about proposals for "general" aid, that is, legislation to aid school districts that did not tightly specify how the funds are to be used. The closest thing to purely general aid was the bill sponsored unsuccessfully by Senators Taft, Thomas and Hill in 1947, which proposed to supplement local school funds to create a minimum per-pupil expenditure of $55 per child nationwide. Part of the impact aid funds also went for general operating expenses of school districts. But the word "general" is something of a misnomer because the label is also used for aid limited to school construction and aid limited to teachers' salaries. Nonetheless, the term is used to cover proposals for all these purposes. It is a convenient way to summarize the early post-War history of federal aid: bills recommended before 1958 were general, and they all failed, while those in 1958 and 1965, which succeeded, were "categorical," that is, they specified more carefully what the money was to be spent for. This tale, of course, masks many differences in the political attractiveness and fate of different kinds of "general" aid. The Eisenhower administration approved of construction aid but not teachers' salaries, arguing that the risk of federal control was much greater in the latter case. The Catholic Church's policy arm (the National Catholic Welfare Conference) was willing to consider construction aid to public schools if it was mixed with some concessions to private religious schools on transportation or other services, but it opposed aid to teachers' salaries. Another complexity arises from the fact that most debates about general aid also involved the question of whether the aid would be targeted at the poorer states, and what formulas would be attached to eligibility. Nonetheless, this era in the history of federal aid is often summarized as simply a period of unsuccessful attempts to pass "general" aid bills.

In contrast, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 specified that the funds

were to be used for summer institutes for teacher training in math, science and languages, for language and science laboratories, and other enumerated activities. While the prospects of general aid had been paralyzed by disputes over aid to religious private schools, the NDEA afforded some benefits to these schools and their teachers. James Sundquist writes that the NDEA "had shown that special-purpose aid, carefully designed, could be enacted at a time when general-purpose aid could not be."[29] Also, of course, the bill benefited from its association with an urgent Cold War crisis, the Soviets' launching of Sputnik. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act benefited from the same characteristics. The Johnson administration presented it as a response to a crisis of poverty and racial disharmony that could be alleviated by educational opportunity. The bill specified that the money was to be used for the education of children in poor districts who needed help on basic skills, although the definition of poverty was defined broadly in order to elicit widespread support for the bill. Other titles within the ESEA provided for library purchases, experimental projects, educational research and other targeted activities.[30] It sidestepped the religious issue with the same sort of compromises NDEA proponents had employed.[31] Sundquist argues that "politics" dictated the shift to special- purpose (categorical) aid, resulting in "a complex structure of special purpose assistance," a shift that no one would have recommended a decade earlier.[32] The politics of enactment pushed it that way because of church-state issues. But one could argue that local school districts would actually have been less threatened by general aid to construction or teacher salaries, because such purposes were not so tightly prescriptive, while categorical legislation sets the agenda and then monitors the expenditures.[33]

Thus, while the categorical nature of the 1958 and 1965 legislation allowed federal officials some bargaining room on the church-state issue, that same categorical nature of the legislation, with its attendant regulations, soon aroused another fount of traditional opposition to federal aid: resistance to federal control. And the other "R", race, loomed important in the implementation of ESEA. In the South, ESEA's Title I provided the lever for the Office of Education to press for racial desegregation, relying upon the fulcrum of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which forbade discrimination in any program receiving federal money. This could have been the case regardless of whether the aid was general or categorical, but the categorical nature of ESEA put the federal government in a posture of considerable active intervention overseeing the way its money was being spent, so the resistance to desegregation was reinforced by resistance to detailed federal management of education.

If the politics of enactment pushed legislation from the general toward the categorical, the politics of implementation tended to the reverse. Paul Peterson argued that the NDEA, which appeared to be tightly categorical, in fact had hands-off, weak oversight from the federal government, making it quite popular with school officials and providing it with a reliable constituency. Impact Aid, which had been quite "general" from the beginning, enjoyed the same loose oversight and the same popularity among local school officials and the Congress.[34] Whether we can therefore generalize that federal programs only succeed when they are loosely supervised is problematic. Some programs (for example, aid for the education of children with disabilities) have succeeded in Congress because of widespread public support, despite considerable levels of regulation. The point to take from Peterson's discussion of NDEA, it seems, is that appearance and reality are two different things when assigning labels like "general" and "categorical." More important, legislation may look like one thing when enacted and

migrate into something else when implemented over several years.

In some cases, not only the purposes but the eligibility for participation widens. For example, successive reauthorizations over the years widened the definition of federal "impact," thus widening the number of districts eligible. The same process occurred with Title I of ESEA: as the formula defining "poor" families widened, the number of eligible schools continually increased. In both cases, the legislation became, in this sense, more "general."

Critique:

The deceptively simple distinction between "general" and "categorical" aid is therefore quite complex. It can be analytically useful and interesting if we keep the following caveats in mind. First, the pair of terms is better seen as a continuum than as a set of mutually exclusive categories. Some "general" aid bills are more targeted than others (*e.g.*, aid for teachers' salaries is more specific than aid for per pupil expenditures). Conversely, some categorical programs are broader than others (*e.g.*, ESEA was broader than NDEA, and NDEA was broader than vocational education). Second, "categorical" legislation can, over the years, become more "general" as eligibility widens or regulations allow more discretion to local authorities. The research literature on implementation used to say "all implementation is local," meaning that top-down regulation didn't work very well at all; in the 1980's, a body of research suggested that implementation of federal programs was a long process of negotiation between federal, state, and local actors, sometimes leading to mutually acceptable, workable programs that retained a measure of categorical direction and oversight.[35] Third, and paradoxically, the more categorical programs there are, the more they collectively act like general aid for a district. The federal government did what it could to ensure that federal funds would "supplement, not supplant" local and state expenditures. Yet even as early as the 1960's, local school officials surveying federal programs — though they might fret over the bureaucratic burden of receiving the grants — could reap considerable benefit to their budgets from programs for vocational education, science, math, and language training and facilities, compensatory education, library purchases, reform projects, and other purposes. This point — that the more categorical programs there are, the more they act like a form of general aid — is a more speculative and metaphorical point, but it underscores the general caution that the distinction between "general" and "categorical" aid is fuzzy.

"Incremental" versus "Episodic" Factors Influencing the Federal Role

This distinction relates more to the politics of an expanding federal role than to its purposes. One explanation for why the federal government continually assumes more authority and engages in more activities points to periodic crises that overcome our otherwise reluctant attitude toward federal intervention. The solution to the crisis is a piece of legislation, or the creation of an agency, to address the problem. Perhaps the program helps solve the problem, often not, but by the time the crisis has receded, the program has developed a bureaucratic momentum, including employees, regulations, and constituents. Thus, the agency survives, and the federal government is at a new plateau of activity in that area. The escalation continues with the next crisis.[36]

This "Leviathan" interpretation seems plausible when applied to the federal role in elementary and secondary education since World War II. After years of failure for general aid, the NDEA succeeded on the heels of the Sputnik Crisis. And the Civil Rights movement of the 60's played a

role in the passage of ESEA. But to some extent, the association of landmark legislation with social crisis is required rhetoric. The proponents of general aid loudly proclaimed an "emergency" shortage of classrooms and teachers in the early 1950's, to no avail. And the widely successful promotion of crisis mentality by the 1983 *Nation at Risk* report, did not lead to a growth of the federal Leviathan, even though the rhetoric of crisis was supported by malaise from the 1980's recession and was accompanied by reports of America's declining productivity and declining test scores. However, because the Reagan administration was firmly committed to a reduction in the federal role, the legislative aspect of this crisis played itself out mostly at the state level. So there are educational "crises" without landmark federal legislation.

The converse can also be true. Public Law 94-142, for the education of children with disabilities, which was passed in 1975, followed a gradual and profound professional shift of approach, not a sudden crisis. Such developments may be called "incremental." In the history of the federal role in education they include such factors as the public's gradual habituation to the federal role in other areas like housing and transportation, evolving constitutional concepts relevant to education, expanding consciousness about rights, and trends in immigration. These and other developments create the context and conditions that lead to policy innovations.

My distinction between "episodic" and "incremental" factors echoes Nelson Polsby's distinction between "acute" and "incubated" policy innovations. Studying eight cases, including both foreign and domestic policy initiatives, Polsby posited two types of policy initiatives. "Acute" initiatives develop quickly, in reaction to a pressing crisis, with few alternatives developed, and constraints on partisanship and debate. "Incubated" initiatives develop over a long period of time, with robust consideration of alternatives and strenuous, partisan debate.[37]

Critique:

In Polsby's scheme, legislation is either "acute" or "incubated." In reality, of course, there are hybrid cases, or, more important, cases in which some observers see the innovation as a sudden outcome of a crisis and other observers argue that it resulted from a more long-term deliberative process. In an exchange with Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Elliott Richardson (then an Assistant Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare), cautioned against the belief that NDEA emerged suddenly, as a result of the Sputnik scare.[38] Indeed, I had already tracked Richardson through the archival paper trail, from the White House Conference on Education in 1955, to the Committee on Education After High School in 1956, to the HEW task force on higher education legislation in 1957, which produced a bill that was nearly identical to NDEA during the year preceding the launch of Sputnik. That bill became NDEA. Similarly, with regard to ESEA, there appears at first glance a great disjunction between Kennedy's failed attempts at legislation for elementary and secondary education, and Johnson's swift, dramatic victory in 1965; yet, various elements of that victory had been "incubating" in the Kennedy years, most notably, the idea of an omnibus bill and the idea of tying the education legislation to the economic and social health of the nation.

Therefore, as in the case of "general" and "categorical" aid, we cannot treat the "episodic" and the "incremental" as mutually exclusive, but rather they combine, in different measure, in different legislative situations. That perception seems supported by the recent literature on political agenda-setting: first, the argument that successful legislation often comes about from the combination of an available, relevant set of policy

ideas (the policy "stream") and the opening of a policy "window" that provides the opportune moment; and second, the idea that stability and instability in policy-making is related to the creation and decay of policy "monopolies."[39] This literature can contribute to a more rounded picture of how the federal role has developed.

Still, the Leviathan thesis reminds us of two important points: first, that the politics surrounding new federal programs often encourages the assertion of a crisis to justify a new intervention; and, second, that once implemented, legislative programs often create a bureaucracy and a constituency that guarantees their continuation. The Leviathan thesis runs the risk, however, of overlooking the incremental processes that also encourage new federal initiatives, and second, overestimates the inexorable, linear upward climb. The thrust of Johnson's liberalism unraveled by the late 1970's; the share of local education budgets provided by the federal government went back down from 9 percent to 6 percent; and the late 1980's consensus on national standards got politicized in the Clinton administration, over issues like whether standards would be developed to measure students' "opportunity to learn." While the trajectory of federal involvement in education was generally upward from 1958 to 1978, it was always bumpy, contested terrain. And from the late 1970's to the present, each administration has had to reinvent the federal role in education.

Theodore Lowi's Enduring Legislative Taxonomy

Proceeding from his skepticism about the "imperial Presidency" literature in the era of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, Theodore Lowi tracked legislative proposals from their planning stages, through committees and in the press, to the floor debates. He distinguished between four types of legislation. "Distributive" legislation targets money at specific clients or purposes (it is called "developmental" by some political scientists). Such statutes include subsidies, land policies, aid to airports, river and harbors, and in education, vocational education or the GI Bill. Such initiatives generally flow out of the executive branch or from committees; they are perceived as creating only winners, not losers; thus, they are often uncontroversial and sometimes have low visibility. "Redistributive" legislation reallocates resources from some groups to others in a more obvious fashion, as in Social Security, farm aid, progressive income taxes, or Title I of the ESEA. These initiatives tend to breed strong coverage in the press and consequently a lot of activity on the floor of the Congress. "Regulatory" legislation implies the rule of law but nonetheless similarly generates much floor activity. Decision-making is dominated by Congress, not the Executive branch. Examples would be labor relations legislation, or the regulation of advertising or drugs; at the local level, it could be rent control. Regulatory legislation affecting education includes Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, prohibiting sex discrimination in federally funded education programs, or Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. "Constitutive" legislation, not important for our purposes here, deals with such issues as the reapportionment of districts or the creation of new agencies. Lowi found that these categories behave differently with regard to who does the development of the legislation, who does the debating, and how much public and press scrutiny they receive.[40]

Does Lowi's taxonomy provide a key to understanding the federal role in education? There are two aspects of Lowi's enterprise that need not detain us here, one empirical, the other theoretical. First, Lowi concluded that the "imperial" presidency had been overrated, and that

Congress was the key player in legislation more than people thought. Second, he attempted to develop a predictive theory based on the four types. But for our purposes the importance of the categories lies in the fact that they became enshrined in the literature on federalism, and some analysts have used them to make normative judgments about what types of legislation can be best handled by each level of government — federal, state or local.[41] Paul Peterson recommended in 1995 that the federal government focus on its primary strength and responsibility, which lay in redistributive policies for social security, welfare, health care and the like. At the same time he recommended that the federal government should take a more cautious stance toward developmental legislation, especially the kind that leads to pork-barrel allocation of funds by enterprising Congressional representatives.[42] Alice Rivlin had made a similar recommendation in 1992, essentially that the federal, state and local roles should be clarified, that overlap should be reduced, and that the federal government should stick mainly to redistributive actions.[43]

Critique:

As with the previous taxonomies, Lowi's categories are not mutually exclusive. One person may see Title I as a form of general aid, another as fundamental redistributive policy. As Beryl Radin says, "In many cases, policies emerge from the political process containing a combination of these policy types. Coalitions are devised to maximize political support, not to enhance policy design coherence."[44] Like the other analytical categories, Lowi's are more useful if they are seen as *aspects* of legislation, not clear-cut *types*.

Even if the distinction between redistributive and distributive legislation was always clear-cut, we would still be in a quandary. The advice that the federal government is especially well-suited to the redistributive role seems less controversial than the recommendation that it should divest itself of the distributive programs. Nobody likes pork-barrel giveaways (except those who benefit), but that hardly exhausts the repertoire of federal grants-in-aid. What should the federal government do when it sees a national interest in helping states and localities do something they are not currently doing and perhaps are unable to do? Peterson recognized this problem when he worried at the end of his book about the fate of cities and their poorer residents.[45] The advice of Peterson and Rivlin leaves us with few tools to decide carefully which developmental initiatives the federal level should take. It is a huge area that in education would include most curriculum development (including virtually all of the NSF's work on elementary and secondary education), assessment, teacher training, libraries, guidance, vocational education, and a large host of other issues. This dilemma leads me in the next section to take one further excursion into the making of taxonomies.

The "Original," the "Discretionary," and the "Mandatory" Purposes of the Federal Government in Elementary and Secondary Education

By the "original" purposes of the federal role, I mean those modest functions originally assigned to the Office of Education and frequently cited as the uncontroversial, basic federal functions in education. The Department of Education Act (1867) assigned to the new agency the responsibility for collecting statistics and information about the condition of education in the country and disseminating such information, including observations about school organization and teaching methods. While there was some controversy about the functions and the performance of the new Department (soon Bureau) in its early years, the first two commissioners devel-

oped a set of activities that became the accepted function of the Bureau in the late nineteenth century. Henry Barnard and his successor, John Eaton, who served from 1870 to 1886, gathered statistics, hired professional writers to write reports, developed a fledgling national library of books on education, and published compendia of statistics, minutes of national meetings about education, and surveys of knowledge on various educational topics.[46] With no power to enforce compliance in any matter, the Bureau of Education sought to compile and disseminate information, report to Congress on the condition of the nation's schools, and write reports on promising developments in education. In the twentieth century, these functions withstood assaults on the federal role in education. Donald Senese, who was Assistant Secretary for the newly created Office of Educational Research and Improvement during the Reagan administration, emphasized that many Republicans, including the President, drew upon the Heritage Foundation's publication, *Mandate for Change*, and that it recognized educational research and statistics as a legitimate function of the federal government.[47]

To these original functions were added a wide variety of functions I would call "discretionary," that is, Presidents and members of Congress found them consistent with the national interest in education, and sufficiently attractive, and they approved them through legislation. Once a new initiative was passed, however, various obligations ensued: the federal government was obligated to provide the money promised; states and local school districts who voluntarily participated were required to meet certain requirements, often including the provision of matching funds. Such programs fall under the term "grants in aid." They also generally fall under the "distributive" or "developmental" category of Lowi's scheme. Most federal programs in education have not been strongly reallocative nor have they been required by some constitutional mandate. As with many of Lowi's "distributive" laws, winners and losers are not perceived, the sources of the money are diffuse, and the recipients of the aid are numerous and widely dispersed geographically. Such was the case with the first federal law for categorical aid to elementary and secondary schools, the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, providing funds for vocational education, through voluntary grants administered by the states.[48] As noted above, federal grants-in-aid mushroomed after World War II, as the government got active in development projects in many sectors, including health, transportation, housing, and education. Discretionary legislation in education at the federal level has escalated as the national interest in education has expanded into campaigns for more equal opportunities and for higher general standards of excellence. Over the past five decades the federal government has offered grants for school libraries, for science and language labs, for school-based experiments in teaching and learning, for metric education, for the development of content standards and assessments, and for many other purposes.

As voluntary and consensual as these programs may seem, citizens, educators, and politicians differ wildly in their judgments about how involved the federal government should be in elementary and secondary education. Political positions on such discretionary legislation range from those who wish to curtail virtually all of it, abolishing the Department of Education and putting as much federal aid as possible into block grants to the states; to theorists who urge much more caution in selecting among developmental grant programs, leaving most of it to the states; to a variety of middle-of-the-road groups, including many interest groups who advocate ever greater federal aid in their target programs; to the advocates of national standards and national assessment, who

would like to see an authoritative (if shared) role for the federal government in comprehensive content standards and accountability systems. The differences of opinion here are not, for the most part, about *what* is being proposed — many agree that *someone* should regulate curriculum and develop test programs. Disagreement is over the *level* from which such authority is exercised. Opponents of federal prerogatives prefer to see authority in the hands of the states, or mostly at the district or school level, or even in the hands of individual teachers. In this era of standards-based reform, the federal government's involvement has ranged across curriculum development, ass-essment policy, whole-school reform methods, advocacy of a voluntary national test, the relationship of Title I ass-essments to state standards, and a host of other thorny problems. Because the policy frameworks of standards-based reform and school-based reform (in-cluding its free-market choice version) are so profoundly at odds, debates about the federal government's proper role in developmental legislation have become intense.

Redistributive (or reallocative) legislation, an important category in the Lowi scheme, is not required of the government. The U. S. Constitution does not specify how progressive the tax structure must be, and the *Rodriguez* case declared that the Fourteenth Amendment does not require equalization of school district financial resources.[49] Thus, at the federal level, redistributive policy is another important and often controversial purpose within the discretionary category.

Hot controversy of a different sort has long been generated by my third category, issues that are "mandatory." Carried largely by the courts and involving only a small portion of legislative actions taken by the Congress, these interventions are nonetheless the most coercive and controversial elements of the federal role in education. These issues include civil rights matters like protection from racial discrimination, First Amendment matters concerning the separation of church and state and the free exercise of religion, and other constitutional issues, including students' rights and the educational rights of language minorities. Because these issues and the rulings about them arise from the U. S. Constitution, they are inherently federal and, in a sense, mandatory. Of course, the enforcement of constitutional decisions in education varies tremendously from one period to the next; but the government is not at liberty simply to ignore an issue once raised properly and forcefully through the courts. The executive and legislative branches may delay prodigiously, as in the well-known history of the *Brown* decision, and the lax enforcement of the Bible and Prayer decisions of the early 1960's.[50] But the nonjudicial branches of the government have to face these issues, to

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resolve their positions, and, ultimately, either enforce or challenge the decisions. Just as the issues are pressed in a mandatory way on the government, when the enforcement mechanisms finally get in motion, the solutions are applied coercively on the country's schools and families. Unlike grant-in-aid programs, constitutionally-related educational issues are not optional. Some Supreme Court decisions, to be sure, are permissive, as when they declare that a certain practice is *not* unconstitutional, and is thus available to states or localities who wish to adopt it. Such is the case with decisions like *Everson* (1947) that allowed states to provide busing of children to religious private schools, but did not coerce any state to do so. But when practice is declared unconstitutional, the federal government disallows it as a matter of law. The enforcement may be very uneven or dilatory, but compliance is not voluntary.

Critique:

As with the Lowi scheme, we may now ask whether these three categories I have proposed — about the original, the discretionary, and the mandatory educational purposes of the federal government — are useful in laying out the evolving traditions and the options for the future. The original purposes of the federal government in education — statistics, research, and information — are now seen as both acceptable and minimal. There may be specific debates about how the statistics agency handles the interpretation of data, or why the research agency doesn't seem more useful, but not much debate about whether gathering statistics, sponsoring research, and publicizing best practice are appropriate federal activities in elementary and secondary education. The biggest challenges are in the two other categories. The challenge with the discretionary category is the proliferation of programs. Since World War II the federal government had introduced a wide variety of such programs, yet there seems little consensus and no firm principles about which are "proper" functions of the federal level. Choices seem to depend upon the inventiveness and the persuasiveness of the proponents, the economic resources available to the federal government, and the level of partisanship on the issue in the Congress and the electorate. The challenge of the civil rights, church-state, and other constitutionally-based mandates, is that they are *not* discretionary. The administration cannot do without a position on racial segregation, or affirmative action, or aid to religious schools. The question is what solutions to espouse and how hard to press them.

Like the other taxonomies, these categories are not mutually exclusive. The "original" modest purposes, including statistics and research, have mushroomed into activities that affect the discretionary and mandatory purposes, as in recent debates about the uses of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the prospect of a Voluntary National Test, or the statistical demands of Title I. And the promotion of good educational practices, which has been in the federal repertoire since Henry Barnard's time, may sound innocuous, but it can involve competition among policy alternatives, as in the recent Obey-Porter bill, which anointed a set of school reform strategies. There are also important overlaps between the mandatory and discretionary categories. At a simple level, discretionary funding is sometimes attached to mandatory purposes, as in the Emergency School Aid Act (1972), which provided transportation funds to districts attempting to desegregate schools through busing. At a grander scale, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was a merger of civil rights concerns and a reallocation of resources across districts, all surrounded and assisted by various developmental provisions for school improvement, libraries, research, and improved state departments of education. It was an artful blend of categories.

The principal provision of the ESEA, Title I, for the basic skills training of children in poorer school districts, is an important example of a federal purpose that bridges my categories of "mandatory" and "discretionary." Although the Supreme Court declared (in *Rodriguez*, 1973) that the equalization of expenditures across school district lines was not constitutionally required, there are nonetheless two senses in which compensatory education for children in poor districts (and, indeed, the equalization of educational opportunity more broadly) is virtually mandatory. First, since the 1960's the right to equal educational opportunity has come to be an article of faith among many Americans, whether it is a right protected by the Fourteenth Amendment or not. The rhetoric is belied by the staunch resistance of Americans to the equalization of per pupils costs, but the rhetoric seems to keep alive programs aimed at softening the harshness of the inequality, and the many cases of the past two decades in which *state* courts have ruled that their constitutions demand equalization of school resources have reinforced the public's awareness of this inequity. Second, as standards-based reform moves toward student accountability, attaching high stakes to student performance (such as retention in grade, assignment to tracks, or failure to graduate), equal protection issues will be raised on behalf of students who have not had a sufficient opportunity to learn the material tested. There is, then, an intermediate category of virtually mandatory federal education programs, including those aimed at increasing equal opportunity. One can imagine a lot of things happening to Title I, but it is hard to imagine Congress abolishing all federal efforts at providing more equal opportunity.

Until now I have focused mainly on legislation for financial assistance to schools. The discussion of mandatory, constitutionally-based issues has expanded our horizon to include judicial influence, which often operates independent of grant funds. I shall broaden our canvas further before we conclude, by mentioning two nonjudicial modes of federal influence, neither of which creates federal programs *per se*. First, block grants have become a familiar feature in educational discussions and legislation, especially since the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981. They serve as a revival of the "general aid" proposals in the 1950's. In a block grant, the government allocates funds with no strings (or few strings) attached. Here the government is assisting education by being a good producer of revenue and by leaving the decisions about educational purposes to the local or state level. Second, the "bully pulpit" function of the federal government was much talked about during the first Reagan administration, when Secretary Bell's pulpit was the *Nation at Risk* report (1983), which strongly influenced reform at the state level. Again, during the second Reagan administration, William Bennett relished the role and used the phrase. Perhaps no federal official has ever been so visible and vociferous while trying at the same time to reduce the authority and budget

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of his own agency. The bully pulpit role was revived in the Clinton administration after the 1994 elections, which installed many conservative Republicans in Congress, complicating the Goals 2000 legislative program and deflecting much of it to the state level. Secretary Richard Riley, well-suited to the persuasive role, took his skills to such venues as a meeting between conservative Christians and public school educators, trying to find common ground on religion in the curriculum.[51]

Postwar educational policy has continually faced the challenge of providing both equity and excellence. Each administration had to decide how much emphasis to put on each, and how these goals can be combined. Neither can be jettisoned.

The Impermanence of the Federal Role

We have examined several sets of terms used to characterize the purposes of federal education legislation. In the 1940's and 50's there was yet one more pair of terms that frequently entered the debates. Would federal aid to education be temporary or permanent? Many participants in the debates — Republicans, Roman Catholics, others nervous about new schemes for federal involvement — argued that if there was to be federal aid, it should only be temporary, aimed at a present crisis, with a definite sunset in view. This rhetorical weight against permanent federal aid for operating costs, construction, or teachers salaries was effective. But then legislative innovators turned to omnibus categorical bills — the NDEA, the failed Kennedy omnibus bill of 1963, and the ESEA of 1965. The permanence issue became more ambiguous. Although these bills were justified as responses to crises, it was less clear that they would be phased out. In his exchange with Elliott Richardson after the passage of NDEA, Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote that it had ended the debate over a federal role in education. Richardson, the lead author of NDEA, qualified this, saying that NDEA had indeed been "a crushing — even mortal — defeat for the all-out opponents of Federal action," but that it was a middling approach, from "those who endorse short-term programs to meet specific needs." A third participant in the debate, said Richardson, had outlined the third alternative. Representative Stewart Udall favored permanent federal aid, and that issue, said Richardson, was still undecided.[52] The passage of ESEA in 1965 was seen as even more decisive. Writing three years after the event, political scientist James Sundquist said that ESEA "took the issue of federal 'control' out of the realm of ideological debate and thrust it into the area of practical administration. Some measure of federal leadership, influence, and control is now with us. Federal money is now being used, and will continue to be used, as a lever to alter... the American educational scene."[53] It seemed to some that incremental and episodic factors had combined in 1965 to escalate the federal role, and that it would be a permanent escalation. But the Leviathan interpretation has proven only partly true. While ESEA Title I has survived, NDEA slowly receded and its provisions were eventually absorbed into other legislation or terminated. And Goals 2000, President Clinton's distinctive attempt to redefine the federal role, was substantially curtailed within a year of its passage, due to the negative reactions of conservatives elected in the elections of 1994. After that reversal, Under Secretary Marshall Smith wrote that the age of big federal programs was over; that

the future lay in the bully pulpit and in dramatic, temporary jolts of money or policy from the federal level.[54] There is, to be sure, a large legislative legacy from the period 1965 to 1979. The Department of Education has survived, and there are regular reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, with its centerpiece Title I. There are bills for the education of children with disabilities, for vocational education and training, and for other familiar federal initiatives. These have survived through two decades of debate about the federal role. Nonetheless, while some federal education programs have been protected by popular purposes and sturdy constituencies, others have ebbed and flowed. Even those constitutionally-related purposes that I have called mandatory are pursued vigorously or weakly, depending upon the political complexion of a given administration.

Since 1980 each administration has had to reinvent the federal role. Even in the creation of goals-based reform, and the successive reauthorizations of major programs like Title I, there has been an aura of instability and contestation quite different from the heady days of 1965. How would one achieve the consensus and momentum of 1965 again? Returning to the theme of this paper, let us look once again at purposes and politics.

TOWARD THE FUTURE: PURPOSES

Postwar educational policy has continually faced the challenge of providing both equity and excellence. Each administration had to decide how much emphasis to put on each, and how these goals can be combined. Neither can be jettisoned. ESEA emphasized the equity side of the polarity. It drew on expanding expectations of what it was to be an American and what the federal government should do to provide opportunities. ESEA touched only incidentally on the excellence side — the quality of the core curriculum. Reviving such a focus on equity would require the federal government to address two widespread concerns that are stronger today than in 1965. First, many people believe that there has been too much emphasis on rights without a corresponding emphasis on responsibilities. Second, there is more concern about the general quality of the public education system for all of its students.

The next big synthesis that attracted considerable bipartisan support was standards-based reform. It tried to address both equity and excellence by aiming at high standards "for all students." Yet its inspiration was in fact the opposite of ESEA; it was about the core academic program of the schools for all children, not focused on disadvantaged groups. And its equity concerns, when they emerged in the Clinton administration, caused cracks in the consensus.[55]

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Both ESEA and Goals 2000 embodied policy frameworks that reflected majority opinion about the problems and purposes of American K-12 schooling in their day. The legacies of both are

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written in the daily life of public schools. Each was a major synthesis, but each has evolved away from some of its early components. ESEA remains a huge program but became detached from its most controversial feature, its use in promoting school desegregation, and Title I funds are less concentrated on high poverty districts than was originally envisioned. Standards-based reform has also had a huge influence, but has had to forego two controversial features, the federal role in approving content standards and the proposal for national testing. It became primarily a state-level activity, with the encouragement of the federal government.

Is a new synthesis of federal purposes in education possible? A good, new synthesis would have to meet the twin demands of excellence and equity. That would take some imagination at this point in our history, because those competing purposes have the capacity to pit people against each other. A new synthesis would also have to address the thorny question of the duties of citizenship. Critics of the integrative, liberal state say that its policies have put too much emphasis on group rights, that identity politics spelled the doom of liberalism as defined in the Johnson era.[56] On the other hand, critics of the increasingly influential free-market, pluralist, laissez-faire position say that its key policy goal — vouchers for school choice — would privatize the purposes of education, emphasize individual gain, and abandon common purposes and experiences.[57] Thirty-five years of debates over the purposes of education have put us in a very different position today than that of Lyndon Johnson and his generation as they set out to imagine a federal role for education and build consensus around it in 1965.

TOWARD THE FUTURE: POLITICS

Reinventing the federal role in education will involve daunting challenges for the new administration. First, having made the states the main players for two decades, and having increased their capacity to develop and implement educational policy, it is difficult to imagine federal officials putting those genies back in the bottle. Of course, state-based standards reforms do not exhaust the federal government's involvement in education. Many programs still move from Washington to classrooms in a mode that would seem familiar to policy makers from the 1960's. Congress and the administration formulate and legislate policy, federal officials confer with people in the field and then issue guidelines. Then they disburse funds, monitor and negotiate state and local compliance, and they adjust guidelines. States and districts, along with various other interest groups, take active roles. But the capacities of the state agencies of education are no longer the subject of derision by the federal level. They have been heavily shaped by federal funding and federally-funded personnel within state agencies, but they are also willing and necessary partners in education reform. A new synthesis of federal purposes in education, then, would have to acknowledge this change in the role and capacity of the states.

Second, the politics of education (and national politics in general) have been highly partisan recently. The fact that education is a much more prominent issue with the electorate today than in 1965 creates as much controversy as con-

sensus. If a new synthesis of federal purposes in education is to succeed politically in the new administration, it will have to do much work in the political center. The education reform scene is more fragmented than in 1965. There is a substantial interest in choice and privatization. Within the reform of public schools, there are differences between standards-based reformers and school-based reformers that will demand great skill to reconcile.

As a historian, I have no special wisdom to craft an program that would make it to the bottom of the treacherous ski slope, crossing the finish line with a new omnibus bill raised in triumph. Arm-chair theorists would like to see federal policy makers address the purposes and politics of their education program in a systematic way. Actual policy occurs in a more haphazard way, driven by many existing commitments and political factors. Nonetheless, a little dash of historical reflection, political theory, and broad policy analysis might help bring coherence to the day-to-day agenda. Among the persistent questions policymakers will face in reinventing the federal role in elementary and secondary education are these:

- How much equalization of resources shall we attempt, and through what means? What strategies, incentives, and human resources can be employed to increase the likelihood that additional material resources will translate into good educational outcomes?
- How many and what kind of discretionary, developmental programs shall we pursue, and how will we fashion a parsimonious agenda from endless possibilities? How will the agenda-setting and the conduct of programs be creatively shared with states and localities?
- What balance shall we strike between an emphasis on equity and an emphasis on excellence? How can we best pursue simultaneously the improvement of the schools' performance as a whole, for all children, and their success with students who are disadvantaged?
- How shall we approach constitutionally-based education issues amidst thickets of philosophical, political, and technical problems? How can we broaden consensus among Americans about the principles of fairness and inclusiveness that lie behind such issues?
- How can we make the traditional purposes of federal involvement in education — conducting research, gathering statistics, and disseminating information about good practice — serve the rest of the agenda without politicizing those functions?

The times may not seem auspicious for a new consensus about the federal role in education, but one might reasonably have thought that in 1963 as well. In any case, whatever the odds, every new administration, along with the Congress, educators, and the electorate, must face the challenge of assessing worthy purposes and making politics work in the service of those purposes. In the present environment — as so often in the past — the choice is between creative, constructive synthesis or stalemate.

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The research that informs this essay is part of a larger project entitled The Federal Role in Elementary and Secondary Education, 1950 - 2000, funded by The Spencer Foundation, whose support the author enthusiastically acknowledges.

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New Federal Roles in Education

By Richard Rothstein[1]

In the recent presidential campaign, Governor George W. Bush insisted he was not running for the job of federal superintendent of schools. Yet he regularly discussed education issues (like testing, or how and when to teach reading) that have not previously been within the scope of federal responsibility. Meanwhile, Vice-President Al Gore made no efforts to abjure intervention in state and local education decisionmaking. He proposed increased salaries for teachers, charter schools, class size reduction, and other policies that have traditionally been beyond federal reach.

Perhaps the role of the federal government in education is destined to expand from campaign rhetoric to actual intervention. But we might consider taking care of first things, first. There are some important areas of elementary and secondary education policy where the federal government could play a unique role, because these areas are specifically federal in character.

The first, and most important, is the interstate inequality of per pupil spending, related to the inequality of states' relative capacity to raise revenues for education.

A second, less important, is the rigidity of the interstate teacher labor market, due in part to the lack of portability of teacher pension plans. (A related federal matter, affecting the rigidity of the interstate teacher labor market, is the lack of national standards for teacher certification. This paper does not discuss this issue, however.)

For nearly 30 years, state courts have ordered more equitable spending between school districts. Yet this within-state focus has meant that an even greater inequality has been ignored: the difference in education expenditures between rich and poor states. Because the financing of public education has always been primarily a state and local, not a federal, matter, very little policy attention has been devoted to this interstate inequality. Yet this might be the most serious financing problem in American education. Per pupil expenditures in the lowest-spending states, on average, amount to only about half of per pupil expenditures in the highest-spending states. Kentucky, the state at the seventy-fifth percentile of states' school spending distribution (state and local funds[2]), spends only 72 percent of what Wisconsin, the state at the twenty-fifth percentile spends. The highest-spending districts in Kentucky allocate less than the lowest spending districts in Wisconsin. And the poorest children in high-spending states receive an education richer in resources than the wealthiest children in low-spending states. In general, even if all within-state spending were equalized, high-poverty districts in rich states would

spend much more than low-poverty districts in poor states. New Jersey, for example, spends, on average, two and a half times as much per pupil as Mississippi. Thus, even if all intrastate school spending were equalized, interstate inequalities that are as significant, if not more so, as intrastate inequalities, would remain.

While there has been considerable policy focus on intra-state school spending inequality, interstate spending inequality has barely changed in over a generation. In 1996–97, the coefficient of variation of cost-adjusted (for student poverty and for regional differences in purchasing power) per pupil state and local spending by state was 16 percent. In 1969–70 it had been barely different, at 19 percent. For per pupil state and local spending at the seventy-fifth percentile, the ratio was 74 percent of spending by the state at the twenty-fifth percentile in 1969-70, barely distinguishable from the 72 percent figure cited above for Kentucky versus Wisconsin in 1996–97. An analysis of 1992 school district expenditures nationwide found that about 65 percent of the variance was interstate, and only 35 percent was attributable to differences within state. These percentages were about the same as twenty years earlier.

> The highest-spending districts in Kentucky allocate less than the lowest spending districts in Wisconsin. And the poorest children in high-spending states receive an education richer in resources than the wealthiest children in low-spending states.

It has been difficult to address this problem because education is largely a state and local concern, with federal dollars accounting for only about 7 percent of school spending. Existing federal aid to education programs, notably Title I, do little to ameliorate interstate spending inequality and, because Title I distributions are adjusted to existing per pupil spending levels in states, may actually exacerbate it in some cases. States that already have high per pupil spending receive more federal dollars per pupil in Title I funds than states that have low per pupil spending.

It could however, be a unique and necessary federal role to equalize per pupil spending between states, with the federal government subsidizing elementary and secondary education in low-spending states. This sounds simple, but a number of complex issues must be addressed to make such a proposal a reality.

- First, the plan must take into account the fact that the purchasing power of the dollar varies between states. Thus, if high spending states are, as is likely the case, also states where the dollar's purchasing power is lower, differences in the nominal spending between states may, unadjusted, be misleading, not as great as the nominal differences would suggest.
- Second, the plan must take into account that it costs more to educate disadvantaged than advantaged children. A fair equalization plan should direct more federal funds to high-need than to low-need states. Because it is often the case that low spending states are also states with higher than average percentages of at-risk children, making an adjustment in a distribution formula for this purpose may increase the magnitude of the equalization task.
- And finally, a federal equalization plan must not create an incentive for states and localities to reduce their own effort in response to

additional federal aid. In order to assure that federal aid is used to "supplement, not supplant" state and local effort, a distribution formula must take account of whether low spending states have the capacity to increase their own spending, or whether their low spending results from low capacity.

Thus, first, to make the plan work requires an adjustment for price differences between states. For example, New Jersey spent $9,700 per pupil in 1996 (the most recent year for which comparative data is available), while Mississippi spent only $3,700. But living costs are lower in Mississippi. It costs less to hire a good teacher there than in New Jersey.

A precise calculation of such disparities is impossible because the dollar's relative purchasing power in different places cannot easily be measured. But we can make estimates with formulas used by business groups to calculate cost-of-living allowances for executives moving from place to place. Such estimates show that the real spending gap is smaller, but still quite large: In "New Jersey dollars," Mississippi spent $4,900 per student in 1996, not $3,700.

Second, because it costs more to educate poor children, subsidies should also be adjusted for a state's poverty.[3] Let's assume that a poor child's education needs 50 percent more money.[4] We can then recalculate per-pupil spending, counting each poor child as "one and a half children." On this basis, New Jersey (where 14 percent of the children were poor) spent $9,200, compared with only $3,300 in Mississippi (where 26 percent were poor).

Third, such gaps may not always result from different values placed by states on education. Mississippi has less capacity to finance schools, no matter how much it wants to do so. In 1996, total statewide personal-income-per-enrolled student in New Jersey was $247,000; in Mississippi it was only $62,000 (again, in "New Jersey dollars"). But some other states may spend little, although they can afford to do more. So Congress should also adjust for a state's capacity to provide for its own needs. States with high levels of personal income-per-child should not receive federal equalization grants, even if their per-pupil spending is low.

A well-designed program would distribute grants to states like Mississippi and New Mexico but probably not Florida because, despite having many poor children, its retired residents give it relatively high personal income per child.

On the other hand, on the basis of 1996-97 figures, California probably should then have received an equalization grant because, despite relatively high wealth, it had even higher relative numbers of children, many of whom are poor. Since 1996-97, however, California has fully emerged from the national recession of the early 1990s from which most of the nation emerged several years earlier. It is possible that, with personal income soaring, California's personal income per enrolled child rose above the national average, subsequent to 1996-97. This example illustrates the importance, in the implementation of such a program, of ensuring that calculations are updated on a regular and frequent basis.

A state's ability to pay for education (as measured, for example, by its total personal income per enrolled student, or "PIPS") should become an explicit criterion for the distribution of federal education funds to states. How much federal spending should be enhanced depends on judgments, first, about what states should be expected to allot to education at a given PIPS level and, second, about what constitutes an adequate level of spending per child, and particularly per poor or near-poor child.

Because federal funds are so small a share of elementary and secondary education budgets, a federal policy to reduce interstate per pupil

spending inequality must augment as well as redirect federal spending. I estimate that a national program to subsidize all states whose mean state and local per pupil spending was below average, bringing these states' spending up to the national mean, would have cost $23 billion in 1996. If subsidies were restricted only to those states that spent below the national average and whose PIPS was also below the national average, the total cost would be $21 billion. If subsidies were restricted only to those states that spent below the national average and whose PIPS was less than 85 percent of the national average, the total cost would be $11 billion. In 1996-97, federal elementary and secondary spending was about $20 billion, so a program to correct these interstate inequalities could easily double federal education spending.

Proposals to increase the federal role in education have usually become enmeshed in partisan arguments. "Small-government conservatives" would likely resist a program by which the federal government equalizes per pupil spending between states because it would increase the education budgets of the federal government and of poor states. Possibly, conservatives fear that federal dollars inevitably threaten local control of education. But government should be no more limited in poor states than in rich ones.

Democrats typically want to increase spending for specific purposes like smaller classes. Thus, "big-spending liberals" may resist a block grant for federal equalization because they prefer to tell states how to spend federal dollars. But subsidized states should not be subject to more federal control than states where, because of low poverty or high wealth, federal aid is not needed. Thus, a federal equalization grant should be a block grant, not categorical. The only restrictions on the grant should be that it must be spent on public elementary and secondary education.[5]

An additional political consideration also comes into play here. One of the impediments to effective Title I funding formulas, in which federal dollars were directed in direct proportion (or more nearly so) to need, has been the political reality that Congressional funding authorizations are more likely to have support if funding is distributed to schools in as many Congressional districts throughout the nation as possible. Federal programs are easier to pass when they propose to distribute a little bit of money to a lot of places than when they propose to distribute a lot of money to a few, targeted places. This generalization does not always hold true, but it is often the case.

But the interstate equalization program proposed here may be politically perverse. It proposes a federal spending program (traditionally more often supported by liberals) whose beneficiaries are more often low-spending non-industrial states whose representatives are more often conservatives. This could create difficulties.

However, this obstacle may not be insurmountable. There are, after all, many existing examples of federal programs that are directed to states where need is greater, so the political realities just described are not always determinative. Also, as the California example above illustrates, there may be important industrial and more liberal states that, because of a very large number of poor children, would benefit from the plan. And finally, the block grant approach, suggested here, for directing unrestricted federal education funds to states, could make the proposal more palatable to conservatives in Congress.

Bringing spending in poor states up to an adequate level should be a federal role on which everyone can agree. This will not solve all the problems in our nation's schools, but it addresses one too long ignored.

A second opportunity for an appropriate federal role is in equalizing the supply of teachers nationwide.

It is well-known that, because of teacher retirements and an expected rising student enrollment, a national teacher shortage is looming. It has already manifested itself in many states.

Less well-recognized, however, is that the national teacher shortage is not uniform. Some states are experiencing a dire teacher shortage, particularly states where enrollment due to immigration has burgeoned, or where class size reduction programs have recently been implemented. But other states are net exporters of teachers, and are expected to continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

States that are experiencing a teacher shortage are places like California, Texas, or New York, where student enrollment is rising rapidly. With experienced teacher retirements expected to increase in the next ten years, these states cannot produce enough teachers to fill anticipated vacancies.

States that have a teacher surplus include, for example, North Central states like Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota, where a relatively stagnant population coexists with a highly developed public higher education system that graduates larger numbers of teachers than there are teacher vacancies. This imbalance, too, can be expected to continue.

No federal role is necessary to permit states with teacher shortages, like California, Texas, and New York to recruit recent teacher graduates from states like Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota. The ability of the former states to do so is simply a function of their being able to offer compensation packages and job opportunities that will attract these recent graduates.

But California, Texas, and New York are also states that have particular need of highly experienced teachers. These states would benefit from being able to attract teachers with 5 to 15 years of experience, or more, from teacher surplus states. Teacher surplus states can afford to lose some of these teachers, because they are not difficult to replace.

Of course, it is difficult to recruit mid-career teachers from one state to another because of the restrictions imposed on these teachers by spousal careers, community ties, and family responsibilities. But there may be a small, yet significant number of such teachers who are willing to relocate, and their willingness to do so could make a contribution towards solving the teacher shortage crisis.

For this small number of teachers willing to move, the main impediment is the lack of portability in teacher retirement plans. Unlike the defined contribution plans of higher education (most university faculty members are covered by a national defined contribution plan, TIAA-CREF) that encourage interstate mobility of faculty, elementary and secondary teachers are mostly covered by state-specific defined benefit pension plans, in which annuities upon retirement are calculated from a formula that typically relies on years of service credited in the pension plan, age, and final salary.

> Bringing spending in poor states up to an adequate level should be a federal role on which everyone can agree. This will not solve all the problems in our nation's schools, but it addresses one too long ignored.

While each state's plan differs, teacher retirement plans typically require both an employee (teacher) and an employer (district and/or state) contribution. Teachers vest after five (in some cases more, in some cases fewer) years of service, meaning that their annuity upon retirement is guaranteed, based on accumulated service, even if they leave the state plan.

Typically, if a teacher leaves a state plan, he or she can withdraw the accumulated employee contributions made to date. Many states permit a teacher who moves into the state and joins its plan to use these withdrawn contributions from a prior state to purchase past years' employee shares of contributions in the new plan. But because no employer contributions can be withdrawn from the prior state plan by this transferring teacher, for rollover into the plan in a new state, the transferring teacher will not be credited with full pension credits, based on teaching experience, towards future retirement.

Certainly, a federal role is not essential here, because nothing prevents a teacher shortage state from voluntarily choosing to enhance its attractiveness to teachers by offering to make up the state and district contributions in the retirement account of a recruited experienced teacher. However, this could be expensive, and could, in some cases, exacerbate the interstate expenditure inequalities addressed in the first part of this paper.

A creative federal role would be to underwrite the transfer of employer pension contributions from teacher surplus to teacher shortage states for experienced teachers who choose to relocate from the former to the latter.

Some states (notably Rhode Island, Texas, and some others) have passed laws authorizing the negotiation of reciprocity agreements to permit such transfers to take place. In no case, however, has a reciprocity agreement actually been negotiated between states, because of a number of practical problems. This suggests a role for federal aid and intervention.

In some cases, it is difficult to negotiate reciprocity agreements because teacher shortage states have a much greater incentive to arrange the transfer of funds from a teacher's retirement plan in a teacher surplus state than teacher surplus states have an incentive to release these funds. Other practical problems that impede individually negotiated reciprocity agreements mostly consist of plan provisions that are not equivalent from state to state. For example, in some states, teacher retirement plans now supplement social security while other states have declined to enroll public employees, including teachers, in the national social security system. In some states, retiree health insurance coverage (as a supplement to medicare) is funded as part of a teacher annuity, while in other states it is not. In some states, funding is sufficient to adjust annuities for inflation, while in other states there is no COLA provision. In some states, disability coverage is included in a pension plan, and in others it is not. And most importantly, of course, state teacher retirement systems guarantee different levels of defined benefit, so even if prior contributions (both the employer and employee share, including credited interest) could be transferred, the amount might still not be sufficient to credit a teacher for all of his or her prior experience.

An initial federal role here would have to begin by establishing a procedure for declaring some states to be in teacher shortage status and others to be in teacher surplus status. The declarations must be reviewed and revised on a regular and frequent basis. Federal law could then authorize the transfer of employee contributions from the retirement systems of teacher surplus states to the systems of teacher shortage states, and for a portion of the employer contributions (in many cases, this would be 100 percent) needed to fund the employer pension contribution for past service up to the level typically made for teachers in the receiving state. In cases where the sending state's employer and employee contributions were not sufficient to fund a full pension in the receiving state, the federal government could make up the difference, perhaps on a matching basis with the receiving state.

This would not be a very expensive program, primarily because, as indicated above, the family

circumstances of few experienced teachers in teacher-surplus states will permit relocation to teacher shortage states. But in the few cases where experienced teachers are available and willing to relocate, this relatively small federal intervention could help take a minor step towards alleviating a critical shortage in some places.

ENDNOTES

1 Research Associate, Economic Policy Institute; and National Education Columnist, The New York Times. Portions of this paper have previously appeared in Richard Kahlenberg, ed., *A Notion At Risk* (Washington, D.C.: Century Foundation Press, 2000) and Richard Rothstein, "Closing the Gap in State School Spending," *The New York Times*, January 5, 2000.

2 This and the estimates that follow are based on fiscal data from 1996-97.

3 Poverty may not be the most important factor indicating risk of school failure. "At-risk" students are most likely those with multiple risk factors, including poverty, racial minority status, birth to teen or single mothers, large number of siblings, and low parental education levels. Data are rarely available on these multiple risk factors, however. But there are data on statewide percentages of children in poverty. Therefore, in this paper, poverty is used as an admittedly imperfect surrogate for the multiple factors that place children at risk of school failure.

4 The estimates that follow of the burden to states of financing the education of poor children will be very sensitive to this assumption. Much of the conventional school finance literature utilizes an estimate of 20 percent, based largely on the historical pattern of Title 1 funding. However, there is no research evidence to suggest that the gap between outcomes of at-risk students and other students can be substantially narrowed with only a 20 percent increase in funds for at-risk students. The 50 percent figure, used here, also appears in conventional school finance literature, but not as frequently as the 20 percent figure. In recent research of the Economic Policy Institute, we estimate a program to substantially narrow the gap between at-risk and other students must include the following: smaller class sizes, more qualified teachers, health and other clinic services, summer school, a before- and after-school tutoring and activity program, and an early childhood and pre-school program. We estimate that the cost of these programs, in total, if applied on a school-wide basis to schools where at least 40 percent of enrolled students receive free or subsidized lunches, would be equivalent to about 150 percent to 200 percent more money than is typically spent on regular students.

5 I take no position here on whether a state should be prohibited from using federal funds for a voucher program.

Rethinking the Federal Role in Elementary and Secondary Education

By Paul T. Hill

Are the values or principles embodied in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 the same values or principles which should guide an extension and remolding of that Act during the new Congress and Administration?

Two core values established early in the life of the ESEA are still fundamentally important: First, federal funds should benefit children, not localities; and second, federal funds should be applied after inequities in local funding are remedied.

Unfortunately, current program implementation does not reflect these values. Title I funds are tied not to individual children *but* to state and local bureaucracies. Moreover, federal rules that required localities to equalize spending on all children before Title I funds were allocated have not been implemented seriously. The next two short sections elaborate these two points:

FAILURE TO TIE BENEFITS TO CHILDREN

As Title I and other federal programs have evolved since 1965, they fund specific services and support creation and maintenance of bureaucracies to provide those services. This deflects funds from services to administration and creates a class of state and local administrators whose careers are tied to maintenance of the status quo. Moreover, programs that mix federal funding with unfunded mandates (e.g. IDEA) thrust the federal government into local politics. Federal programs strengthen interest groups advocating particular forms of local spending (e.g. more on special education, thus inevitably less on schools' core instructional programs). Thus, in their implementation, federal programs have strayed from the original ESEA principles, by funding bureaucracies and programs not children, and by strengthening interest groups not schools.

If it is serious about upholding the original principles of ESEA, the federal government should support the education of disadvantaged children directly, by funding the schools that actually educate those children, not government administrative structures. Congress should consolidate all federal grant programs into one funding mechanism, with procedures for identifying individual beneficiaries and providing funds directly to the schools those children attend.[1]

The first step toward redefining the federal role would be to consolidate all federal grant pro-

grams into one statute and create clear definitions of beneficiaries. A reform of this scope would require scrutiny of some programs that do not normally come up for reauthorization at the same time as ESEA, for example, Vocational Education, IDEA, and the Department of Education's research structure. There is, however, no reason why those programs cannot be considered for reauthorization on the ESEA timetable. Including such programs in a review of ESEA is a necessary precondition for creating a rationalized and effective federal role in education.

Federal policy must work with, not against, the reality that the only people who can help a student are that child's teachers, parents, and neighbors. Washington should avoid buttressing any particular administrative regime or creating permanent groups of federally paid state or local employees. Schools should be free to use federal money for teacher training, new instructional materials, or outside assistance that can improve teaching, but districts should not be free to use money for programs that put central office priorities before the needs of individual schools.

> If it is serious about upholding the original principles of ESEA, the federal government should support the education of disadvantaged children directly, by funding the schools that actually educate those children, not government administrative structures.

Schools and communities must struggle with the question of what is to be done for children who cannot learn in normal classroom environments. Powerful interest groups and legal advocacy organizations, many created by federal subsidies, will continue to have great influence. But the federal government should not prevent schools from experimenting with different ideas about how best to serve the disabled, or from considering the effectiveness of alternative services and the needs of other children.

Funding of students, not bureaucracies, will almost certainly strengthen demands for increased federal funding. If Title I funds were to follow children to schools, the 30-40% of disadvantaged children who do not now receive Title I services would finally get them.[2] Congress might decide to keep aggregate funding steady and reduce the amount allocated for individual children, but that would be unlikely. Because federal money and its uses would be visible at the school level, the case for increased funding would be easy to make. A school could add another teacher for every 50 or 60 disadvantaged students, thus creating many new opportunities for instructional improvement.

FAILURE TO MAINTAIN COMPARABILITY

Despite ESEA's commitment to provide federal funds only when local spending is equalized, local spending, especially within the big-city school districts that receive the bulk of Title I funds, is not equal. This has very negative consequences for the quality of teachers assigned to low-income schools.

Daily headlines bring new bad news about the low quality of teachers in low-income schools. At a time when teachers are in short supply just about everywhere, the poorest schools get the teachers with the least training and experience. It's so bad, that New York City and Los Angeles are considering tactics used for recruiting professional athletes and dot-com stars, hiring

bonuses. New York City Chancellor Harold O. Levy has even considered raiding parochial schools for teachers.

The problem is not new. The Education Trust has demonstrated that students in low-income and minority schools consistently get far less qualified teachers than kids in wealthier neighborhoods *in the same district.* This is the direct consequence of a fundamental flaw in how school districts allocate teachers and funds to schools.

Given the importance of teacher quality, it's harder to defend procedures that systematically encourage the best teachers to head for classrooms with the fewest difficulties, leaving new and inexperienced teachers to deal with the learning needs of students with the most severe problems.

The problem is total freedom of choice for senior teachers. Senior teachers can choose where they work, and most understandably choose to work in the most attractive schools and neighborhoods where the demands on teachers are least severe.

At first blush, it's hard to argue with this. Rank, after all, has its privileges. But, given the importance of teacher quality, it's harder to defend procedures that systematically encourage the best teachers to head for classrooms with the fewest difficulties, leaving new and inexperienced teachers to deal with the learning needs of students with the most severe problems.

This is how it works: As teachers gain seniority they get the privilege of choosing the schools in which they work. In order to preserve this privilege, districts charge schools the same amount for each teacher no matter what her actual salary is. A school staffed entirely by highly-paid professionals pays no more for its teachers than a school staffed entirely by low-paid raw recruits.

Senior teachers overwhelmingly prefer schools in nicer neighborhoods, where family support is often strongest and fewer students pose severe challenges. These schools are free to assemble staffs made up entirely of highly-paid senior teachers.

When there is a shortage of qualified teachers, schools in poor neighborhoods must accept many inexperienced and marginally qualified teachers. Moreover, as teachers gain experience, they transfer to other schools. As a result, poverty-neighborhood schools are staffed by a shifting cast of new and poorly prepared teachers. Faculties change too rapidly to pursue any sort of sustained improvement strategy.

Small wonder that every year one-third of new teachers leave the profession. Facing the toughest school assignments, many green teachers quit because they cannot handle the pressure; others leave because they get no support and cannot stand the frustration. Those who stay learn to shut themselves off in their classrooms and ignore the rest of the school.

Some districts claim to allocate disproportionate amounts of money to poverty-neighborhood schools. However, as Marguerite Roza has shown in the case of Seattle, funding formulas that give extra weight to needy students are often a shell game. Senior teachers still cluster in the nicer neighborhoods. Poverty-area schools get extra money in the published budget but the district charges still them more for their teachers than those teachers are paid. The result is that schools in poor areas have fewer real dollars per student than the budget claims they have.

Title I gives the federal government authority to fix this. The authority lies in the principle of *comparability*, which says that federal funds may not be used to compensate for inequitable local funding of schools. To get federal funds, districts are supposed to show that per pupil spending from state and local sources is equal in all schools. Under this 35-year old federal statute, therefore, every district receiving Title I funds and spending less per pupil in low income neighborhoods is operating in violation of the law.

Unfortunately, since the principle of comparability was first written into the Title I statute it has been amended to let districts calculate comparability without considering teacher salaries. Body counts matter but not teacher pay or experience. Comparability, designed to ensure extra expenditures in poor schools, has been redefined (under pressure from school districts and unions) to ignore the resource that matters most.

The fact is that gross school funding inequities within districts could be eliminated practically overnight. The President could demand new guidelines measuring comparability in terms of real dollars. School districts could have a limited period — say five years — to show that poverty area schools had the same real-dollar per-pupil spending as other schools. The adjustment could be easy, given that half of all senior teachers will retire in the next five years. As teachers retired, inexperienced teachers could be placed in schools that employ disproportionate numbers of highly-paid teachers. This would make it harder for teachers to leave poverty-area schools as soon as they gain a little experience. All schools would then face the manageable challenge of combining the work of more and less experienced teachers.

2. What lessons should we learn from the experiences of the last 35 years of federal aid to guide the new President and Congress as they address these important issues in the upcoming year? In particular, based on your knowledge and experiences, what would you recommend for a re-fashioned federal role in education?

The federal government needs to pay special attention to the big cities. Despite programs like Title I, big-city children, most poor and from minority groups, are still half as likely to graduate from high school and to reach adulthood in command of basic skills, as other American children.

This is a tragedy, and much more can be done. Our greatest cities are treasure houses filled with human talent and great institutions – museums and universities, orchestras, churches, and foundations, all of them dedicated to learning and to uplifting the human sprit. Unfortunately, the way we now run public education has kept these institutions on the sidelines. They can give money and moral support, but they cannot create or operate public schools — nor can their musicians, scientists, writers and artists teach students, except before and after school hours or as volunteers.

Federal leadership can help these cities find ways of making all their resources relevant to the education of city children. This will require many changes — more aggressive use of charter school laws to create new schooling options, more flexible uses of federal funds, fewer barriers to private investment in schools, and greater openness to allowing experts in their fields to teach in schools without abandoning their other careers.

These changes require local initiative, and cooperation with the states. But the habit of treating the public education system as a bureaucracy separate from the other resources of a city is hard to break. People who are dedicated to education of the public's children must be prepared to take risks, accept experiments, track results, and abandon arrangements that do not work.

The federal government cannot mandate these things to happen. But the federal government can help city leaders forge new compacts to strengthen public education. An important role for a new President would be to call a series of small White House Conferences that will bring the government and private leaders of big cities together, one city at a time, to hammer out new arrangements for using all of a city's assets for the education of its children. During the conferences the President and Secretary of Education should offer to reallocate federal funds and waive regulations that might get in the way of cities' initiatives.

3. How can sufficient political support be garnered to ensure that your vision for a re-fashioned federal role in education is put in place by the new President and Congress, and supported in the years ahead?

I have called for three changes in the implementation, though not in the fundamental principles, of the federal role in education: First, provide extra funding for children, not localities, and fund all eligible children, not just some of them. Second, enforce the principle of comparability, so that real-dollar spending is equal for all children before federal funds are applied. Third, create a capacity for the White House and the Secretary of Education to craft agreements on reform strategy with the leaders of individual cities, and to tailor federal program rules so that they support local reform strategies.

All of these proposed changes would dispossess or inconvenience someone. The first change would eliminate specialized state and local bureaucracies attached to federal programs. The second change would eliminate incentives for experienced teachers to flee schools in poverty neighborhoods. The third change would eliminate city leaders' excuse that regulations and lack of flexible funding make real reform impossible. Can these changes be made? Of course they can, if the White House and Congress decide to make them. Though the infrastructure built up to administer existing federal programs is large and powerful, it is not significantly larger or more powerful than the county-based welfare apparatus that Congress disassembled a few years ago. Similarly, though the constituencies that support the existing programs are large, they are not very strong if they lose parental support. It is no secret that African-American parents, once united around Title I as the best hope for their children, now want choices that city public school systems do not give them. If minority parents believed that a re-defined federal role could benefit their children, groups like the Urban League could be powerful forces for change.

With strong White House leadership, the federal role in education could be put back on a firm foundation. The federal government's perspective is national: the President and Secretary of Education are positioned to see emerging national needs that are less visible from within a state or region, and to broker collaborations among states, districts, and regional organizations.

Programs that commit all federal funds to set programs, and that consistently align federal officials with particular interest groups and government bureaucracies, fritter away the federal government's inherent advantages. The federal government can make a continuing contribution to the quality of education for all American children, particularly the poor and disadvantaged, if it re-commits itself to the original values and principles of ESEA.

The foregoing statements come easily to a person who, like the present author, lives a continent away from Washington and spends much more time in the halls of schools than in Congress or the Department of Education. Most

districts and all schools could readily adapt to drastic revisions in federal program structure and administration. The real barriers to change are not in the schools but in Washington, in the form of Congressional committee structures that make certain programs the "property" of powerful subcommittees, providers' lobbies, and other adult groups who gain from the ways the programs are now run. Necessary change will be politically difficult. But the needs of children and schools must not take a back seat to the self-protection interests of politicians.

ENDNOTES

1 For elaboration on these points see Hill, Paul T., Schools, Bureaucracy, and the Federal Role in Education, in Ravitch, Diane, *Brookings papers on Education Policy 2000*, Washington D.C., The Brookings Institutiuon Press 2000.

2 Unpublished estimates of the added cost of a "portable entitlement" range from $4 to $20 billion annually. The size of the estimate appears to depend on the analyst's view of the desirability of such a change in federal program strategy.

The Federal Role in an Era of Standards-Based Reform

By Margaret E. Goertz

nactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965 was a major turning point in federal education policy. This legislation dramatically increased the federal government's financial support of K-12 education, but more importantly represented a new commitment to educational equity. For the last 35 years, federal programs have funded and promoted expanded educational services for students with special educational needs. While these students have access to a broader range of educational opportunities today, the need for federal support remains. Factors that place children at risk of school failure persist. One in every five children resides in a low-income family. One in every eight students receives special education services. A growing number of children enter school as English language learners. Students of color and poor students still achieve at levels far below those of their white and more affluent peers.

Discussions about the future of the federal role in education will take place in a different environment than ten years ago. First, after decades of debating whether there should be a federal role in education, there appears to be bipartisan support for maintaining (and even expanding) a federal presence in K-12 education. Appropriations for education, including Title I, grew steadily in the 1990s. The presidential candidates from both major parties recommended increased federal spending on education and supported standards-based reform efforts in the states. They were committed to high standards for all students and strong accountability systems. Indeed, they proposed strengthening the accountability provisions of Title I, although in significantly different ways, and providing incentives to states to narrow the current achievement gap. The two candidates also recommended initiatives to build the capacity of the education system in the areas of reading, teacher preparation and recruitment, and school improvement.

A second change concerns the nature of the federal role: What is the appropriate balance between federal objectives (in this case, student equity objectives) and state and local governments' need for flexibility and discretion? Federal education programs of the 1960s were designed to bypass state education policies because they usually did not encompass an equity agenda. The federal government used targeting provisions, service mandates and compliance audits to ensure that educationally disadvantaged students and other under-served populations received access to federally-funded programs and other services. In contrast, many federal education programs of the

1990s are designed to be integrated with, rather than separate from, state and local education reform initiatives. The provisions of the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), for example, give states a prominent role in Title I. States are expected to establish challenging content and performance standards, implement assessments that measure students' performance against these standards, hold schools and school systems accountable for the achievement of all students, and take other steps to promote pro-

After decades of debating whether there should be a federal role in education, there appears to be bipartisan support for maintaining (and even expanding) a federal presence in K-12 education.

grammatic flexibility and to foster instructional and curricular reform. States are then expected to align their Title I programs with these policies.

Third, federal policymakers have shifted their emphasis from procedural accountability to educational accountability. Under this "horse trade," states are given greater flexibility in the use of federal funds in exchange for performance-based accountability. The federal government monitors the results rather than the process of education, and holds districts and states accountable for student achievement rather than for compliance with rules and regulations.

The success of this new generation of federal education policies depends, however, upon the willingness of states and localities to enact policies that reflect federal objectives. Earlier research (*e.g.,* Moore, Goertz, & Hartle, 1983) has shown that granting more decision-making discretion to the states results in wider program and policy variations across the states. These variations can be undesirable if federal and state (and local) priorities do not converge.

In this paper, I look at how states have responded to the standards-based reform provisions of Title I of IASA and discuss the implications of these state policies for improving the education of Title I's target population — economically and educationally disadvantaged students. These findings are drawn from a 50-state survey of state accountability, assessment and Title I policies and intensive case studies of 23 school districts in eight states.[1] I conclude with some reflections on whether and how federal policy can address the observed variation in state policies.

STATE RESPONSE TO TITLE I

States and districts are generally moving in the direction of standards-based reform, consistent with the intent of Title I. Forty-nine states have developed content standards in at least reading and mathematics, and 48 states have statewide assessments of these subjects. Thirty-three states have performance-based accountability systems that extend beyond public reporting of student test scores.

By aligning Title I with state standards-based reform policies, incentives to provide a quality education to poor, low-achieving children are now embedded in these state performance and accountability systems. We found that states differ widely, however, in the goals they set for Title I schools, their measures of continuous progress, whom they include in their assessment and accountability systems and how they identify and support schools and/or districts in need of program improvement. These variations reflect dif-

ferences in state demographics, political culture, educational governance structures and policies, and educational performance.

DUAL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

While the intent of IASA was to create single and "seamless" accountability systems that would treat all schools equally, only 22 states had single or "unitary" accountability systems in place by 2000-2001. "Unitary" systems are ones in which all schools and/or districts are held to the same performance standards through the state accountability system regardless of their Title I status.[2] Twenty-eight states operate dual systems of accountability in which either Title I and non-Title I schools are held accountable using different sets of indicators and/or performance standards (16 states), or only Title I schools are held accountable by the state or district outside of the performance reporting structure (12 states). In states with dual accountability systems, accountability requirements for Title I schools generally meet the spirit (if not the letter) of the federal legislation, while accountability requirements for non-Title I schools may be less rigorous. Several states that rely on public reporting to hold schools accountable have found it politically difficult to enact stronger accountability systems for all schools.

VARIATION IN PERFORMANCE GOALS

Focusing on Title I accountability provisions, we found a wide variation in performance goals for Title I schools across the 50 states. State targets appear to vary along four dimensions: (1) whether they set an absolute goal or a progress goal; (2) the expected level of student performance (*e.g.*, basic, proficient) if they set an absolute goal; (3) the percentage of students schools must get to these standards; and (4) the length of time schools are given to meet their goal. Where states set their school performance goals reflects, in part, their strategy of how to create incentives for growth and change and interacts with the states' definition of adequate yearly progress (AYP). Goal-setting is also a political activity.

All but five states have established absolute goals for Title I school performance and most of these states expect to bring some or all of their students to the "proficient" level of performance. The measure of proficiency is not comparable across states, however. States use different assessments aligned with different standards and set different cut scores for each performance level. States also differ in the percentage of students that schools are expected to bring up to the basic or proficient standard. About a dozen states specify that they expect 90 percent to 100 percent of students to reach proficiency, about a dozen specify they expect 60 percent to 85 percent to reach this level, and about another ten states set the goal at 50 percent of students meeting the assessment target. Other states focus on average scores, such as having schools achieve a certain average NCE in reading or mathematics.

States set different timelines for meeting these performance goals. Fourteen states have established explicit target dates, ranging from six to twenty years; the modal target is ten years. Some examples are: 100 percent of students at standards by 2008 (Vermont); a school improvement index of 100 in ten years (Colorado) or by 2014 (Kentucky); or 70 percent (mathematics) to 75 percent (English/language arts) of students meeting the basic standard in six years (South Carolina). A second group of states does not specify target dates for meeting standards, but uses AYP targets as an implicit timeline for moving schools toward the state's performance goals.

A few states set lower, but more immediate (and in their opinion, more achievable) performance goals, intending to raise these goals over time. Texas is an example of this strategy. When the state enacted its reform, it rated schools as "acceptable" if 25 percent of their students passed the state assessment. The state raised this threshold by five percentage points a year, to the current level of 50 percent passing.

CONTINUOUS PROGRESS TOWARD HIGH STANDARDS

The intent of the adequate yearly progress provision of Title I is to ensure that schools make continuous progress toward the goal of having all students meet high state standards. Many states fall short of this objective, however. Twelve states do not incorporate any measure of continuous progress into their AYP measures and most of these states have established modest performance goals, such as having 50 percent of students meet state standards. Of those states that do include some measure of continuous progress, many do not expect schools to bring all of their students to proficient and advanced levels of achievement. Performance criteria often can be satisfied by focusing attention on those close to meeting satisfactory standards and ignoring students at the bottom of the performance distribution.

Fifteen states focus on closing the achievement gap by requiring schools to move students from one achievement level to the next higher level; nine of these states use this as their sole definition of AYP. A handful of states address the achievement gap issue through the use of subgroup performance measures, either as a requirement for adequate yearly progress, a requirement to be eligible for a state rewards program, or a secondary accountability indicator.

INCLUSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

Accountability systems can help address the achievement gap between students of different socio-economic, racial, ethnic and language backgrounds and between students with different educational needs by providing information on the nature of the gap and creating incentives for educators to narrow these differences. For these policies to work, however, states must assess all students on the content of the standards-based curriculum, disaggregate and report their scores, and include their scores in accountability measures. The assessment and accountability provisions of Title I, as well as those of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), reinforce these goals.

The requirements of Title I and IDEA present state policymakers with a seemingly intractable problem, however. How do they include all students in state assessment systems while ensuring that these assessments generate valid data? Issues of test validity and construct-relevance underlie the decisions policymakers make about who gets tested on what and how, whose test scores are reported and how, and whose scores are included in accountability measures.

States report they are testing more students with disabilities and offering a range of test accommodations and modifications to these students. States appear to provide a broader range of accommodations and modifications to their own criterion-referenced assessments. When using commercial, norm-referenced tests, states may be limited to accommodations allowed by the test publisher. States are also developing and beginning to implement alternate assessments for students with disabilities, but they face ongoing challenges in determining student eligibility, aligning these tests with state standards, and scoring and reporting test results (Sack, 2000). States also report they are monitoring exclusion

rates, and some are incorporating these rates into their school accountability measures.

The story is different for English language learners. Tests that are given in English to students with limited English proficiency can be more of an assessment of their English ability than their content knowledge (President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, 2000). Therefore, states have developed a variety of policies regarding whether and when English language learners are included in state assessments. Some states require all students to take the state assessment if they have been in the local school system for one year. Other states exclude students who have resided in the United States or in their state for up to three years if they are enrolled in a bilingual or ESL program. A third group of states exempts students based on their length of time in an ESL or bilingual education program, while a fourth group exempts students based on their level of English proficiency. Finally, a handful of states give some of their assessments in a limited number of foreign languages.

Finally, states must decide which scores to include in school and district accountability measures. Many states report including the scores of all tested students in their accountability systems, although some exclude students taking alternative assessments and other students who took tests under non-standard conditions.

IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

States play a primary or major role in identifying low-performing Title I schools in 37 states; the other 13 states have their districts identify such schools. States and/or districts generally identify Title I schools for program improvement if they fail to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years. There is greater variation in the type and level of support that states are able to provide low-performing schools. In some states, Title I is the primary source of funds for school improvement. Other states, especially those with aligned state and Title I accountability systems, draw on state resources to assist both Title I and non-Title I schools. These states often supplement general assistance programs with special services for Title I schools. The downsizing of state departments of education, however, has limited the capacity of many states to provide comprehensive assistance to a large number of schools.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EDUCATION OF DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

Standards-based reform has the potential to improve the quality of education for disadvantaged students. In our study districts, special needs students were being brought into the general education curriculum, and schools and school districts had more latitude in how they served these populations. State and district-developed standards set expectations for student achievement and guided curriculum development, school improvement planning, assessments, and professional development. Most of the districts required schools to develop improvement plans that identified school-level needs and strategies for achieving district goals. These plans were often used to identify teacher professional development needs, justify the expenditure of Title I and other discretionary funds, and/or plan curriculum and instruction. Similarly, state and locally-defined accountability systems created incentives for school and school system improvement by focusing attention on student outcomes and progress, providing data for decision making, and creating a press for more and better measures

of student performance (Goertz, 2000; Goertz, 2001; Massell, 2001).

The potential benefits of standards-based reform for special needs students are inexorably linked to state policy decisions, however. Title I is predicated on the assumption that states will develop seamless accountability systems. Yet, over half of the states have developed different policies for Title I and non-Title I schools. This dual system is not a problem if most or all low-performing schools participate in a state's Title I program. In many states, however, it is likely that a substantial number of low-performing schools may not be subject to the more rigorous Title I accountability policies. Middle and high schools are under-represented in the Title I program, and some large, high poverty districts are unable to serve all of their Title I-eligible schools.

But ensuring that states have aligned accountability policies may not be sufficient to protect the interests of low-performing students. First, while federal policy calls for states to hold all students to high standards, states set different expectations for their students, schools and school districts. If schools must bring only 50 percent of their students to standards, what is the incentive to help the other half? If students are excluded from state assessments and/or accountability calculations, how will educators be held accountable for their performance or get the information they need to assist these students?

Second, Title I, like most state policies, emphasizes accountability over capacity-building. Yet, research on school-based performance awards programs shows that clear goals and incentives are necessary, but not sufficient, to motivate teachers to reach their school's student achievement goals. Teacher motivation is also influenced by the presence of various capacity-building conditions, such as leadership from the principal and district office around standards-based instruction, feedback on student assessment measures and results, meaningful professional development related to program goals, and structured teacher collaboration. Teacher knowledge and skills related to improved instruction are also important (Kelley et al., 2000). An unanswered question in the performance-based accountability movement is whether states and districts can ensure that these conditions exist, particularly in struggling and failing schools.

Finally, closing the achievement gap requires addressing inequities in students' opportunities to learn to high standards. Ensuring that all students have comparable learning opportunities is perhaps the most politically challenging issue that states face. As students are expected to meet more challenging standards, they need access to an academic program that addresses these standards. They need access to teachers who have the content knowledge and pedagogical skills to teach this curriculum to a diverse group of learners. And they need access to supplemental help as they move through the system. Yet, economically and educationally disadvantaged students are more likely to be taught by teachers with less experience, who are not fully-certified or who are teaching out-of-field.

THE FEDERAL ROLE IN STANDARDS-BASED REFORM

How should the federal government respond to these issues? Can, or should, federal policy try to reduce variation in state standards-based reform policies? We return to the recurring issues of what is the appropriate balance between federal control and state and local discretion, and what are the limits of federal policy.

In the spirit of the flexibility/accountability tradeoff (and in response to the election of a more conservative Congress in 1994), the federal government initially minimized its role in the imple-

mentation of IASA. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) issued guidance, rather than regulations. The Administration chose not to review the substance or quality of state content standards or assessments. These actions sent signals to states that state priorities would take precedent

First, stay the course with standards-based reform, but proceed at a pace that is technically defensible and politically feasible.

over federal objectives. As ED began to review state assessment plans, however, it identified areas where states have not met Title I requirements, such as the inclusion of all students in state assessment and reporting systems. In response, the Department has become more proactive, negotiating changes in state policy and issuing more explicit guidance (see, for example, Cohen, 2000). It is unclear how prescriptive ED will be in its forthcoming review of state AYP policies.

The Department is working in uncharted territory. The "new" Title I represents the first time that the federal government has used the power of the purse to drive state general education policy. In taking this approach, the federal government faces four questions:

1. Who will set the standards for what is an equitable state assessment and accountability system? In reviewing AYP plans, for example, will the federal government require states to set performance goals at 100 percent? Mandate provisions for closing the achievement gap?
2. What are the technical limits of federal policy? For example, the Education Department is pressing states to include more students with disabilities and more English language learners in their assessment and accountability systems. Yet, there are unresolved technical issues around the validity of assessments for some of these students.
3. What are the political limits of federal policy? We have begun to see a backlash against the high stakes testing of students in some states, especially when these tests measure more than basic skills. Some state legislatures are unwilling to adopt performance-based accountability systems for their schools and school districts. Other states mandate the use of norm-referenced tests in their assessment systems. How much and what kinds of change in state policy can Title I leverage?
4. What is the cost of compliance? The federal government can threaten to withhold Title I funds as a way of inducing states to develop policies that are more in line with federal policy. It will do so, however, at the price of intergovernmental conflict. In the past, time and a large infusion of federal dollars mitigated this tension for some categorical programs (such as the original Title I program). The cost of getting states to comply in areas where they have historically had broad discretion (and little federal involvement) will be much higher.

Given these issues, how should federal policymakers proceed with the reauthorization of ESEA?

First, stay the course with standards-based reform, but proceed at a pace that is technically defensible and politically feasible. Setting deadlines for the enactment of standards, assessments and accountability systems sends strong signals to states about the importance of these policies. Setting deadlines and imposing sanctions that do not acknowledge the technical limits of current assess-

ments or political concerns about high stakes accountability systems is counterproductive.

Second, support research to develop assessments that are valid measures of challenging standards for our diverse student population. Researchers, as well as advocates, have raised serious concerns about the appropriateness of many assessments for special needs students. Much work is needed to ensure both the technical and face validity of tests that will be used to hold students and schools accountable for student performance. We need research, as well, on alternative accountability policies for students who take tests in non-standard conditions, and on how different state general accountability policies play out in a range of political, social and educational contexts.

Third, provide resources to build the capacity of states to assist low-performing schools and school districts. Enacting stronger accountability provisions without making a major investment in capacity-building will have a limited pay-off. These resources should include information on effective practices, direct technical assistance, and financial support. States have limited human and fiscal capacity to support low-performing schools, and many state legislatures have been unwillingly to invest in their state departments of education. As a result, many states rely heavily on federal aid to fund technical assistance activities. The federal government should also facilitate networking across states through its own activities and those of organizations like the Education Commission of the States, Council of Chief State School Officers, Achieve and the Council for Basic Education.

Finally, recognize that resource inequities within and across states hamper the ability of schools to help all students meet higher standards. Title I alone cannot level the playing field.

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ENDNOTES

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The 50-state survey was conducted in spring 2000. Data were collected from the 23 school districts in 1997-98 and 1998-99. The districts in the study were selected for their activism in school improvement and standards-based reform, but vary in size, racial/ethnic composition and poverty.

2 When categorizing state accountability systems as "unitary" or "dual," we looked at the performance indicators, school performance goals and measures of adequate yearly progress used to hold schools accountable and at the consequences of the accountability system We did not include the kinds of assistance that would result from the system of accountability.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Standards-Based Reform

By Paul E. Barton

any considerations are involved in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, including issues on which there is debate and disagreement. This paper addresses only one aspect of the 1965 Act: the 1994 amendments regarding the requirements that states adopt "standards-based reform." Specifically, it discusses the requirements that states have content and performance standards for all students and that tests be aligned to those standards.

I. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES.

Standards-based reform was a major effort for raising educational achievement in the 1990s, but it began earlier. It traces back to the standards rolled out in the 1980s by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), to the Governors' Education Summit in 1989 and the resulting National Education Goals Panel, to concepts of "systematic" reform, to the Goals 2000 legislation, and perhaps most importantly to the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, particularly its Title I component. That title required the states to have a triad of content standards, performance standards, and aligned assessments for all students and for this model to be applied to Title I recipients.

The general approach of standards-based reform has garnered a wide consensus. In terms of values and principles, the triad suggests an undeniably logical progression: Get broad acceptance of what students should know and be able to do, decide how well and how much of it they must master, align standardized tests to the content, and use the results to see if students are reaching the standards.

Although there are many differences in values and opinions about how to raise student achievement, there has been little quarrel with the underlying logic of this formulation of how to approach reform. Perhaps that is because it describes a process, not the means by which achievement is to be raised. It seems to this author that the basic direction set in this approach can continue to serve the goal of raising student achievement. But there is great need to take stock of how this approach has played out in practice, with a view toward steering it back to the broader visions of its creators.

Standards-based reform in practice has come to be something often quite different from the approach espoused by mathematics teachers that caught the nation's attention in the mid-1980s. (In

fact, in the early stages of reform, Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch tried to spread this kind of effort by education practitioners to other subject areas, by providing grants to comparable groups to do this work.)

What I argue in this paper is that a funny thing happened to standards on the way to the classroom. The movement needs to be put back on the track it started from, and Title I is a critically important place to do this. That's because Title I is driving a lot of what is being done in states that did not take this initiative on their own or that altered the approach they started with in order to comply with the new legislation.

II. THE LESSONS WE ARE LEARNING.

The period of experience for standards-based reform begins from about the mid-1980s, as NCTM standards were coming to fruition. I will summarize what I think we are learning from this experience and why what we are learning should give us pause. Also, I will point out what we don't know and haven't been keeping track of, and how that may be hurting us a whole lot. We are, I believe, at a point where we need to establish higher standards for judging when standards based-reform efforts are doing what they were originally designed to do.

A. A Standard Is Not a Test and a Test Is Not a Standard.

In the initial conception of standards-based reform, the idea of high standards was to define challenging subject matter that teachers were expected to teach and students were expected to master. It has come to pass, however, that the term "standards" is used almost interchangeably with standardized tests. How this came about is somewhat of a puzzle, but one runs into it all the time. A typical expression is Yes, we are establishing high standards; we have a new hard test and we have accountability.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary gives this definition of standards (among several, of course): "the fineness and legally fixed weight of the metal used in coins." A scale is what is used to measure the weight, to see if the standard has been met. But the scale is not the standard. And a test is used to measure whether the educational standard is being met; it is not itself, the standard.

Having higher standards means doing what NCTM did. In fact, NCTM did not even develop a test. The push to get standards in place is moving too quickly to a test to hold all parties accountable. Testing is what should be done at the end to find out if standards-based reform is working. The test needs to be placed in proper perspective, as one piece of the total effort.

B. The Establishment of "Content" Standards Is Just a First Step in a Necessary Sequence of Events.

The establishment of content standards has resulted in having in the state capitol a document, likely a thick one, describing what students are expected to know and be able to do in all subjects and in all grades. This is not a "curriculum." And it is even further removed from being a set of lesson plans. It cannot even be translated into a curriculum until a decision is made as to a balance among all the subjects for which content standards have been created. Content specialists in American history, for example, will want the coverage and depth that they think appropriate for the subject. But how is the time to be allocated among all the subjects?

And, for each subject, how are these content standards to be translated into a curriculum for American history in the 10th grade? Who is responsible for doing it: the state chief state

school officer? The district superintendent? What is the authority and responsibility of the local school board?

One has to assume that the curriculum must change to meet the new (higher) content standards. That may mean changing the textbooks, the workbooks, the software for computers, and other instructional materials. And all this change has to be translated into the day-by-day lesson plans used by the teachers. Moreover, the teachers have to be instructed in what the new curriculum is, and in how to deliver it. But the way things have developed, content standards are being treated, in some places at least, as ends in themselves, merely as a step in getting to a standardized test. If Title I is to continue to drive standards-based reform, it needs to come to grips with what has to happen after the content standards are developed.

C. The Role and Construction of Performance Standards Remains Ill Defined and Not Well Understood.

In the original formulation of standards-based reform, the term "performance standards" seemed straightforward. The content standards were what students should know, and performance standards were how much of this they needed to show that they had mastered. But how were performance standards to be derived? The major accomplishment at the time was the rolling out of NCTM standards; but these addressed content, and not a way of determining a standard in terms of the amount of the content the students would be expected to master, or the depth of their knowledge and competency. The truth of the matter is that this was uncharted territory, and not the province of existing professions.

Content standards were the creation of educators, in the case of NCTM standards. And while the participants were often broadened to include others in arriving at standards documents at national and state levels, they were all concerned with the substance of what should be taught in classrooms.

The professions of educational measurement and psychometrics deal with testing and assessment. They know how to move from content standards to specifications for a test. They also draw upon developed practice in setting passing scores, or "cut points," that students have to reach on a test. Some accepted techniques exist for doing this in which panels of experts look at the individual test items and decide how many a test-taker has to get right in order to meet some agreed-upon level of competence (the frequently used "modified" Angoff method is one of these). But the intervening step of establishing "performance" standards usually gets by-passed, and no professional body has stepped forward to tell us how best to link content and performance standards.

The matter of the gap between content and performance standards was examined by a leading educational measurement expert, Bert Green, at Johns Hopkins University in a lecture he gave at Educational Testing Service. He summed up the situation this way (from Setting Performance Standards; Content Goals and Individual Differences, ETS Policy Information Center, 1996):

> "The performance standards have to reflect the content standards. The bridge from the content standards to the performance standards depends on the test specifications, the item writers and test editors, and on the resulting performance measurement scale. Logically, it would seem preferable for the judges to set standards just on the content domain. They could identify what parts of the domain are basic, what parts go with proficient persons, and what parts would mainly be mastered by advanced students. It is

> not at all clear how to do this [emphasis supplied], but a way might be found. Judges might also be useful in evaluating the bridge from content to performance. This would seem a more straightforward task than imagining the behavior of marginally competent test takers..."

To the extent that we continue to simply look at individual test items to set passing scores on a test, we do not have a known and recognized process to develop performance standards that mediate between content standards and what students have learned. This is a piece of unfinished business in the development and application of a standards-based reform approach.

D. A Way Needs to be Established to Monitor the Extent to Which the Content Standards Are Being Delivered to the Classroom Through the Curriculum.

None of the indicator systems we now have in place provides a vital piece of information. The content indicators may look good. But is the state changing the curriculum and preparing the teachers for it? And if the states say they are, how do we know what is reaching the classroom?

Some would answer that this is what we find out when we give a test that has been aligned to the content standards. But student performance on such a test is not a clear indication of how closely the instruction is in line with the content standards. If students do poorly it may be because the content did not reach the classroom. It also may be that the instruction was aligned but the instruction was not competent. Or it may be that the curriculum was delivered but the learning environment in the school and/or at home was not conducive to achievement (for example, there may be problems with discipline and orderly classrooms). It may tell us that while students progressed a lot from where they were when they started, they started from such a low level they could not reach a common standard in the same amount of time as students in a different school who started from a higher level. (This might be because they had poorer instruction in earlier grades, or because they came from poorer neighborhoods, or because of fewer opportunities for learning experiences in early childhood).

This matter of translating state content standards into the delivered curriculum becomes very important if we are to know how much standards-based reform is actually changing instructional content and delivery. It is also very important in how we use tests for student, teacher, and school accountability. Is the teacher responsible if the curriculum he or she is provided is not changed? Is the student responsible for meeting standards not taught? And how can we tell from the results of the test alone whether the curriculum delivered in the classroom had been changed to reflect content standards? We are putting too much of a burden on the test, and we will not get the information we need from it.

But the overriding concern is that we may or may not be getting the job done when we check off the box that says "content standards," which is what the state must do to comply with the requirements of Title I. What we want is to have a rigorous curriculum in the classroom and have it delivered by a teacher who is prepared to deliver it.

E. Alignment.

Alignment has been referred to several times in the above points. The term is currently used to refer to an alignment of the test with the content standards, and sometimes with the performance standards (which I have said do not have an agreed-upon meaning that we know how to make operational). Determining such alignment is not

a simple proposition. A lot of work has been done recently in developing a rigorous approach (see the Council of Chief State School Officers' publication Alignment of Science and Mathematics Standards in Four States by Norman L. Webb). A summary of findings is as follows (from the report's Executive Summary):

> "Reviewers analyzed the alignment of assessments and standards in mathematics and science from four states at a four-day institute.... Data from these analyses were processed and used to judge the degree of alignment on four criteria: categorical concurrence, depth-of-knowledge, range-of-knowledge correspondence, and balance of representation....
>
> Alignment between assessments and standards varied across grade levels, content areas, and state without any discernable pattern....
>
> A goal of this study was to develop a valid and reliable process for analyzing the alignment among standards and assessments."

Having such a requirement in federal law puts a lot of responsibility on administering staff to make these analyses and render judgments. But the considerations go beyond the matter of alignment between the content standards and the test. What we really need to know is the alignment between the test and the curriculum. Whether the curriculum does or does not reflect the content standards, we want to know about the alignment of the test to what is actually taught. It seems reasonable that we should hold students accountable only for what it is they have been taught.

We may also want to hold teachers accountable for teaching what they are supposed to teach, and ways need to be developed to do this (evaluations by principals, or classroom observations, or examination of lesson plans, are examples). This dimension is not addressed in the administration of Title I, and it would require a level of involvement by a federal agency that may not be possible, or may not be judged appropriate.

Some work is being done on the matter of how what the teacher teaches compares with what is on the state test. An ongoing research study in 11 states looks at this question, among others (Anthony Bryk, et al., The Survey of Enacted Curriculum Project). In data from eight of the states, correlations were established between the content of instruction as reported by the teachers and the content covered by the state assessment in mathematics in grade 4 and science in grade 8. The findings were that "less than half the intersections of content topics...were in common with the assessment items found on the state...test." What are we to conclude from the test scores in such situations? Does standards-based reform as contemplated and enforced by Title I include the proposition that students should be held accountable on such tests? And if not, is there really a legislative solution for changing what is happening in these eight states?

F. The Test is Not the Treatment.

I believe that what is good about standards-based reform is what was contemplated at the outset, and exemplified by the experience then available, such as the NCTM standards for mathematics. Content standards were to be a starting point for changing the curriculum and teacher development. A lot of this was actually done in many states — curriculum changes as well as necessary changes in instructional materials and pedagogy were made. In fact, the impact was visible enough that backlashes occurred in some places where there were disagreements over adopted changes. And, appropriately, further

changes were made in the math standards. Those states understood that the test that incorporates the content of the revised curriculum and the instruction that delivers it to the student in the classroom can be an important tool for monitoring the effect on the actual learning of the students, for looking at results, and for taking corrective steps of one kind or another.

As a general matter, I think that professional educators and those whose academic, research, and professional practice involves test theory and construction would be in agreement. Certainly there are many, in what constitutes a political movement to change the schools, who are at least comfortable with the proposition that we can start with constructing a test, give the test, discover that the students do poorly on it, and expect that teachers will change their instruction to enable the students to do better. It could be called test-driven instructional change.

This approach comes very near to what happened in the state of Virginia with the Standards of Learning (SOLs). This is a case where "standards" is used interchangeably with a test, or somehow embodied in the test. In the first test administration, 97 percent of the schools failed, based on the scores that were deemed to be acceptable. Commenting on these dismal results, the chair of the state school board said that when the teachers and students came to learn what was being tested, the students would do better. What is happening now in Virginia is that resources are being identified at the local or state level to institute what amounts to a parallel curriculum. There is a large amount of disarray, many teachers and parents are upset although political support has not eroded. However, the school board did make a number of changes in response to criticism.

An analysis of all that can go wrong in test-driven instructional change, and the inequities and unfairness that can result, would take another paper.

I assume that such test-driven instruction was not the objective of drafters of the 1994 Title I legislation. I know of no reason to think that it was. But there is a strong current of opinion that believes reform can be achieved by making the test the treatment. So, where a state has approved content standards, performance standards (whatever they are, beyond a cutpoint on a test) and an aligned assessment, all we may really have that is operational is the test. I think such a situation is counter to the goal of raising real student achievement. It will harm the education enterprise, and it will be unfair to students and teachers.

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What is advocated here is a reexamination of the provisions of the law dealing with standards-based reform, and a refashioning of the legislative approach to make sure that what the legislation requires is actually resulting in what is intended by it. This reexamination would include looking at what is happening at the district, school, and classroom levels as a result of the way states have (and have not) come into compliance. This will lead to an understanding that the benefits of standards do not flow simply from examining the document labeled "content standards," or "performance standards," and from looking at a test to see if the questions somehow reflect these documents.

The problem that must be faced, however, is whether federal law can (or should) prescribe the detailed process to be followed from the creation of such state-level documents to what happens at the level of the classroom, with the approval and follow-up system that would have to be put into place in the Department of Education. Title I dictated a process that had to be statewide, for all students, in order for the states to qualify for substantial sums under the federal law. Considerable consternation would result if the federal government were to extend such statewide control even

deeper into state policy and practice. This paper has focused on the process of education reform, and the steps to be taken in putting standards-based reform into place. There have been other problems and considerations that are important in doing a good job and in gaining public acceptance. There are legitimate criticisms of the quality of the standards in some states, in clear communication to parents and the public of what the state is trying to do and why, and in explaining what the test is measuring and what the results say about student achievement and deficiencies. These are not matters, however, that can be addressed in federal legislation, but need to be addressed if reform is to be sustained and effective.

III. GARNERING SUPPORT FOR CHANGES.

Support for major changes would have to be built by expanding the knowledge base as to what has actually been happening in many states, and how Title I is involved in the dynamics of implementation of standards-based reform. Creating the knowledge base could come from hearings in the two responsible committees of Congress, and from studies commissioned to inform the committees. It may be the case, however, that the problems I have laid out would not impress the people who constitute the political force for what I consider an over-reliance on standardized testing, in a corruption of the original formulation of standards-based reform. On the other hand, they may not object to a system that returns reform to what I believe was contemplated in the early 1990s, as long as there is continued use of testing for monitoring the results and ensuring accountability.

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Refashioning the Federal Role in Education Keep It Focused – Keep It Simple

By Elizabeth Pinkerton

My views regarding the re-fashioning of the role of federal education reflect work that has been done in my district, Elk Grove Unified School District in California, and the work of my fellow educators - in California and other states. We work in our local school districts to improve the academic achievement of students, especially the ones who are most in need. Our local efforts are supplemented with assistance from state and federally funded programs, and there are a multitude of them that vary from district to district and state to state. My thoughts emerge from this local framework of providing services to students, and they are influenced by my experiences over the years with federally funded programs for education.

As I worked with my colleagues in preparing for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, I have become aware of the diverse and unique needs and issues faced by districts across this nation. I do not speak for all my fellow educators, but my comments reflect the thinking of many of them. I have taken into consideration how things could be done differently at the federal level so that local school districts can be assisted with improving the education of all children. Academically effective programs differ widely from place to place, but there are many that do produce successful students. We need to carefully analyze the factors that make good programs work. Our priority must continue to be that we reach all children and provide an equality of opportunity for those who are most in need. In order to do this, we need to simplify what we do by focusing on what works, and we must abandon the practices that do not bring about the results that are required.

In reviewing ideas about how a new President and Congress ought to re-fashion the federal role in education, I have come to the conclusion that federal legislation, specifically, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, needs to be greatly simplified. In its present form, there is far too much in expectations and promises, and far too little in delivery and results. There is no need for the many federal programs that presently exist in a confusing overlap of purpose and implementation. As we continue down this road, we continue to add new programs, and this pattern is repeated within our individual states as state legislatures and governors do the same. Eventually, a form of block grants may be the only solution to the problem, although I do not see such grants as have been proposed as improving education for all children.

I propose four programs in the new ESEA – each to serve as an umbrella program under which most, if not all, of the present programs can be

subsumed. Each of the four program areas needs to have major accountability provisions, but the focus for all of them must be the improvement of the academic performance of students. The four programs I propose are as follows:

1. A Program for Children of Poverty
2. A Program for Children with Special Needs
3. A Program for Recruitment and Training of Teachers and Other School Staff
4. A Program for the Improvement of Academic Achievement

There are other important areas that need to be addressed, such as parent involvement, technology, and extended day and year, but it is my belief that none of these can or should stand alone. The four core programs can subsume these and all the programs that are presently in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. If any intervention, strategy, or program will be effective in the future, it must be integrated into one or more of these four areas. What does not fit into at least one should probably be eliminated.

The foundation upon which the 1965 ESEA was built must continue to guide us into the future. How we live in the year 2001, however, bears little resemblance to how we lived in the early 1960s when the ESEA was being developed. As we project our vision into the years to come, it is easy to see that this is a time for change. We must, however, stay true to the values and principles upon which ESEA was built - especially the leveling of the playing fields, assuring that all students have opportunities to learn and develop their potentials. We must also stay tuned to the more recent establishment of standards and strong accountability measures. In order to create the new vehicle that is required now and in future years for a new kind of federal role in education, we need to adjust our thinking. Though there are likely to be differences of opinion in how we do this, it is clear that a federal role in education has been clearly established over the years. It is a good role, and we need to continue it, for it is through federal guidance and assistance that ultimately we can expect educational equality for all children in our nation. It is especially for the children whose families do not have the resources to address educational needs that we must focus the energy of ESEA, and we must not let anything divert us from that direction.

A PROGRAM FOR OUR CHILDREN OF POVERTY

Head Start and Title I are the two main programs that address the children of poor families in every state, and almost every school district, across this nation. However, because of how these two programs developed, they have continued to function as two very separate, though powerful, engines, and each has its own design and purpose. The philosophies upon which they are based, and their plans, implementations, and evaluations, are like those of two big trains. They follow their own tracks and go their own ways. Though both may enter the same city, each only stops at its own station, and many times, neither knows the other even exists. Even when a school district is the delegate agency for Head Start, as many are, Head Start and Title I do not run smoothly on the same tracks. In most programs, there is no transition for the children and families served by Head Start, ages 0 to 4, to the kindergarten that awaits the five-year-olds at Title I schools. The folks who run Train #1 do not work with the folks who are responsible for Train #2, and often they don't even communicate with each other because they hardly know that their counterpart in this educational venture exists. Their areas of focus are different, the program curriculum, instruction, and staff development are not linked,

and their governance structures are poles apart. There are huge differences in what each group calls a "teacher," and they have separate facilities, budgets, regulations, and compliance monitoring. Yet, in the guise of education for both children and parents, Head Start and Title I serve the same families, and they often do so at the same time - as when a family has both school-aged and younger children.

The goal of both poverty programs, Head Start and Title I, is to provide equality in opportunities. The focus for both is clearly on poor families, and they truly do reach large numbers of these families in every state in the nation. The programs are also similar in that both use up huge chunks of federal dollars, and that there continues to be controversy as to whether or not the investment produces results and is worth what it costs.

How is it that this separateness and lack of alignment has occurred? We have dedicated people working in both programs, Head Start and Title I - but here is the problem. It seems to be a matter of missed connections all along the way. Head Start people view their program as a community intervention to improve the lives of poor families. The problem is that they fail to make the important connection so that what is done in the early years for children is continued in kindergarten and the primary grades. The problem with Title I folks is that they see their program as a way for poor children to reach high standards, but they fail to reach back to those very important years before kindergarten. It is in those early years that children need to be introduced to the tools and learning associated with their emerging literacy and numeracy. This is what will help them become ready to learn when they enter kindergarten and ready to read when they enter first grade.

What can be done to resolve these differences? There is a simple solution, but it fails to take into account the political structure that created the two separate programs. This may not matter any more for it is the right time to move forward. Head Start needs to be under the Department of Education - as has been proposed by our next president. I believe that the place for Head Start is to be under ESEA, and I suggest that it be listed under Title I of ESEA – with the present program for children of poverty. One of the problems with our present Title I is that that this extensive program really does not have a name, and its lack of a proper name has hindered its implementation. *Helping Disadvantaged Students Reach High Standards* has only confused the issue because there is no common definition of "disadvantaged" students. Most school folks call the program *Title I*, and sometimes, regretfully, they even shorten it to *Title*, which is even worse. Title I suffers from its lack of a name for it is not only community members and parents who cannot explain the program, but it is often school folks who do not know the real purpose of the program.

This is one way that Head Start is light years ahead of Title I – everyone knows what Head Start is, or at least what it should be, because the name spells it out. In my proposed version of a new Title I, programs for all children of poverty should be able to move forward with a descriptive and classy name. I leave the choice of a name to those who are clever at devising appropriate names for programs, but this great program should have a proper name.

The new Title I, focusing on children of poverty and including pre-kindergarten programs, should be funded through a simple formula based on poverty. If free/reduced lunch works, it should be used because it is as timely and accurate as anything. Census figures are always from prior years, and the different calculations of poverty between federal and state agencies are confusing and lacking in fairness.

The concept of "hold harmless" should be banned and stricken from our vocabulary of serving

poor children, and we must eliminate pegging federal funding to the levels of state funding. All those practices do is create more money for rich states and penalize the children who live in poor states.

Head Start dollars could be based on a percentage of Title I dollars. If a district has 9,000 children designated as poor in grades K-12, then you could divide by 13 (for the grade levels) to project 692 children who would be four years old, and therefore eligible for funding from Head Start. If we reached to three-year-olds, there would be another 692 to consider. Programs for infants and toddlers (0-2) are small in number, and these could be worked into other health and community programs. Perhaps they could continue as competitive grants. Even Start should be rolled easily into both of these poverty programs. The dollar amount per student for Head Start could end up being less than it is now because administrative agencies at the local level could be eliminated. The additional dollars could be designated for the local school district that has the responsibility of managing the pre-kindergarten program, or the two agencies could work together in providing services for families.

I believe that all of what we now call Title I programs should be schoolwide, although I am aware of the controversy surrounding that issue. What must be made a major requirement and focus is the effective teaching of children who do not meet grade level standards. These students need to get caught up — with no excuses. They will not benefit from social promotion, and they will not benefit from retention, unless intervention is a major part of what happens to them. Children who do not meet grade level expectations need major interventions, not only during the regular school day, but also before and after school, on Saturdays, and at summer school or intersession. No student should be allowed to fail, and it must be our major goal as educators to never have children who do not learn at school.

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The educating of the most needy, at-risk, poor children must be addressed, and that has to be an absolute requirement. We must insist that these neediest of our children be taught by highly qualified teachers – and that may mean providing incentives for our teachers and paying them more when they teach at our poorest schools. We have plenty of research about successful practices and programs, and it is time to require that federal funds only be used in ways that will bring about academic improvement. All the structuring pieces of Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Programs, for example, should be part of Head Start/Title I programs. There is no need to re-invent ourselves, and we can no longer practice and experiment with the education of our children who are at risk. It is time to move on to strategies that bring us results and allow our children to reach high content and performance standards in all areas. Children must be able to read fluently, pronounce the words correctly, understand what they read, compute and solve mathematical problems, spell correctly, write cohesive sentences, participate in discussions, and explain themselves orally. None of these expectations are new – you would find these in the

courses of study for our nation's schools of a hundred years ago.

There are only two major changes in these requirements of the past. Our children today must also be technologically and computer literate, and we must have these expectations for every one of our children.

A PROGRAM FOR OUR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

We spend far too much time (and money) trying to sort out children with special needs. Finding the right formula for funding to make everything fair and square may, however, be somewhat essential to make sure that one special need does not get over-funded at the expense of another special need. Each special need has its own constituency, and these can even take on lives of their own. While we focus on trying to keep all the special needs cared for, lined up, and ready to go, we continue to find new ones that have to be addressed – and we start all over again.

A major overhaul is necessary, and in order to bring that about, I propose funding all special needs students under ESEA in what could be called Title II. These should not be competitive grants, just a funding from a simple formula that identifies students by need – special education, neglected, homeless, delinquent, tribal affiliation for Indian Education, English Learner, Immigrant, Migrant, and Gifted/Talented. ESEA funding could be a dollar amount for each student so designated, but not all dollar amounts need to be the same. These dollar amounts should be above the poverty amount from the new Title I for poor children. The only requirement should be that the money must follow the student. It must focus on what is needed to address the academic need, influenced as it may be by the disability, cultural situation, or capacity to learn.

This in effect puts IDEA and programs for children with disabilities into ESEA, and although I realize that there may be problems with this, it should be considered.

A PROGRAM FOR RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND OTHER SCHOOL STAFF

There is an immense teacher shortage facing us, greater in some parts of our nation than others, and greater in some subject areas than in others. We have plenty of history teachers, for example, but not anywhere near enough math teachers. A huge number of teachers will retire in the next ten years, but not enough young people are entering the teaching field. Other careers are enticing, some pay a lot more money, and we have failed to place teaching on that list of wonderful career opportunities for young people. Unfortunately, it is our own folks among us who have bestowed upon our profession this blanket of negative tone. Although the status of teaching as a career is better than it has been for years, we must continue to work on improving the image of the classroom teacher and let our profession rise to the top of the list of desirable occupations. Here is what we can do in regard to both recruitment and training.

Year round pay - Teachers need to get paid for twelve months. They can teach for ten months, spend two weeks in training, two weeks tutoring, and still have one month of vacation. It is time to set aside the ten-month school year and recognize that we have children who need to be in school for a longer time. It will be a good thing for teachers to join the rest of the world in working all year long. Teachers should also work an eight hour day of which five hours must be spent with students in providing instruction, two hours for

preparation, and one hour for tutoring, parent or student conferences, or home visits before or after school. It is time to do this, and the push to do so must come from the federal level. With the anticipation of additional pay, it is likely that teacher organizations will support the concept.

Recruitment - We need to identify prospective teachers when they are still our students in our schools – even as early as middle school, and definitely in high school. Future teachers are not hard to find – some bright young people have a natural affinity for helping others, and we need to showcase their talents and skills. We can assign mentors, even retired teachers, to these student "interns" that we identify to make sure they have a caring adult to guide them in this new venture. We can have our future teachers and leaders assist with the tutoring of younger students as community service, and later, when they become adept at this task, we can pay them through work experience programs or other funding sources.

We can work with institutions of higher education to plan the college years of these students. After they graduate from high school, we can employ them part time to work in our classrooms and in after school and Saturday programs where they would work in close proximity to their mentors and under their supervision. We could use the military model as a guide and implement great incentives for entering the future teacher and leader program and staying with it for a specific number of years.

Other types of recruitment will also be needed – paraprofessionals who have already shown their ability to work with students, mothers of young children who can only work part time, and professionals from other fields who need only minimal training to become excellent teachers. And, we need to look beyond the colleges and universities for the training of teachers. Perhaps a national model should be considered – similar to the types of entry level into other professions.

Teacher training that is on-going – A two-week training session each year, on contract time, will minimize the amount of time needed for teacher training that causes classroom disruption and the employment of substitutes. Training needs to focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Teachers need to know how to understand the performance data, and how to intervene at appropriate times when students are not learning as they should. This is an area that is greatly lacking among both new teachers and many veterans as well. Training of teachers has not focused on this important activity that utilizes the best procedures of differentiation of instruction – from kindergarten, and even pre-K, through grade 12. No matter if it is beginning reading or advanced calculus, all students are not in the same place at the same time, and the teacher needs to take that into consideration with every lesson, every day, all through the year.

I would call this area of focus the new Title III. It would include the present Eisenhower program, but also move ahead into new realms of teacher education and training as well as the recruitment of future teachers. Also included in this Title should be training for future administrators so that they can truly be instructional leaders as well as effective educational managers.

A PROGRAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The three previously discussed areas of focus exist to improve student performance in academic as well as other areas, but Title IV needs to include everything else that is federally funded for education. With appropriate instruction, spe-

cial help and extended time, every child can learn, and every child will - if that is the expectation and if there are multiple opportunities for learning to occur. Standards have changed how we look at learning, and there is much that can be said to advance the idea of having a common base for our expectations.

Let us be encouraged by the many among us who know that children can indeed rise to high expectations. A national assessment program may have to be considered, and I would support it. We already have strong systems in place from state to state, and we are getting accustomed to the big concept of accountability. The issue of multiple measures continues to be troublesome because there are many differences among the measures that have been considered. Some form of standardized assessment seems to be the best option for showing growth as well as for comparing schools, districts, and states.

> Simplicity will encourage flexibility to meet the local needs of students, and it will provide a clearer focus for teaching and learning. It will set into place a high expectation for learning that is based on standards and assessments, and it will assure generous amounts of staff development and parental/ community involvement.

Incentives to achieve, and penalties when we don't, both need to be put into place. These work in many situations, and we understand the concepts from our national obsession with sports. Bringing home the gold is a worldwide understanding, and there is no reason why we cannot put it into effect in our public schools. By rewarding teachers and students who excel, we will be able to make the general public understand what it is that schools are supposed to do for children. We must establish the indicators of success and let the world know when we reach them. We need the cooperation and partnership of our entire community to celebrate our successes – from the newspaper folks to the Chamber of Commerce to the Senior Citizens to the leaders of our churches and service organizations, and it is from a national level of leadership that this can occur. As we work together to improve the achievement of our children, so too must we celebrate the stories of our success, and this too must be from the leaders of our nation.

If this area is to be Title IV of the new ESEA, we could place many of the stand alone programs under it as well as competitive grants. Class Size Reduction has as its purpose to improve instruction, and so do after school programs such as the 21st Century Learning programs. The mission of Safe and Drug Free Schools is to have safe schools where children can learn, and Goals 2000, with its emphasis on a common set of expectations could be the heart of this section. We can also add overall parent involvement programs to this group, along with school renovation and construction – all the programs that help our students become successful learners and good citizens.

SUMMARY

An ESEA with only four titles may not suit everyone, but it simplifies the end result, which is improving the ability of the local school district to deliver quality education to all students.

Simplicity will encourage flexibility to meet the local needs of students, and it will provide a clearer focus for teaching and learning. It will set into place a high expectation for learning that is based on standards and assessments, and it will assure generous amounts of staff development and parental/community involvement. Responsible governance and program management, streamlined for efficiency in the implementation of services, will serve as the strong foundation upon which federal funding can be based.

Overall funding is an issue I have not addressed, but in these times of surpluses, discussions of tax cuts, and searches for new programs, it would seem that fully funding the federal education programs has to be a priority. Both presidential candidates expressed their support for the education of our children, and the increased appropriations for education enacted in December of 2000 seem to signal a bipartisan approach to the funding of education. A streamlined ESEA and full funding is a fine way to start the 21st century.

Title I: Politics, Povery, and Knowledge[1]

By David K. Cohen and Susan L. Moffitt

itle I faces the greatest opportunities and problems of its history. The opportunities lie in the program's embrace of standards-based reform. Looking back from 1994, Title I's advocacy of more ambitious goals for all students seems an historic step toward more generous conceptions of equality and a more expansive view of schools' responsibility. But looking forward the new Title I presents deep problems, all rooted in disparities between its very ambitious educational agenda and modest resources for enactment. Title I's political and fiscal design, the formula grant which spreads money widely and well, creates a near-entitlement to federal funds which weakens incentives for improving schools. State and local education agencies, the education professions, and most schools which serve poor children are instructionally weak. Goals and IASA sought to build a new framework around them, which would enable them to become more effective. But those weak agencies are the very organizations that must build and enact the new framework. The recent conservative turn in American politics and government reinforces these weakness. Title I seeks much more aggressive work by state, local, and federal agencies, yet the rise of conservatism pressed both major political parties and federal agencies toward limited government.

The revised Title I is a parable of old tensions in U.S. social policy, between ambitious policies and programs on the one hand and weak governments and professions on the other. President Clinton secured passage of Goals 2000 and IASA while his administration shrank government, continuing the Reagan-Bush tradition of strengthening ambitions for schools without strengthening government.[2] And while state governments have become much more active in education in the last two decades, most had weak education agencies. The recent reforms assign them much greater responsibility, but do not seem to have brought them much greater strength.[3] We offer an analysis of the program and its problems, and follow that with a discussion of how it might be strengthened.

I. INITIAL SUCCESS AND BEYOND

Antipoverty programs must solve three problems if they are to succeed. They must have a plausible design for moving people out of poverty. They must be thought to have done so, with some plausible basis in evidence and experience. And they must mobilize broad political support for helping the poor in a society in which most people and policymakers are not poor. Success for such programs

requires weaving solutions to problems of politics, policy design, and knowledge into a single package. Though some have solved one or another problem for a time, only a few policies or programs have solved two or all three for very long.

Title I has done best on politics, for the formula grant helped to build broad support by offering funds to most school districts. The support has been durable, even leading Republicans to oppose Presidents Nixon's and Reagan's efforts to turn the program into a bloc grant. Title I also began with a promising approach to producing results, for in the 1960s it was reasonable to believe that added conventional educational resources, purchased with federal dollars, would improve education for poor children and lead them out of poverty. Distributing funds to support supplemental remedial services thus made both political and educational sense. Federal officials and local and state educators quickly developed the administrative arrangements, political understandings, and professional knowledge needed to make Title I work. The program wove together political appeal, a promising educational strategy, and the capacity to operate an intergovernmental education program. Despite some serious initial problems, Title I was generally thought to be a strong and successful program by the middle 1970s.

But as time wore on, the program appeared unable to deliver the results which its antipoverty strategy promised. Several national evaluations claimed that the program produced only modest gains that did little to close the achievement gap between Title I students and their advantaged peers. By itself that news might not have been grave, but the 1980s brought a powerful conservative movement which was eager to reduce federal investment in social programs, and a school reform movement which pressed for much more ambitious academic work. Weak evaluation results made Title I more vulnerable to these changes, and opened it to proposals for revision. We consider the developments which prompted the re-design, and then take up the new design.

Accomplishments

The early symmetry among Title I's educational and political designs, and the capabilities of the governments in which it operated, enabled remarkable achievements. For the first time in U.S. history, federal priorities had been asserted for local schools. In a political system organized around a weak central state, Title I helped to get a value that was typically ignored — better schools for the poor — represented in national, state, and local politics, and schools. Title I's formula-grant funded the new priority, and helped to make the program a managerial and political success. Within ten or fifteen years of the program's passage a national Title I system had been established, in a country whose schools always had been locally controlled, which had no shadow of the required political or administrative infrastructure,[4] and in which many politicians asserted federal action in education to be "socialistic" or worse. These remarkable developments are by now so familiar that we take them for granted, but they were absent and widely thought to be impossible, just a few decades ago.

Title I also helped to set new professional priorities. It kept a focus on education for poor students, and legitimated that concern. That helped to persuade professionals and researchers to attend to matters that hitherto had been mostly ignored, a concern which has grown. One result has been better schools for many poor students. Another has been the development of several promising comprehensive school improvement programs, and still another has been more knowledge about school improvement.

One key to these accomplishments was a national alliance that supported better schools for

poor children, which included advocates for the poor, civil rights groups, state and local school agencies. Title I offered elements of a frame for the alliance, and the program's friends and enemies helped to make it work. Professionals, advocates for the poor, Democrats, and Republicans defended the program against repeated attacks in Washington, while the program became an intergovernmental system which supported better education for poor students at all levels of government. The alliance soon became familiar, but it would have been difficult to imagine in 1963. In the current political lexicon it is an interest group, but that is what it ordinarily takes to put issues on the public agenda in America, and keep them there. It is no surprise that such groups exist for the health care industry or oil producers, or even that some advocates would sometimes plead for disadvantaged children. But an enduring and effective alliance which supports better schools for poor children is more unusual.

Another key to the program's accomplishments was its modest or even marginal nature. Title I monies were a small fraction of total local outlays, and the instructional time that Title I bought was a small fraction of the entire school day. The program also was marginal to the organization of instruction, for it existed chiefly in pull-out groups which were removed from the core instructional program. In doing so, the program relied heavily on existing capacity and knowledge, which eased program enactment. Local educators were accustomed to work on basic skills, and pullouts didn't require teachers to make fundamental changes, to learn radically new ideas, or to work much more intensely. These and other elements of marginality were conditions of the program's existence. They enabled development of a system of intergovernmental accountability that focused on identifiable remedial work in identifiable settings, and were reinforced by the formula-grant which mobilized broad political support by spreading funds widely but thinly. Through these instruments and enabling structures, Title I became an administrative and political success in the 1970s, but that depended on its limited demands on governments and schools, and on federal deference to the very states and localities for which it was trying to set a new agenda. It was a major accomplishment for Title I to create that new agenda and to become a viable program, but like much social policy in the U.S., the major accomplishment depended on major limitations.

Problems

The accomplishment also contributed to large problems. The program and the issues that it helped to legitimize stimulated research which improved knowledge of how schools work, and encouraged the development of new conceptions of educational improvement. Though that informed efforts to improve schools, it also undercut the credibility of the program's anti-poverty strategy. For beginning in the 1970s, research suggested that improving instruction was more complicated than fiscal transfers to purchase more conventional educational resources. One of the first such studies — William Cooley and Gaea Leinhardt's research on time — was done as part of the Congressionally-mandated NIE study of compensatory education, in the mid-1970s.[5] This work improved understanding of instruction, but thereby helped to erode belief in the program's original educational design. Pullouts, accountability for dollars rather than instruction, and a focus on conventional educational resources all became targets of increasing criticism during the late 1970s and 1980s. As understanding of educational improvement grew, the program's marginality — its modest intrusion on instruction and school organization, and its broad coverage — became more

troublesome. Critics and advocates began to argue that the program's broad targeting limited opportunities to do more intensive work, especially in high-poverty schools. The formula-grant which spread money widely was central to the program's political appeal, but it came to seem a barrier to its educational effectiveness.

These changes encouraged the idea that Title I should focus on results. That flowed in part from recognizing that conventional resources would not necessarily boost performance, but it also responded to more ambitious ideas about what schools should accomplish, and to worries about Title I's effects. Beginning with "new basics" in A Nation At Risk, reformers proposed much more ambitious teaching and learning. These ideas have echoed through the American educational and political systems for two decades, in an historically unprecedented passion for intellectually ambitious schoolwork. But the outpouring called into question Title I's remedial work on basic skills; advocates of high standards often argued against Title I's remedial focus.

That concern was reinforced by several national evaluations of Title I, which reported that students' achievement improved only a bit more than that of similar students without Title I. But two critical matters were rarely mentioned or discussed in connection with worries about Title I's failure. One was the program's educational power, and the other was the criterion of its success.

Educational Power

Title I has been a modest intervention. One reason was that its political design centered on broad coverage and local control. Given the lack of massive federal appropriations, the program delivered relatively modest monies to schools which had lots of latitude in spending it. Within ten or twelve years of its inception, researchers knew that Title I brought quite modest resources to schools and classrooms. The mid-1970s NIE Compensatory Education Study found that in a national sample of districts, all compensatory programs together accounted for about one-fifth of available instructional time in elementary schools. Since Title I was only one of several such programs, its contribution was only part — unspecified in the study — of that one-fifth. Subsequent research showed that Title I purchased an average of 30-40 minutes of remedial instruction for eligible students, which was less than a fifth of the schools' instructional time. It also showed that few schools added instructional time to the school day, so that Title I substituted one sort of instruction for another.

An additional, long-ignored threat to Title I's educational power arises from its role as a supplement. A decade of hard political and administrative work, between the late 1960s and the late 1970s, foreclosed much chance that LEAs would use federal grants to substitute for local or state revenues. It was a substantial victory to assure that Title I would add onto local programs rather than replace them, for that increased the resources which could be mobilized to improve schools for the children of poverty.

Such supplementation seems appropriate for a national program in a federal system. But most school revenues in that system derive from local funds which voters raise with taxes on their own property, and from funds which state legislators distribute across all LEAs. Great inequalities in local fiscal circumstances create very unequal local revenues, which buy unequal educational programs. The politics of state legislatures make it difficult for them to do much more than moderately equalize local inequalities. As a result, Title I builds on very unequal local programs. A 1993 study showed that wealthy districts spent more than 35% more per pupil than poor districts: $6,725 as against $4,025.[6] If these differ-

ences are sorted out by schools' poverty levels, the contrasts are more dramatic: per pupil expenditures in high-poverty schools in wealthy districts were $7,126, as against $3,849 in high-poverty schools in poor districts.[7] Title I builds on very unequal local revenues.

Those differences are reflected in local programs. Teachers in Title I schools in wealthy districts were better educated than their colleagues in poor districts, and poor districts were more likely to spend Title I on less educated aides than on regular teachers.[8] Schools in poor districts were not only older, but were larger by one-third. Teacher turnover was nearly twice as great in high poverty schools in poor districts as in similar schools in wealthy localities. And while all school principals in high poverty schools in wealthy districts reported that their teachers were "...much above the district average" in quality, only half of principals in such schools in poor districts made such a report.[9] Wealthy districts also spend a good deal more on teachers' salaries[10] and special needs programs.[11] The authors wrote that

> ...the Chapter I program may be impeded in meeting its goals in low revenue districts because Chapter I funds tend to be used to provide only remedial instruction while funding is not available for other vital and related services (i.e., LEP and special education programs, attendance and health services). These types of services are interdependent with compensatory education services in meeting the overall goal of the Chapter I program...[12]

Ironically, though Title I "supplements and not supplants," it does so across quite unequal local schools. Title I students in wealthy districts have a better chance of getting a decent education than Title I students in poor districts.[13] This modest program is likely to pack less of an educational punch in high-poverty schools in poor than in wealthy districts. Title I thus has been far from a homogenous "treatment," yet that did not figure prominently in national evaluations. Those studies asked a crude question: does exposure to "the program" affect students' test scores? Despite evidence that "the program" was much more plausible legislatively and administratively than educationally, the evaluations treated Title I as if it were educationally coherent.

Criteria of Success

That is especially troublesome in view of three national evaluations, which asked if the program "...closed the achievement gap" between Title I students and their more advantaged peers. Such a standard might appear sensible in Washington, where the mere existence of a categorical program with a viable administrative system could convey coherence, and where political importance could make it seem large. But in a reasonable world, no one could have supposed that such a modest and variable program had the educational power to close the achievement gap — a gap which arises from generations of inequality and discrimination, and which rests on many social and economic differences outside of schools.

Even if Title I had been well designed to leverage many elements of local instruction, and even if local school professionals joined eagerly in carefully designed efforts to improve teaching and learning, it would be difficult to justify using such a criterion. But research showed that nothing of the sort was true. Most schools did not use program monies strategically, but in ways that fit with conventional instruction and kept the program marginal.[14] Most students had only conventional remedial instruction in pull- out classes for a small fraction of the day, affecting the rest of instruction little. Very few schools added instructional time for students. Weak coordination between Title I and regular instruction was

common. This evidence was well known: advocates and others regularly complained about them and the limits they imposed on Title I's influence.[15]

Title I could no more have closed the achievement gap between Title I students and their more advantaged peers than modest increases in health care for very poor Americans could make them as healthy as well to do citizens. But Congress, executive agencies, and evaluators kept asking the question, and recurring reports of little gap-closing fed a sense that the program was failing. Neither Congress nor the responsible executive agencies showed much interest in more careful studies which distinguished strongly and weakly implemented local projects, and then figured out what fraction of schools had each sort. Such work could have shown what portion of a modest stream of federal funds was turned into educationally sound projects, what it took to design and enact them, and how their effects compared with other projects.[16] But it was not done.

Despite the lack of appropriate evidence, even Title I's friends began to conclude that the program was failing, or to worry that because others had so concluded, fictional failure was becoming political fact. With the program's effectiveness under attack, its ability to mobilize political support seemed increasingly uncertain. By the mid-1980s Title I was caught in a bind, among worries that it was failing, rising expectations for learning, and conservative pressure for less government and more family choice. Key elements of the program's early success were re-cast as causes of failure. The sense that Title I should change began to grow in the same era that the Reagan administration slashed its administrative capacity, limited its influence, and promoted family choice.

II. THE REVISED TITLE I: AIMS AND INSTRUMENTS

The first steps toward a new educational design, in the 1988 amendments, were cautious. But soon after Democrats took the White House, Congress passed Goals 2000, and the next year it passed a vastly more ambitious Title I. The two bills were linked. Title I would operate in the framework of standards-based reform: schools would hold students to high academic standards, and states and LEAs would hold schools to those standards. States would adopt standards-based reform, and integrate Title I into those schemes, because if states wanted Title I funds they would need Goals 2000-like standards, assessments, and accountability. The administration proposal blended voluntarism and deference to states with incentives to accept its approach.

The 1994 amendments spelled out an ambitious educational design.[17] States would create demanding content and performance standards, and use them to guide the invention of ambitious assessments. States would use the assessments to set levels of academic proficiency and criteria for satisfactory academic progress, and to identify schools in which students were failing. Localities and states would improve those failing schools, and schoolwide programs would replace pull-outs in high-poverty schools. There are other provisions, but these are the heart of the new Title I. They represent historic and hopeful changes. Title I would reject remedial work in basic skills in favor of ambitious instruction. It would focus on the core of instruction, not marginal pull-outs. It would become the lever for turning teaching and learning in a much more challenging direction for all Americans, and it would help to turn the school system on its head, by orienting schools to results rather than resources, and holding them responsible for students' performance. For schools which typically had offered a thin academic gruel to many stu-

dents, especially the poor, these would be long-overdue changes.

Challenges to Capacity

But for just that reason, the changes present a huge challenge to education agencies and professionals. The IASA requires standards, for instance, which have "...coherent and rigorous content...[and] encourage the teaching of advanced skills..."[18] when most extant standards concerned basic skills and graduation requirements. They would concern content to be learned, when most earlier standards addressed courses taken. To do a good job with such standards, state or professional agencies would consider the most fundamental issues in school subjects and the related disciplines, make difficult judgements about relations among topics, account for the development of academic knowledge over time, frame standards in a clear and parsimonious way, and attend to the time available and the relations with other subjects.

Framing such standards has too long been ignored, but in part for that reason, devising them is very difficult. It requires extensive knowledge of school subjects and the underlying disciplines. It additionally requires extensive knowledge of how the material in question is taught and learned. Few professional, disciplinary, or government agencies had much experience in such matters. Creating quality standards certainly was not something which state education departments, with their limited staffs and modest instructional capabilities, were well situated to take on.[19] Meeting the challenge contained in this provision of the new Title I would require the creation of much new knowledge, and extensive learning in many agencies and professions.

New assessments pose an equally great challenge. The 1994 amendments require that they be "...aligned with the State's challenging content and performance standards ...[be] valid and reliable, and...consistent with relevant nationally recognized professional and technical standards...[and] involve multiple up-to-date measures of student performance, including measures that assess higher-order thinking skills and understanding."[20] The tests are to be for all students, not just those in Title I, and thus must enable participation by students who are disabled, have diverse learning needs, and have limited English proficiency.[21] These assessments would be educationally innovative and technically sound. They would capture performance in advanced skills and understanding, but would be accessible to all students, from many backgrounds, at all levels of ability. They would define a new horizon for American education, and be the yardstick to judge how closely schools approached it.

Devising such assessments would require extensive research and development. Most extant tests do not aim very high, few are accessible to all students, and they consist chiefly of closed-end multiple choice items, which limit the complexity of the material with which they can deal. The means to devise more demanding tests, which validly and reliably assess a broader range of performance, are not well understood. The existing tests also are designed to assess the distribution of knowledge or skill within a population at one point in time, rather than to measure growth. To validly measure academic growth, assessments would have to tap the same domains in progressively more demanding ways over time. That would require decisions about what topics and skills to track, and how to progressively measure difficulty within topics. Test developers have little experience with such matters.

Valid assessment of growth in schools' effectiveness would almost surely require following the same students in the same schools over time, which is more difficult and costly than the cur-

The 1994 amendments set enormously important and ambitious work for schools and education agencies. Success will require building new knowledge across several key fields, including academic standards, measuring growth in knowledge, assessment of complex academic knowledge, and improving teaching and learning. Such work is badly needed to improve state and local school agencies, and professional organizations, which typically have very weak capabilities in instruction. But it is just those weak agencies and professions which, under IASA, are charged with doing the work.

rent practice of testing school populations, many of which change, at successive points in time, and hoping or pretending that the results are valid. Nearly all state and local school systems also use tests which were designed to assess the distribution of knowledge and skill within a population at one point in time, to measure growth — even though assessment experts have warned against such practices for decades. These are problems which very likely will become the focus of political conflict and litigation, if standards-based reform continues to move toward consequences for schools, students, or teachers. Though some states and private assessment agencies have extensive experience with the extant test technologies, few have much experience with the sorts of assessments for which the 1994 amendments call. Those amendments propose a basic reconsideration and re-direction of assessment, and that would require much more knowledge and extensive change in test technology.

The chief purpose of standards and assessments is "...improving accountability, as well as teaching and learning..."[22] The 1994 amendments and Goals sought to create a framework within which standards and assessments would be used to improve schools generally, but especially Title I schools. A key element was creating incentives to use standards and assessments, by holding school and district professionals accountable for students' performance. If local professionals were rewarded for students' success and penalized for their failure, reformers reasoned, schools would improve.

To that end, states must set three levels of performance on assessments: advanced, proficient, and partially proficient. They also must set standards for improvement, by defining "adequate yearly progress" for all schools. If this system of accountability worked as intended, some schools would do well. Others, which performed poorly but were able to take the evidence seriously and attack the problems, would find ways to improve, more or less on their own. But many schools would not take the evidence seriously, or would not use new standards and assessments well, or would not effectively attack the problem, and would not improve. They would need help.

That could be the most important and difficult feature of the IASA: though many schools are doing poorly, states and localities have little experience with school improvement, especially for failing schools. A few states have taken over particularly weak or corrupt districts, but no dramatic result in classrooms has been observed. A few states and localities have placed some schools

in some version of receivership, again with no dramatic effects. A handful of districts, prominently including Community District #2 in New York City, and El Paso Texas, have demonstrated some success in improving instruction and boosting performance, and researchers have codified some of the lessons from that work. Promising results also may be expected from private agencies, prominently including some of the designs in NAS and CSRD. But while these have more experience than state and local agencies, most are early in their development, and just beginning to learn. The agenda for building knowledge is broad, including everything from leadership development to teacher education.

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Instruments

The answer depends partly on whether the instruments[23] that Title I deploys, and the enabling structures in which it operates, can build that knowledge and achieve the program's other aims. We begin by asking how well suited those instruments are to the revised program's aims.

Administrative Supports

One instrument is administrative, and consists of an elaborate system of planning, managerial procedures, schedules, and federal review. The procedures are intended to regulate state and local efforts to devise standards and assessments, define adequate yearly progress, improve schools, and more. Such administration is an instrument of policy because management can enable or constrain enactment. Though the procedures are extensive, they are modest when compared with the program's educational design. Every critical decision, from the content of standards and assessments to the criteria for adequate progress, is left to states. Federal influence is kept to review of state plans, while assessments and standards are reviewed by teams of professional peers, with federal officials excluded. Department of Education officials recently have tried to expand their scrutiny of state efforts, with some success. But it is unclear how far this can be pushed, since IASA explicitly restrains federal influence on state decisions. More important, no amount of review and peer comment can substitute for the capability to devise substantial standards and assessments. Review can call attention to evidence of incapability, and encourage a search for something better, but it cannot create capability.

Grants and Schoolwide Programs

Two other instruments are the Title I grants, and provisions for schoolwide programs. The basic grants are Title I's chief instrument, for they create stable support to focus on better education for disadvantaged students. They enable state and

local agencies to organize staff and other resources in a predictable way. They are relatively flexible, and, since the grants supplement state and local funds, they help to mobilize more funds than the federal contribution.

These features suggest the grants' potential, but the inertia of established practice, and the extensive change the new design implies, impede realizing that potential. Inertia is rooted in the routinized instruction familiar in many US schools, and the even more drab versions in high-poverty schools. Title I alone cannot change this; no federal program could, for they operate far from schools. The question then is whether Title I's grants offer enough stimulus and support to enable states, localities, and schools to move from low-grade conventional instruction to more ambitious and demanding work.

There is no evidence that they do. One reason is the grants' size. The average annual Title I per pupil grant for elementary schools is $591, slightly less than ten percent of average per pupil expenditures.[24] Though Title I appropriations have increased seven- fold since 1965, the increase is much more modest after adjustment for inflation.[25] The program's fiscal capacity to support educational improvement was modest in 1965, and remains so now. The independent power of basic grants also is doubtful because they are a near-entitlement. Even if the grants were much larger, the formula which broadly distributes funds and makes the program politically viable in Congress, generates disincentives for school professionals to give federal priorities a higher place than many local concerns, including inherited practice. Though some research shows that while spending is slightly and positively associated with achievement, more money alone ordinarily is not a change agent. Change requires new instructional norms, more knowledgeable and sophisticated pedagogy, and vigorous leadership.[26] These often require more money, especially in poorer districts, but much else must be done to use that money to good advantage. Professional education, strong leadership, sound educational designs and materials, school budgets which are keyed to educational improvement, time, and opportunities to learn are among the crucial agents. These things require more knowledge and skill, and a focused will to improve.

Concentration grants and schoolwide programs were intended to solve those problems. Reformers reasoned that if substantial amounts of Title I money could be brought to high-poverty schools, then educators would have the leverage to deeply change instruction. These concentration grants comprise 14% of the total program, and, added to basic grants can support significant interventions in high-poverty schools.[27] Success For All (SFA), the School Development Program (SDP), and other comprehensive school reform designs operate in good part on Title I budgets, and there is scattered evidence that a few of these designs are more effective than conventional instruction.

Schoolwide programs were an administrative instrument designed to make schools, not pull-outs, the preferred unit of operations in high-poverty areas. They would help to coordinate instruction and reach many more students, to enable more flexibility in targeting services and combining funds, thus making it easier to devise powerful educational programs by collecting more resources behind them.[28] Stafford-Hawkins had encouraged these programs if schools enrolled 75% or more free lunch eligible students, but participation was voluntary, and modest. The 1994 amendments dropped enrollment requirements to 60% in the first year and 50% thereafter.[29]

But schoolwide programs did not add resources to high poverty schools; they operate with the basic and concentration grants discussed above. Thus schools with such programs must do much

more than would have been the case if they had retained pullouts. That is in part a matter of serving more students, and in part a matter of doing more work to revise instructional programs to deal with more students and coordinate instruction. That takes time, effort, thought, and renegotiating roles and relationships for entire schools — all with nothing beyond the existing grants.

Additionally, schoolwide programs are an organizational, not an educational scheme. Schools are eligible by proportions of poverty not the quality of programs, and the key requirements concern program planning. The amendments required states to develop special teams to support schoolwide efforts, but they included no means that would turn schoolwide programs toward educational quality. Funding schools on that basis would greatly reduce their number, and that would have frustrated both administration champions of the idea and Congressional supporters who relished broadly distributed funds. The 1994 amendments recognized the problem in a sense, for they set out several pages of advice about desired program elements, including comprehensive needs assessments, opportunities for all children to meet state standards of proficient and advanced performance, effective instructional strategies, meeting the needs of all children, and more.[30] But the advice was just that: schools could take it or not, without affecting their eligibility for grants or schoolwide programs.

Concentration grants bring more money to high poverty schools, and schoolwide programs enable coordination and flexibility. But even if interventions like SFA and SDP can operate within Title I budgets in high poverty schools, each intervention requires that the schools focus most or all of their instructional program on their design. In such cases, Title I grants are likely to work only if the entire school program supports them, which would require significant change, including new instructional norms, more knowledgeable pedagogy, vigorous leadership, new priorities, and new approaches to budgeting. Title I can build a fiscal foundation for change, but improved instruction depends on more complex changes in leadership, budgeting, and instruction.

Standards, Assessments and Accountability

Those observations were part of the reason to turn from Title I's former design to standards, assessments, and accountability. Reformers assumed that they would create the frame for school improvement which grants alone had not. Can these instruments stimulate low performing schools to use grants to initiate and sustain change, and break the cycle of school failure?

Standards, assessments and accountability have two roles in Title I and Goals. One is to stimulate much more challenging teaching and learning, and the other is to create new criteria with which Americans will judge schools, students, and professionals. Both statutes use ideas about the aims and content of schooling as an instrument of policy.[31] Standards and assessments have drawn a great deal of attention to more ambitious teaching and learning. States, localities, and professional, disciplinary and business organizations have considered, discussed, and promoted the new aims. Changing the conversation is important, and these instruments have begun to succeed.

But to succeed as the legislation intended, standards, assessments, and accountability also must provoke change in instruction. These three instruments might be thought of as the exoskeleton of instruction, for they are intended to create a framework around states, local districts, and schools, which will guide them toward much more ambitious teaching and learning, and improved schools. That exoskeleton probably would be sufficient if teachers already knew

enough to do much more ambitious work, and if the required instructional materials existed. Teachers could simply read the standards and assessments and teach accordingly. But most teachers are far from knowing enough, and few of the required materials exist; that is why so many reformers supported passage of Goals and IASA, and why, even when teachers do read the standards and assessments, they produce superficial and distorted versions of the intended result.[32]

That means the exoskeleton is insufficient to change teaching and learning as the legislation envisions. That change requires new instruments of instruction, including instructional materials, teachers' knowledge of the subjects to be taught, their understanding of how students think about those materials, and teachers' opportunities to learn those things. These could be regarded as the inner organs of instruction, and they are not contained in the exoskeleton. Neither Title I nor other versions of standards-based reform have devoted much attention to these elements, focusing instead on changing standards, assessments, and accountability. One reason is the apparent assumption that changes in the exoskeleton either will directly stimulate change in teaching and learning, or that they will stimulate the production of appropriate instruments of instruction, which then will change teaching and learning. Another is that the agencies which have initiated standards-based reform are instructionally impoverished; few staffers know much about instruction or its instruments, and so are unlikely to be aware of how critical these instruments are.[33]

Thus there are grave limits on the role that standards, assessment and accountability alone can play in Title I and other standards-based reforms. Unless states, localities, or other agencies create instruments of instruction which fill out the exoskeleton's missing inner structure, educators will lack the materials, pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of content, and opportunities to learn which are critical to enactment. Lacking those things, they can continue to use existing knowledge and materials which are not consistent with standards and assessments. Or they can try to use assessments and perhaps standards as though they were curriculum. Or they can simply fail to respond.

The other role for standards, assessment and accountability is public education. Goals and IASA aim at much more ambitious academic work than has been common, hence at an unfamiliar sort of schooling. Standards-based reform is unlikely to succeed unless citizens, professionals, and policymakers learn to judge schools by the results in student performance, not the resources they mobilize, and to judge by ambitious conceptions of performance. America is large and diverse, and government is quite decentralized; without broad public understanding and support of many different local efforts in many states, a reform which differs so radically from existing practice could not be sustained. Standards and assessments are not only elements of the new educational design, but also instruments for popular persuasion about that design.[34]

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Goals and Title I seek to persuade in several

ways. The reporting and public education requirements for the Goals Panel is one. Another is discussion of the standards and assessments in speeches by members of the administration, liaison with parents' organizations, advertising the ideas at education summit meetings, and drawing states and corporations in as partners. Another is the development and use of standards and assessments, for they incarnate the new criteria, make them a focus of professional and public discussion, and thus enable them to become agents of professional and public education about public education. Professionals are a key influence on children's schooling, and unless they are persuaded that the new Title I makes sense, it could not work. The Department of Education has tried to focus educators' attention on more demanding work, to persuade them that all students can do it, and to make that expectation central to professional action. The Department has used publications aimed at professionals, and conferences which draw in Title I state and local staff, to promote the new ideas. It now appears to be considering the creation of networks of professionals which will support consultation and related work in support of the reform.[35]

Work of this sort is critical to enacting Title I, because it depends on so much change in so many minds. Ideas are a very different policy instrument than mandates or appropriations, but changing minds is essential to support enactment of programs like Title I. There are, however, some important limits on the efficacy of these instruments. Some arise from the weak infrastructure for public education about public education. Professional organizations are not accustomed to doing such work either nationally or at the state level, and they lack many of the technical and human resources. Though several important organizations actively support IASA and standards-based reform, their efforts at public and professional education have been modest. The lack of active and intense support from these organizations is especially important when government is weak, and much social problem-solving depends on non-government agencies. In such a system, weak private agencies limit what government can do.

Other limits arise from weakness in existing standards and assessments. The chief case in point is OTL standards, for the legislative compromise which helped to pass Goals eliminated the requirement that states devise and use such standards. States thus need not discern differences in students' opportunities to learn, or communicate with professionals or citizens about them. The national government and advocates are left with no way to take account of differences in students' opportunities to learn to higher standards, or to bring evidence on such differences to bear in public discussion.

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Standards, assessments, and accountability are important policy instruments, but their influence depends on their quality. One weakness in their influence is the lack of much political, professional, or public attention to the quality of standards and assessments, or to the elements of quality. Another is the lack of much attention to great inequalities in U.S. schools, and therefore in the quality of students' opportunities to learn. Both impede understanding of what it will take to improve schools.

Despite these limitations, standards, assessments and accountability have played a significant role in public education about educational improvement. Arguments for more ambitious academic work and more vigorous national leadership seem to have had a dramatic effect. Few Americans supported strong national academic standards in the late 1970s, but by the early 1990s huge majorities supported them. Support has

continued through the 1990s, through changes in many state education programs, the adoption of the national goals, and the programs discussed here. There is little sign of public disaffection, despite increasing controversy about standards-based reform.[36]

Withholding Funds

A last instrument is withholding Title I funds for non-compliance. This seems particularly potent, since all states and most school districts depend on Title I funds. The 1994 amendments also authorize the Secretary of Education to withhold states' administrative allocations in the event they fail to comply with the administrative procedures discussed above. These funds support all or most of state Title I management systems; since as much as 80% of state education department administrative budgets derive from federal sources, the threat is no small matter. Even wealthy states would have difficulty managing without the federal funds. But using these fiscal instruments is not that simple, in part because executive agencies like the Department of Education also depend on states and localities for political support.

The 1994 amendments also require states to adopt either Goals 2000, or a comparable framework of demanding standards, assessments, and accountability. The Clinton Administration expected that the desire for Title I funds, and the fear of losing them, would induce state policy makers to fall in line with Goals 2000. But that has been difficult, for Goals turned out to be a much weaker reed than initially envisioned. One reason was that Congress killed one of Goals 2000's two key provisions — NESIC's voluntary national standards and assessment review process — soon after the Republican majority was elected in 1994. Operating such an agency objectively enough to offer honest advice, and diplomatically enough to enable states to ask for advice and listen to it, would have been difficult in the best of circumstances. But if done well, it could have created a useful conversation about the new standards and assessments, and offered helpful advice. One result is that there has been no independent national review of state standards and assessments, and thus less basis than had been expected for deciding whether states were or were not on the right path toward Goals.[37] With NESIC gone, the review process fell to the Ed.D, which was neither designed nor staffed for such work. It also removed some independence from the review process, since NESIC was to have been above the partisan fray rather than its victim.

Goals also offers grants to states to support the development of standards and assessments, under its Title III. State proposals are reviewed by panels of peers, which then recommend whether the Secretary should fund the proposals. The Department could have written stiff specifications for the grants, and funded only those which strongly supported the development of standards, assessments, and accountability, but in practice it did not. Secretary of Education Richard Riley is a former governor, and state education agencies can be one of the Department's important political allies — for example, in battles for education appropriations — and that limits the extent to which federal officials are willing to provoke them. Selective federal enforcement can be effective if done judiciously, but Goals created an enormously ambitious new framework for schools and school systems, in which most states would be far from full compliance. It would be difficult to find one or two apples which everyone knew were bad, to be used as examples, and easy to find many states which were struggling with a host of difficult problems. If these were not enough inhibitions, Executive Branch actions often are a matter of interest for Congress. Congress authorizes and funds executive agen-

cies, and uses those processes to review, prod, and rein them in. The same Republican Congress which killed NESIC was disinclined to support aggressive efforts to press states in a direction they hesitated to take, especially if the direction was given by a Democratic program. The Department of Education became even more cautious about pressing states after 1995, which also eased the threat of fund cutoffs.

Funds cutoff can be influential. If the political winds are right, it could prompt improved state enactment. But one limit on that influence is that it is exercised in a decentralized federal system, in which states and localities have more influence than the central government. Another is conservatives in Congress, whose objections to federal influence will tend to rule out all but the most egregious cases of non-compliance. Still another is the near entitlement in Title I's formula and by now settled in tradition. Another limit is the enormous changes which Title I envisions, for the key problems are not compliance with clear regulations, but inventing a new system of schooling in response to revolutionary mandates. That presents very different and much more complicated problems than requiring states to supplement not supplant and compelling a few egregious offenders to return monies which were inappropriately spent.

Finally, a key instrument — better knowledge about school improvement — doesn't exist. Our discussion of the new Title I shows that better knowledge is the central requirement for most of the program's key instruments, and critical to Title I's success. Yet the legislation nowhere provides means to build that knowledge. Federally sponsored research addresses a few scraps of the needed work, and private funding addresses a few others, but most of the knowledge needs are simply unmet. The need for R&D to support school improvement is so widely ignored that there has not even been an effort to define a suitable agenda, and many crucial elements needed to enact Title I and related efforts remain unspecified. One example is curriculum and other instructional materials which are consistent with ambitious standards. Another is research on what is loosely termed alignment, to probe the consequences of trying to create consistency among assessments, curriculum, and standards at different levels of topic specification. Still another is assessments which are both aligned with defensible standards and valid for measuring growth. A few agencies are at work on a few bits of these and other needs, but knowledge development is the weakest link in a frail chain.

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The new Title I is ambitious in its vision of improvement, but offers modest instruments in support of the vision. While the program can support substantial intervention in high poverty schools, its effectiveness will depend on schools dramatically changing their use of these and most other resources. While Title I offers educators who wish to overhaul their schools and school systems some technical support, it is modest when compared to the program's ambitions.

This does not mean Title I will fail. It does mean that its success will heavily depend on how states, localities, schools, and professionals use it, and on whether the knowledge needed to improve schools is created and made available. There is nothing new in federal programs' dependence on states, localities, schools, and professionals — it is central to the design of American government. Nor is there anything strange in the importance of knowledge to improving education. But there are several other noteworthy features of this dependence. One is that the new Title I's ambitious design envisions much more to be done than any previous program of this sort. Another is that the federal gov-

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ernment has very modest resources with which to do it. A third is that the state and local school agencies which are the keys to enacting the fundamental reforms for which Title I calls, paradoxically offer the poor instruction, and bear some responsibility for causing or compounding the educational problems, which Title I seeks to solve. A fourth is that though Title I's success requires greatly improved knowledge of school improvement, the federal government has a lamentably weak record in this area, and only a few private foundations have seriously invested in it.

All policymakers depend on enactors, whether it is parents making discipline rules for children, or state health officials setting standards for doctors. But that dependence grows more acute as policy departs further from extant practice, as the need for new knowledge thus increases, and as the agencies which enact policy become weaker. The dependence is even more difficult when the professionals whose practice must be changed are key members of the political alliance whose support sustains the policy.

III. STATE AND LOCAL RESPONSE

Whatever liberals wish or conservatives fear, social policies and programs themselves do not create strong government structures and professional capabilities out of weak ones. The new Title I wisely seeks better education for all children, especially those disadvantaged by their parents' poverty, but that ambition has to be carried out by the existing state, local, and professional agencies. This delegation is nothing new in a formal sense, but as a substantive matter it is a major change, for the combined effect of the program's ambitions and modest resources hands a much larger problem-solving assignment to state, local, and professional agencies than did the older Title I.

Moreover, the delegation is not accompanied by federal assistance which has increased in proportion to the program's ambitions. The revised program contains little new federal money that states could use to strengthen their core operations, little new support for state or local training and technical assistance, and little support for developing the needed knowledge. The chief such provision in the original legislation — a modest authorization to fund state school improvement efforts — remains an unfunded victim of partisan battles on Capitol Hill. If things continue as they have since 1994, Title I's success will depend primarily on how states and localities, and professionals in them manage this delegation, and on what knowledge about school improvement is produced by sources unrelated to Title I. We

briefly summarize what we have learned about state and local responses to the 1994 legislation, to supplement our analyses of the program's instruments and the knowledge needs which it generates.

Response to the new Title I was generally slow through the late 1990s. The strongest action was taken in states which had launched standards-based reform on their own, including Texas, North Carolina, Florida, and Kentucky. But there is controversy and uncertainty about what has actually happened, Texas being the leading case in point. Only recently did many more states move to report on assessments and accountability; there was no prior sign of an enthusiastic rush to Title I's new design. That is what we would expect from states and localities facing a program which set a very ambitious new agenda while offering neither extensive assistance nor strong incentives.

There are several promising local responses to various versions of standards-based reform, most in jurisdictions which undertook change on their own. These including El Paso, Houston, Dallas, NYC District # 2, and at least a few others. There is some evidence of achievement gains for low-performing students, some of which arises from longitudinal studies in which students and teachers are linked. Reports on two of these districts support the view that serious efforts to improve schools depend on a combination of district leadership, teaching and teacher assignment, professional development, accountability, and standards.

The results of efforts to learn about these developments has been mixed. There have been some studies of state reforms, most of which are of good quality.[38] Most of what we know about the states' responses to Title I are based on these studies. But the scope of states' action, even in a few of the more active states, is much greater than the existing inquiries comprise. There seem to have been fewer studies of local responses to recent reforms. Even though several of the existing studies are excellent, many questions remain, including the nature of the teaching and curriculum which produced achievement gains, the effects on students from different social strata, and the schools' and districts' capacity to sustain improvement through local leadership changes. Learning about the response to Title I and state reform is hindered by the lack of any coordinated means to collect even rudimentary descriptive evidence on state and local responses to school improvement efforts. Though the existing studies are promising, there is nothing like a coordinated agenda for inquiry about these efforts, let alone coordination among researchers.

Standards

Most states have developed or adopted content standards, but they vary in scope and difficulty. Many are general, and appear to lack rigor. In such cases, alignment and accountability mean something quite different than in the few states with more precise and demanding standards. Several states offer their standards only as models which LEAs may or may not use, which also tends to compromise both alignment and accountability.[39] External evaluations vary in their views of standards' rigor.[40] The disagreements highlight the largely absent independent and careful scientific scrutiny of standards. ACHIEVE is working on a few elements of the problem, prominently including eighth grade math, but many others remain untouched.

It is unclear how federal review will deal with the quality of standards, for Title I leaves most decision-making to states. That makes some political sense, but if standards are to be of continuing use in school improvement, there must be independent means to investigate and report on their quality, usefulness, and effects. At the moment only ACHIEVE seems to fill part of

that assignment, and ACHIEVE is a creature of the states. That also makes some sense, but it limits ACHIEVE's capacity for independent review, and ACHIEVE's size limits the issues with which it can deal.

Assessments

Many states' reports on their assessments were barely on time or late, and, by all accounts, their response has been quite mixed. Many, perhaps most states, appear to be using off-the-shelf tests, which were not designed for alignment to the sort of standards for which IASA called. A few states which had initiated standards-based reform on their own have developed new assessments. Some others have revised extant assessment systems. It appears that most states have not attended closely to aligning assessments and standards. Nor does there seem to be research which probes the nature of alignment, what is entailed at different levels of specificity, and many other issues. Alignment is a critical idea in standards-based reform, but, taken seriously, it has several complex dimensions. If serious consequences are attached to schools' or LEAs' performance, alignment is likely to assume greater importance; at the moment, it appears to have received little careful scrutiny.

Many states do not have the unified Title I and state assessment systems for which Title I calls. That is to be expected, given the problems of holding privileged and underprivileged schools to the same standards on the same tests, as the legislation requires, this would be a terrific challenge for state and local school systems.

There are scraps of research on the quality of assessments, only bits of which might be termed independent. Several of the tests appear to be only modestly difficult, the TAAS being a leading case in point. This accords with the state's strategy of gradually raising the bar, but that suggests the importance of assessments which validly assess growth in knowledge and skill, and of tracking changes in the tests and schools' responses. The former subject so far appears to be unexplored in Texas, and we have found no evidence of any work on the latter. Lacking such work, it will be impossible to make any valid inferences about trends in the response to the Texas (or other) reforms. Several other state assessments appear to be more demanding, but we have found no studies which compare their coverage or weigh their difficulty. It is telling that we are left with such vague descriptions, in such critical areas of school improvement.

Performance Levels and Adequate Progress

Most states appear to have set performance levels, but from what we can tell, they appear to be modest. That is no surprise, for the legislation leaves states and localities lots of room to define performance levels and adequate yearly progress, and setting levels higher makes more work, and opens up more trouble, for states and LEAs. States also seem to vary widely in the levels of performance that they define, in the performance that they require for adequacy, and in the language they use to describe performance levels.[41] Most define Adequate Yearly Progress in terms of the percentage of students moving from one performance level to another. As several analysts have pointed out, such a definition enables schools to satisfy AYP criteria while many students continue to perform poorly. Only a few states attend to progress at all levels of performance.

These responses suggest the importance of comparing responses to the legislation across states and over time, but a moment's thought reveals the difficulty of making valid comparisons, given unexplored differences among assessments and standards. If much is to be learned

from state and local responses to standards-based reform, there is a need for some system of comparing standards and assessments among and within states, in part to help make sense of evidence on state and local responses. The variable responses also suggest a need for care in the interpretation of initial "success", and for attention to change in assessments, performance levels, and schools responses over time. We found no evidence of efforts to design or undertake such research.

Accountability

Making schools and LEAs responsible for students' academic performance is what presumably will animate school improvement in the new Title I. The legislation stipulates the years schools may have weak performance before they are called to account, but the criteria for school failure depend on a combination of decisions about the difficulty of state (or local) assessments, how performance levels are set, how AYP is defined, and what other indices are used, in addition to tests. These decisions are made by state and local officials, with the main responsibility for determining and remedying school failure assigned to LEAs. These criteria vary on several dimensions, but analysts report that only a few states, which undertook standards-based reform on their own, have relatively strong accountability systems.

There is a good deal of controversy about the fairness and appropriateness of several of these systems. For instance, there is some evidence that some Texas schools try to improve performance by excluding students who were likely to perform poorly, a practice which the state seeks to avoid, but which has been reported elsewhere as well.[42] These reports have been disputed. Though reputable researchers are involved, most appear to be partisans or antagonists of the accountability systems in question. We have found only a few examples of research that is both dispassionate and of high quality. Yet it seems likely that understanding the operation and effects of state accountability systems will depend partly on such research.

In view of the assignment of most responsibility for determining and remedying school failure to LEAs, it is worth noting that research on state accountability systems finds that there has been little attention to accountability for districts.[43] Most attention thus far has focused on schools, with the agencies which decide about school failure escaping much attention. Most districts which have imposed strong accountability requirements on schools seem to be located in states with more demanding accountability systems.

School Improvement

This is a critical part of the new Title I, for the program's success will rest in good measure on state and local efforts to boost performance in failing schools. It also is the least developed feature in states' and localities' response. Few states seem to have well developed means for school improvement, beyond standards, assessments, and accountability; those which have been at work the longest have the most developed systems, but even in Kentucky, one observer reports only modest progress in improving failing schools. Independent research in a few districts in Kentucky and Texas seems to confirm this view.[44]

One reason is that some key elements of improvement, especially professional development for teachers and administrators, are weak nearly everywhere. Research on state professional development programs suggests that most are scattered, weakly coordinated, and not focused on central issues of instruction and its improvement.[45] A few states have begun to build regional sub-units which will offer LEAs and schools assistance with improvement, but we have found

only sketchy descriptive material on these efforts. To the extent that states have responded vigorously to standards-based reform, they have chiefly concentrated on what we term the exoskeleton.

There is scattered evidence on how teachers and students respond to standards-based reform. Some evidence and anecdotes suggest that in some high-poverty schools, in states with relatively strong accountability systems, there has been teaching where formerly there was little or none. These appear to be cases in which the tests became the school curriculum, both because few states have well developed assistance for school improvement, and because the tests are salient. In places like Texas, where tests are pretty low level, it does seem to produce some improvement, but that response is no better than the tests themselves. It could penalize students, if learning is confined to doing the tests. The only way to decide this critical issue is to carefully study students' and teachers' work with a range of assessments, over time.

The last decade has in addition seen a modest amount of research on teachers' response to the sorts of ambitious reforms which Title I urges. The chief patterns which these studies reveal is the general lack of appropriate opportunities to learn the new and more demanding material, and consequently superficial and distorted enactment of reform initiatives.[46] In the few cases in which teachers did have suitable opportunities to learn, researchers report appreciable changes in instruction, and, in one case, improved student performance.[47] But the broad pattern has been to impose demanding reforms with weak support for professional learning and consequent lack of capability for deepening or continuing improvement in instruction. If that approach continues, it is likely to limit future opportunities for substantial change.

There are bits of evidence on direct efforts to improve failing schools. State and local school take-overs and reconstitution were very unusual until recently. Jennifer O'Day reports that approaches to reconstitution differ, but that it is difficult for LEAs to rebuild instruction, and there are only modest signs of change.[48] Several of the comprehensive school improvement designs aim to improve high-poverty schools. Though several have been carefully devised and executed, these designs vary widely. There has been some research on their effects, of quite variable quality; some is encouraging, some is not. Though research on CSRD recently has increased, there seems to be no studies which will both probe how these designs interact with a variety of state and local accountability schemes, and deeply explore their effects on teaching and learning. Here as elsewhere, there is nothing that resembles a coordinated agenda for inquiry.

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Our analysis of state and local responses to the new Title I and related reforms rests on sketchier evidence than we would like, but what we have learned does not contradict our earlier analysis. The initial response to reform supports the idea that standards, assessments, and accountability are only an exoskeleton. It could help to support change, yet even taken on its own terms, that external framework has a long way to go before it is in place and working well. Among the key missing elements are means to clarify quality and coverage in standards and assessments, means to clarify consistency between standards and assessments, and the adaptation or creation of assessments which validly measure academic growth.

But even if the exoskeleton worked well, no states and only a few localities appear to be creating the instruments which could breathe instructional life into it. These instruments include cur-

riculum which is grounded in standards and reflected in assessments, and is usable by teachers and students; materials with and from which teachers and other professionals could learn how to use curriculum and assessments; designs for work in and around schools which would create opportunities to learn these things; and incentives, in the work, to learn and improve. In addition, despite serious efforts by some researchers and professional organizations, we know much less than is needed to make informed judgments about responses to the legislation. Some federal agencies and a few foundations have supported some very useful work, but there is no sustained effort to produce the knowledge which sustained improvement requires.

IV. IMPROVING TITLE I

Title I has entered a new era. For most of its history this program sought educational improvement with conventional instruments: added money, regulating money and organization, and enforcing compliance with straightforward measures of fiscal and administrative performance. But the 1988 and 1994 amendments mobilize qualitative and unconventional policy instruments with which to improve schools, including content standards, assessments, school improvement initiatives. This shift reflects a sea change in ideas about schooling and its improvement, in which new, qualitative interventions — CSRD designs, standards-based reform, knowledge-based pay, and other initiatives — figure prominently. From allocating and regulating conventional resources, reformers have begun to regulate and directly intervene in instruction.

This change was in part deliberate. Advocates of standards-based reform argued, with growing empirical support, that inherited approaches to educational improvement were insufficient, that conventional resources and their regulation could not do the trick. Goals 2000 and the revised Title I were a self-conscious move to a very different approach, which depends on building a new qualitative framework — more ambitious goals, more substantial content standards, more demanding assessments, and stronger incentives for performance — around U.S. schools.

In another part, the change was unexpected. Advocates of standards-based reform seem not to have recognized how difficult it would be to make the new qualitative framework pay off in better teaching and learning. They seem to have assumed that the exoskeleton would "drive" change in the inner work of schools. That may be true in a very rough initial sense: some test score increases in some states and localities, on relatively low-level measures of performance, seem to support that view. But research on the response to standards-based reform suggests that teaching and learning in such cases are not likely to produce much more than modest initial increases.

On both counts, there is much to learn about how to enable schools to be more educative. There are only scattered efforts to build the knowledge which would be needed to support continued improvement, and little recognition of how critical better knowledge will be. Neither states and localities nor the federal government, nor private agencies have extensively focused on creating the inner elements of instruction which could enable the new Title I, and schools more generally, to become more effective.

Several other problems face both Title I and the new, qualitative approach to school improvement. One is the lack of a teaching force which is well educated and works in conditions which enable constructive responses to standards-based and related reforms. Another is the lack of teacher education, professional development, and work organization which could remedy those problems. There is little evidence that these are

chiefly problems of teachers' intelligence or ability, and considerable evidence that they are problems of deficient recruitment, professional education, and on-the-job learning, supervision, and decisions about advancement and job security. In many Title I schools these problems are compounded by the presence of poorly educated classroom aides, many of whom teach. A third, closely related problem is the lack of many school and district leaders who are able to lead instructional improvement. That owes a great deal to the lack of suitable education and professional development programs, and appropriate methods for recruitment, learning on the job, and advancement. These problems are critical for Title I and standards-based reform in general, since both can only work with and through school professionals.

These problems of teaching and leadership are complicated by large differences in fiscal and educational strength among states and localities. However large the problems of teaching and leadership are in relatively well-funded LEAs, they are likely to be worse in poorer districts which recruit less qualified staff, who work in larger schools with fewer supplementary services, and offer weaker educational programs.

Finally, there are no well designed means to produce the knowledge which is needed to help solve the problems above or those posed by the new Title I. State and local schools typically support few or no efforts to systematically learn from experience, and few have means to learn from research or others' experience. The federal government has weakly and inconsistently supported research and development, and only a few private foundations have interested themselves in such matters.

Title I is a supplementary program, and it must build on the existing schools. We see no alternative to considering these problems in connection with efforts to strengthen the program. Our analysis leads us to consider three major problems: weak teaching and school leadership; insufficient knowledge about school improvement, and unequal quality in students' education.[49] By focusing on these deep problems we do not imply that nothing can be done short of doing everything. On the contrary, evidence from New York City's District 2, from El Paso, Houston, and other places show that much can be done. But research and other reports on these efforts show that improvement is an uphill struggle against larger problems in U.S. education. Though we hope and expect that work of this sort will continue, we focus on the changes which would enable it to succeed more broadly, with less extraordinary leadership and effort.

Improving Teaching and Leadership

These are among the most fundamental problems in U.S. education. They result from a combination of weak professional education, inadequate recruitment and professional socialization, conditions of work and professional advancement which offer insufficient opportunities to learn on the job and advance by means of learning and professional performance, and weak research and professional knowledge underlying professional education of all sorts. They are not the concern of Title I alone, but improving the effectiveness of this program will depend on solutions to this fundamental problem.

Any solution will require building knowledge about instruction, instructional guidance, teaching and administrative work and school organization. It will require building knowledge about both professional learning for teachers and school leaders, and work organization which supports and rewards learning at work. And it will require using both sorts of knowledge to inform and improve professional education and work organization for teachers and school leaders. Work of these sorts is most likely to prosper if educators work with researchers and professionals from

their own and other sectors. Government can help, but attempts at direct government solutions are likely to further regulate activities that are already over-regulated, and to load additional political freight onto already overloaded organizations and semi-professions.

Accomplishing these things would require extensive research, the development and testing of opportunities for professional learning during and prior to practice, and the development and testing of alternative ways to organize work and to support and encourage learning at work. These things would require the adaptation of some extant institutions, the invention of new ones, research on their operations and effects, and broad testing of the most promising alternatives.

Building Knowledge For School Improvement

We argued earlier that the success of Title I and related reforms depends on better knowledge and know-how of several sorts. Some is a matter of creating instruments of instruction which would enable professionals to constructively respond to standards-based reform. These include curricula which are linked to standards and assessments, assessments which are linked to standards and curricula, and can validly assess academic growth, and opportunities for teachers and school leaders to learn how to use these instruments to good effect. Though these matters can be easily described, developing, testing, and refining such instruments would be complex. One reason is that the work entails many technically and conceptually difficult issues. Another is that there is more than one way to build sound instruments of these sorts; while variety should be encouraged, comparisons of their strengths and weaknesses would be critical. Another still is that because the operation and effects of such instruments depends on the users, what they know, and the situations in which they work, development, testing, and estimating their likely value would be especially complex.

The best curricula and assessments will be of little use if school and district leaders do not use them intelligently, or if state officials introduce competing initiatives. Investigating the actions required to support improved instruction — by school professionals, private school improvement agencies, parents, students, local districts, and states — is critical.

A rather different sort of work concerns the ways in which schools, districts, and states can support improved instruction. The best curricula and assessments will be of little use if school and district leaders do not use them intelligently, or if state officials introduce competing initiatives. Investigating the actions required to support improved instruction — by school professionals, private school improvement agencies, parents, students, local districts, and states — is critical.

Still another sort of work concerns the types of instructional intervention which best improve learning in elementary math and reading. One issue is the nature and effects of early academic intervention. Another is what, if any, continuing intervention is required to sustain the gains to the end of elementary school, and into high school. Still another concerns the social and financial resources which improved schooling requires, and the costs of alternative approaches. Research and

development of these sorts would take substantial and sustained investment. Researchers would have to collect and analyze evidence on the effectiveness of various approaches to school improvement, including their instructional approach and content, their costs and effects, and their scale of operations. That would require common evidence on a range of schools, classrooms, school improvement efforts, and their circumstances, for comparisons would be needed both to illuminate the nature of improvement processes and to draw valid conclusions about their effects. Such comparative work would require valid measures of the enactment of school improvement and of growth in student learning. Each would present significant challenges: observing and measuring enactment of complex instructional interventions is relatively new, and while assessment of student performance is an older field, existing tests may well be unsuitable to assess growth in learning. Major assessment and other instrument development would very probably be needed.[50]

Work of these sorts would require a range of approaches, including experiments, ethnographies and surveys. Since we are near the beginning of evidence-based efforts to improve teaching and learning, it is likely that new school improvement designs also should be developed, and that existing ones would be modified. Development is not research, but it should be evidence-based, which would include grounding improvement designs in research on instruction, field testing of pilot versions, revision, field tests at greater scale, and evaluation all along the way.

Developing such knowledge would enable learning about which approaches to improvement were most productive, and why. It also would require tracking schools' progress as they used new instruments of instruction, or adopted school improvement designs. For evidence on success and failure in practice would be critical to making wise judgments about the most promising approaches to improvement. Such work would make it possible to bring solid evidence to bear on problems of school improvement. That is essential to improving Title I, but it goes further. For it would require comparing varied schools, students, and approaches to improvement, and require larger and more varied samples of students, teachers, schools, and communities than Title I offers. Moreover, an evidence-based approach to better schooling is unlikely to find broad support unless it helps many schools and students. But school improvement for disadvantaged students should be a high priority.

Knowledge Use

Better knowledge would not be automatically used, in Title I or other standards-based reform efforts. Some parents, professionals, policymakers, and education organizations would do so on their own, but many — in professional organizations, executive agencies, school neighborhoods, and legislatures — would not. Non-use would be most common in the most needy schools and neighborhoods. If experience in public health and other sectors is any guide, efforts to improve awareness include stimulating broad public awareness; offering specialized advice through professional channels; outreach by voluntary organizations to parents and other citizens; and government and private support.

Awareness is not the same as use, and use is not necessarily effective. School improvement on a substantial scale, which is Title I's chief aim, probably would require two additional lines of action: policies and practices to stimulate knowledge use and change, including mobilizing strong incentives for improvement, and help for schools and districts in using knowledge. The first is more likely to be feasible for governments than the second. For while state and local education governments can legislate, appropriate, oversee, and

require accountability, few seem to have the capability or experience to offer extensive school-by-school assistance. In addition, these agencies govern schools, are legally responsible for their performance, and have elaborate formal political, legal, and administrative relations with schools. Yet when schools try to improve they typically need extensive professional advice, assistance in often difficult learning, tolerance for mistakes and help in learning from them. The role of thoughtful, helpful, and professional teacher may be inconsistent with that of political overseer. Even if public agencies had the technical capability to do both, adding a large agenda of support and assistance onto state and local agencies' existing responsibility for political and administrative oversight, and their management of relations with competing constituencies, seems likely to extraordinarily complicate their relations with schools.

Extended assistance with school improvement may be more feasible for private agencies which offer research-based programs of instructional improvement. Several such agencies now offer packages of curriculum, professional education, and in some cases assessment, which have been specifically designed to promote the new roles, organization, and professional learning, which better instruction entails. These agencies are variously based in universities, private firms, and research institutes, but they represent a significant development. They can help parents and professionals to make wise choices about improvement, and can offer assistance as professionals try to change practice and improve instruction. They provide more knowledgeable and intensive help than most governments.

But if we suspect that such work is likely to be crucial, we do not know enough about how to do it well, on a large scale. Designs for evidence-based school improvement are new, in and out of Title I, and though most operate within the Title I program, all but a few operate at a modest scale. Researchers and developers are only beginning to learn about the operation and effects of these designs; better knowledge would require research on existing and new designs, especially those which give priority to working with schools which perform poorly, and which enroll many disadvantaged students.

Organizing the Enterprise

Success in this endeavor would depend partly on how it was sponsored and organized, for that would affect the quality of the work and its reputation. Given the mixed record of educational R&D, and the weak reputation of the agencies involved, these are matters of unusual importance. Our proposals would require building a scientific and professional community, and that would take high standards for recruitment and training. Devising properly focused and well coordinated R&D programs would take careful planning, deft leadership, and periodic, serious review. Success would be more likely if the enterprise were overseen by a panel of leading scientific and professional experts, for that would express a commitment to quality, help to attract and retain an outstanding staff, and offer professional and scientific leadership in planning and reviewing programs.

It would be very difficult to attract and hold top people unless an appreciable fraction of the research were intramural, for that is what attracts outstanding researchers and other professionals. Much more work would have to be extramural, for one agency could not do anything approaching all the work. And even if it could, success requires progress in an entire scientific and professional community.

High quality work and confidence in it require a plainly non-partisan and independent enterprise. Sponsorship by a broad coalition of private foundations, government, business, social

science, and the professions would help. Such a coalition could build a foundation for research-based school improvement which reached well beyond government. Better knowledge about school improvement would serve the interests of students, parents, employers and workers, higher education, and the body politic. Their interests are in some sense all public, and the concern of governments. Most schools are creatures of the state, all are state sponsored and regulated, and most are state operated. But if government has an interest in school improvement, government alone cannot adequately manage that work. Governments are deeply involved in the schools' inadequacies, and cannot be dispassionate about them. And government is increasingly riven by partisanship, which would seriously impede efforts to use knowledge to improve education.

The more important education has become as a public policy issue in the decades since World War II, the more partisan it has become. Education now is one of the top two or three items on the public agenda, and it is more intensely partisan than ever. Creating better knowledge about school improvement and encouraging its use would require the capacity to do penetrating work, to make candid assessments, and to offer sometimes difficult advice. It is unlikely that any government – or even a coalition of governments — could do a good job of sponsoring such work for very long, for the conflict in roles could be intense, and the political cross-pressures crippling. That is another reason for broad and independent sponsorship. Still another is that the enterprise we propose would have to overcome a very uneven history of federal educational R&D, and much consequent suspicion. Trying to rebuild on the extant foundations would saddle any new effort with a huge handicap. A clean break and new foundations are in order. That could help to protect against partisanship by representing support across a broad spectrum, by expressing a non-partisan approach, and by removing educational R&D from the federal establishment, in which it has been politically much too vulnerable.

An effort of this scope, scale, and importance would require national perspective and organization. Schooling is an enormous enterprise in one of the world's largest and most diverse nations. Staff and funds sufficient to sponsor a range of studies, program development, field trials, experiments, evaluations, and other work would be required. Such an institution could not be effective if it did not work closely with private and professional agencies and state and local governments, for its success would partly depend on helping to improve their work. But if governments would be among its most important partners, the agency would be more useful to them and others,

Creating better knowledge about school improvement and encouraging its use would require the capacity to do penetrating work, to make candid assessments, and to offer sometimes difficult advice. It is unlikely that any government – or even a coalition of governments — could do a good job of sponsoring such work for very long, for the conflict in roles could be intense, and the political cross-pressures crippling. That is another reason for broad and independent sponsorship.

if it was situated in neutral territory, on the boundary between the public and private sectors.

That implies an enterprise whose purposes were public but whose sponsors reached well beyond government and partisan interests. One possible vehicle would be a mixed, public-private corporation, and another would be a sub-agency of the National Research Council, at the National Academy of Sciences. Whatever its home, the sponsoring coalition should be represented in a governing board which helped to oversee the agency's work as well as relations with clients and donors.

V. CONCLUSION

We argued near the outset of this paper that antipoverty programs must solve three problems if they are to succeed. They must have a plausible design for moving people out of poverty. They must be thought to have done so, with some plausible basis in evidence and experience. And they must mobilize broad political support for helping the poor in a society in which most people are not poor. Success requires weaving solutions to problems of politics, policy design, and knowledge into a single package.

Title I was increasingly at risk through the 1980s, in part because the view that it had failed to deliver for students made it vulnerable to proposals for block grants and choice, despite the formula-grant's political appeal. Though the idea that the program had failed was misguided, it was politically consequential. Title I is much more ambitious now, and much more difficult to enact. For that reason among several others, it will be more difficult to produce convincing evidence that the program delivers for students.

The knowledge building program that we sketched would make it more likely that states and localities could deliver on the promise of the new Title I and related reforms. It would make it less likely that the new Title I and standards-based reform would be judged a failure. In the new era into which education has entered, knowledge is central to school improvement. The chief instruments of improvement are all knowledge based. Using them well also will depend on knowledge of their operations and effects. One key to improvement is having instructionally usable standards and assessments, and curriculum linked to them. Another is professionals' opportunities to learn how to turn these instruments of instruction to students' advantage, and to work in settings which support ambitious instruction. Still another is professionals who have the knowledge, skill, and incentives which enable and stimulate use of these resources and opportunities. Lacking much better knowledge, Title I and many related improvement efforts will be operating in a twilight zone, in which compelling evidence of improvement would be impossible. Without such knowledge, Title I will be lost educationally. If it is lost educationally, it will be at increasing risk politically.

Conventional approaches to improving education are unlikely to help very much in this new era. Enforcing compliance with policy requirements may get some states and localities off the dime, but to get much beyond the neighborhood of the dime they need knowledge, know-how, and opportunities to learn them. Neither the revised Title I nor Goals 2000, nor most state reforms, offer much help either in building knowledge, or in creating opportunities for professionals to learn. Similarly, massive new appropriations for class size reduction are unlikely to help unless there are many qualified teachers in high poverty schools, and a large reserve supply of such teachers waiting to move into vacant classrooms created by such reductions.

If conventional resources and regulation are unlikely to get us very far, deregulation is unlikely

to get us further. Turning Title I into a block grant might solve a political problem for some partisans of the idea, but there is no evidence that many states have made great progress toward improving the schools which children from poor families attend. There are few places in which less restricted federal funds would enable even greater progress in the development of promising state or local action. There is instead evidence that most states, including those that may have some evidence of success, are just beginning to learn how this problem might be solved. Similarly, there is no reason to believe that school choice can solve this problem. It may be one of several useful ways to deal with failing schools, but there is no evidence that choice alone can produce better teaching and learning. There is increasing evidence that improved instruction requires a complex recipe which blends teachers with strong subject matter and pedagogical knowledge, schools and districts with knowledgeable and strong leadership, strong and usable academic standards, assessments which are useful both for diagnosing problems of learning and teaching and for exemplifying standards, and strong incentives for better learning and teaching — among other things. If old-style regulation and conventional resources will not produce even these ingredients of the recipe, neither will the conventional antidotes of deregulation and consumer choice.

Better knowledge would be useful to professionals and policymakers, and it could help build political support for education. Educators who knew much more about how to improve instruction would have more successful students, and that would improve their influence. Evidence that schools can do much better also could change the sense of what is educationally and politically possible, and that could mobilize the will to press for improvement. Parents and local officials who knew more about school improvement would have a basis to press educators who did not act. State policymakers who knew much more about how to improve schools could set priorities for local action, and take steps if local school authorities did not act, or needed assistance. Better knowledge could focus action and enhance influence for citizens, private agencies, professionals, and public officials, which could help to build stronger constituencies for improvement.

These ideas build on experience in other fields, and recent developments in education. Better knowledge about nutrition, sanitation, and disease have been catalysts for action in personal health, in health professionals' work, in government, and in creating constituencies for public and private action to improve health. Better knowledge began to pay off in public health and medicine roughly a century ago, and the pace accelerated with more investment in medical R&D since WW II. Knowledge was not an independent force, but it enabled professionals, patients, citizens, and public officials to take action and exert influence that otherwise would have been unlikely.

The work we propose would yield no school improvement vaccine. In a nation as varied as the U.S., one remedy would rarely work everywhere. Schools, communities, students, and governance arrangements differ, as do parents' ambitions, state and local conditions, and students' interests. Such differences would count, both because approaches to improvement that are effective in one situation might not be so in another, and because better knowledge would not end local preferences or debates about schooling. But if more solid evidence on schools and their improvement would be no panacea, it could inform many decisions as well as broader deliberations about schooling. It could reduce assertions which were not informed by careful investigation. Solid evidence on effectiveness is, however, only part of judgments about education. It can inform debate and enable better informed decisions, but

could not eliminate debate or push politics aside. In a democracy, nothing more should be tolerable. In a nation which cares about its children, nothing less should suffice.

The last fifteen years have seen unprecedented public and private efforts to improve schools, and a growing popular sense that better education is a high priority. Public concern with better schooling is at an all-time high, and public distaste for political partisanship at an all-time low. Scientific and professional knowledge which helped to improve schools could be an attractive focus for action across partisan lines. The effort which we propose could help to revise the political incentives around Title I and schools more generally. For if some schools, districts, and states used new knowledge, and schools began to improve, it would generate growing pressure for others to keep up — from the media, from organized advocates, from politicians who used the comparisons to advance their own interests, and from interested parents and citizens. The growth of knowledge about school improvement, and of the capacity to help schools improve, could help all of the participants in such an effort. Better knowledge could increase the effectiveness of professionals, parents, and policymakers, because it would create a more solid basis for professional action and public accountability. That could enable government to be more effective, in part by enabling professionals, parents, and private agencies to be more effective. Better knowledge could help the federal system to work, without trying to make it do things which it will not do well.

ENDNOTES

1 This paper was written for a meeting on the federal role in education, sponsored by the Center on Education Policy, in Washington. It is not for quotation or other use without our written permission. It summarizes several key elements of a book, *Poverty, Politics, and Pedagogy: Federal Policy And School Improvement*, to be published in 2001.

2 For example, the number of U.S. Department of Education employees fell from 5,254 in 1992 to 4,926 in 2000. Similarly, the number of employees within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, which administers Title I, fell from 290 to 282 (Central Personnel File, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2000). This was much less of a decrease than in the Reagan-Bush administrations: the number of Department of Education employees fell from 7,469 to 5,202 between 1980 and 1991, and from 479 to 308 in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

3 For example, employment in state education agencies has increased only very slightly since 1993 — from a total of 1.83 million employees in 1993 to 1.96 million in 1999, a time of vastly increased responsibility (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2000).

4 Paul Peterson, Barry Rabe, and Kenneth Wong, *When Federalism Works* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1986).

5 See W. Cooley, and G. Leinhardt, *Instructional Dimensions Study: The Search for Effective Classroom Processes* (Pittsburgh: Learning Research and Development Center, 1978).

6 Jay Chambers et. al., *Translating Dollars into Services: Chapter 1 Resources in the Context of State and Local Resources for Education. Final Report* (Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences, 1993) Table 2, p.xi.

7 Chambers, 1993, *Op. cit.*, Table 4, p xvi.

8 Chambers, 1993, *Op. cit..*, Table III-13, p. 54.

9 Chambers, 1993, *Op. cit.*, Table III-14, p. 55.

10 Chambers, 1993, *Op. cit.*, Table III-11, p. 50.

11 Chambers, 1993, *Op. cit.*, Table III-12, p. 52.

12 Chambers, 1993, *Op. cit.*, pp. 95-6.

13 The program does equalize some differences, but it is far from eliminating them. See J. Chambers, J. Lieberman, T. Parrish, D. Kaleba, J. Van Campen, and S. Stullich, *Study of Education Resources and Federal Funding* (Washington, D.C, U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

14 See, for example, Milbrey McLaughin's discussion of the GE Tempo study results of Title I in the later 1960s, in Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin, *Evaluation and Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1975); see also Cooley and Leinhardt, *op. cit.*

15 Brian Rowan, Larry Guthrie, Ginny Lee, and Grace Pung

Guthrie, *The Design and Implementation of Chapter 1 Instructional Services: A study of 24 schools* (Far West Laboratory,1986).

16 Only one study that we know of (Rowan, Lee, Pung) probed some elements of these issues as part of the mid-1980s National Assessment

17 As this summary suggests, the redesign accepted many proposals made by The National Commission on Title I, and, like that Commission, the administration drew deeply on ideas about "systemic" reform that had been developing since the late 1980s. That was no surprise: the President had been deeply involved in school reform as a governor, and several of his top education officials had been leading figures in the movement for systemic reform.

18 *Improving America's Schools Act* sec. 1111. State plans. (b)(D(II and III).

19 The Department of Education has intermittently tried to support standards development, especially in reading and math, but these efforts have been quite controversial, and several were abruptly terminated.

20 *Improving America's Schools Act* sec. 1111. State plans. (b)(2)(B,C,E)

21 *Improving America's Schools Act* sec. 1111. State plans. (b)(2) (A,F).

22 *Improving America's Schools Act* sec. 1001. Declaration of policy and statement of purpose.(d)(8).

23 We use the term instruments in the same sense as R. Elmore and L. McDonnell, "Alternative Policy Instruments" *Educational Evaluation And Policy Analysis*, vol. 9 no.2, Summer 1987. They refer to policy instruments as "...the mechanisms that translate substantive policy goals (e.g. improved student achievement, higher quality entering teachers) into actions."

24 Chambers, J., Lieberman, J., Parrish, T., Kaleba, D., Van Campen, J., and Stullich, S. *Study of Education resources and Federal Funding.* Washington, D.C, U.S. Department of Education, 2000, p.38. This figure is higher in targeted assistance than high-poverty schools, because the Title I grants are spread over many more students in the latter schools.

25 Figure from Education Funding Research Council (EFRC) *Title I Handbook.* Washington, D.C., Author, Sept 2000, p.D-71. The EFRC calculations imply that inflation in has grown nearly by 700% since 1965, which seems implausible. If so, then the EFRC deflator understates growth in the real purchasing power of Title I. But NCES calculates that, when adjusted for inflation, teachers' salaries are flat between the early 1970s and the late 1990s. Since those salaries are the largest part of Title I expenditures, this suggests that the EFRC deflation is at least roughly correct. But even if we estimate conservatively, the real purchasing power of Title I has at most doubled since 1965, rather than increasing seven-fold.

26 Newmann, Fred M. and Wehlage, Gary G. *Successful School Restructuring: A Report to the Public and Educators*, Wisconsin: WCER,1995; Purkey, Stewart C. and Smith, Marshall S. "Effective Schools: A Review." *Elementary School Journal*, v83 n4 pp. 427-52, March 1983; Elmore, Richard F and Burney, Deanna. "*School Variation and Systemic Instructional Improvement in Community School District #2, New York City. High Performance Learning Communities Project.*" Pittsburgh, LRDC, 1997; Elmore, Richard F. and Burney, Deanna. "*Investing in Teacher Learning: Staff Development and Instructional Improvement in Community School District #2, New York City.*" New York: mimeo,1997; Elmore, Richard F., Peterson, Penelope L. and McCarthey, Sarah J. *Restructuring in the Classroom: Teaching, Learning, and School Organization.* California: Jossey-Bass,1996.

27 Chambers, et. al., op. cit., p. 24. In FY 2000-01 concentration grants totaled $1.14 billion, and basic grants totaled $ 6.57 billion; the concentration grants thus added roughly one-sixth to the total basic grant allocation. Education Funding Research Council, *Title I Handbook.* Washington, D.C., Author, Sept 2000, p.D-98. The average per pupil expenditure for all U.S. schools, for 1998-99 is $ 6,046; see Education Funding Research Council, *op. cit*, p.D-73.

28 See Phyllis McClure, "The New Title I Compensatory Education Program: An Analysis." Chapter I Handbook, Update Volume XV, No. 3. November 1994. p.A-348, She explains how supporters of schoolwides connected to high standards found pullout models inadequate, and intended schoolwides to be comprehensive and remedy problems of low expectations for students. Others argued that schoolwides would offer greater flexibility in targeting students, still possibly leaving children as the unit of treatment. Others found them appealing because they allowed more administrative flexibility.

29 The legislation also charged states to develop teams to help schools enact schoolwide programs. IASA sec. 1001. Declaration of policy and statement of purpose. Also, SEC. 1114. Schoolwide programs.

30 IASA, 1114 (a) (5) (B).

31 Janet Weiss and Mary Tschirhart, "Public information campaigns as policy instruments." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, vol 13:82-119 Winter '94.

32 *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, vol 12, no. 3, Fall 1990; James P. Spillane, "State Policy and the Non-Monolithic Nature of the Local School District: Organizational and Professional Considerations," *American Educational Research Journal*, vol.35 no.1 pp.33-63 Spring1998; James P. Spillane, and Charles L. Thompson, " Reconstructing Conceptions of Local Capacity: The Local Education Agency's Capacity for Ambitious Instructional Reform," Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, vol. 19 no.2 pp.185-203 Summer1997; Elmore, et. al. op. cit.

33 An additional consideration in the case of Goals and Title I is that it would have been politically infeasible for federal agencies to become deeply involved with instruction. But if the importance of these instruments had been understood, the legislation could have made provision for state, local, professional, or other agencies to develop these instruments, and defined such work as a critical part of the reform.

34 Weiss and Tschirhart, *op. cit*

35 *Goals 2000* II (A) (203) (1) (5) (6).

36 Public Agenda Foundation. September, 2000.

37 Several states and private agencies created ACHIEVE, a consortium with a similar mission to NESIC without any formal federal connection. The extent of state participation and influence remain to be seen.

38 Margaret E. Goertz and Mark C. Duffy, *State and District Accountability Systems and the Federal Role* (Consortium for Policy Research in Education: University of Pennsylvania, June 9, 2000); Margaret E Goertz and Mark C. Duffy, "Resource Allocation in Reforming Schools and School Districts," in *School- Based Financing. Twentieth Annual Yearbook of the American Education Finance Association*, Ed. Margaret E. Goertz and Allan Odden (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin Press, Inc., 1999), pp. 215-244; Margaret E. Goertz, "Implementing Standards-Based Reform: Challenges for State Policy." Paper presented at: "Beyond the Standards Horse Race: Implementation, Assessment and Accountability – The Keys to Student Achievement," 1999; Tammi J. Chun and Margaret E. Goertz, "Title I and State Education Policy: High Standards for all Students?" in *Hard Work for Good Schools: Facts not Fads in Title I Reform*. Ed. Gary Orfield and Elizabeth H. DeBray, (Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project. Harvard University, 1999) pp. 120-129; Dianne M. Piche, "Title I in Alabama: The Struggle to Meet Basic Needs" in *Title I in Midstream: The Fight To Improve Schools for Poor Kids. Report of the Citizens' Commission on Civil Rights*, Ed. Corrinne M. Yu and William L. Taylor (Washington, DC, 1999).

39 Margaret E. Goertz and Mark C. Duffy. op. cit.; Tammi J. Chun and Margaret E. Goertz, op cit.

40 Chester E. Finn Jr. and Michael J. Petrilli, Ed. *The State of State Standards, 2000: English, History, Geography, Mathematics, Science* (Washington, DC: The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2000); Chester E. Finn Jr., Michael J. Petrilli, and Gregg Vanourek "The State of State Standards," *Fordham Report*, vol.2 no.5 July1998; American Federation of Teachers, *Making Standards Matter 1999: An Update on State Activity*, Educational Issues Policy Brief Number 11, (Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers,1999); Heidi Glidden, *Making Standards Matter 1998. An Annual Fifty-State Report on Efforts To Raise Academic Standards*, (Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers, 1998); Matthew Gandal, *Making Standards Matter, 1997: An Annual Fifty-State Report on Efforts To Raise Academic Standards* (Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers, 1997); Matthew Gandal, *Making Standards Matter, 1996: An Annual Fifty-State Report on Efforts To Raise Academic Standards*, (Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers, 1996); American Federation of Teachers, *Setting Strong Standards: AFT's Criteria for Judging the Quality and Usefulness of Student Achievement Standards* (Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers,1995).

41 In the CPRE core study, Goertz and Duffy report that four states delegate responsibility for setting performance levels to LEAs; these states treat LEAs in the same voluntarist frame as the federal legislation frames for states. Six of the ten states set levels themselves. Goertz and Duffy, *op.cit.*

42 Walt Haney, "The Texas Miracle in Education." Education *Policy Analysis Archives* Vol. 8 No. 41; Stephen P. Klein,

Laura S. Hamilton, Daniel F. McCaffrey, Brian M. Stecher, "What Do Test Scores in Texas Tell Us?" (Rand, 2000).

43 Goertz and Duffy, *op.cit.*

44 Julie Stewart and Barbara Neufeld "Standards-Based Reform in Corpus Christi Independent School District" (Cambridge: Education Matters. August 30, 1999); Barbara Neufeld and Jennifer Boothby, "Standards-Based Reform in the Jefferson County Public Schools: Update Report" (Cambridge: Education Matters, Inc. August 30, 1999).

45 Thomas B. Corcoran, "Helping Teachers Teach Well: Transforming Professional Development," *CPRE Policy Briefs* (New Jersey, 1995); Brian Lord, "Teachers' Professional Development: Critical Colleagueship and the Role of Professional Communities," In *The Future of Education: Perspectives on National Standards in Education*, Ed. N. Cobb (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1994, pp. 175-204); Judith Warren Little, "Teachers' Professional Development in a Climate of Educational Reform," Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, vol.15 no.2, pp.129-51 Summer,1993.

46 *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, vol .12, no. 3, Fall 1990; Stewart and Neufeld, *op. cit*; Neufeld and Boothby, *op. cit.*

47 Spillane and Thompson, *op. cit.*; David K. Cohen and Heather C. Hill, "Instructional policy and classroom performance: the mathematics reform in California" *Teachers College Record*, vol.102 no.2:294-343 Apr 2000.

48 Jennifer O'Day and Betheny Gross, *One System or Two? Title I Accountability in the Context of High Stakes for Schools in Local Districts and States* (Washington DC: U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of the Under Secretary: Office of Educational Research and Improvement 1999).

49 We refer to what has been called "opportunity to learn". But that term is too precise for what is now known about the influences on learning, and too freighted with recent political argument, to be useful.

50 This sketch implies that a research agenda focused on the central issues of school improvement would span basic research on learning, teaching, and assessment in a few central school subjects, as well as more applied work on the impact of interventions and related subjects. Basic and applied work would both be critical to the enterprise, and interaction between such lines of work would be essential.

APPENDIX A:

Participants

THE CENTER ON EDUCATION POLICY'S MEETING ON THE FEDERAL ROLE IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

December 4, 2000

Gordon Ambach
Council of Chief
State School Officers
Washington, D.C.

Charles Barone
Committee on Education
and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Paul Barton (*Presenter*)
Educational Testing Service
Washington, D.C.

David Bergholz
The George Gund Foundation
Cleveland, Ohio

Patrick Canan
U.S. Catholic Conference
Washington, D.C.

Michael Casserly
The Council of the Great City
Schools
Washington, D.C.

David Cohen (*Presenter*)
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Michael Cohen
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C.

Father William Davis
U.S. Catholic Conference
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Steve DeWitt
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Reston, Virginia

Virginia Edwards
Education Week
Bethesda, Maryland

Peter Folan
U. S. Catholic Conference
Washington, D.C.

Charlotte Fraas
American Federation of Teachers
Washington, D.C.

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Consortium for Policy
Research in Education
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Christina Hamilton
The Honorable David Obey
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

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MEMBERS OF THE PRESS

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Title I Monitor
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APPENDIX B:

Biographies

Paul E. Barton is Senior Associate in the Research Division of the Educational Testing Service, where he was previously Director of the Policy Information Center and Associate Director of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. He has been President of the National Institute of Work and Learning, member of the U.S. Department of Labor Policy Planning Staff, and staff member of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. His publications are in the areas of education, assessment, youth employment, literacy, welfare, and income maintenance.

David K. Cohen teaches at The University of Michigan. His current research concerns the implementation and effects of education reform. His past work concerns the relations between social science and social policy (Useable Knowledge, with C.E. Lindblom), and American high schools (The Shopping Mall High School, with A. Powell and E. Farrar).

Margaret E. Goertz is a professor of education policy and co-director of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. Her research focuses on state education reform policies, state and federal programs for special needs students, and education finance.

Paul T. Hill is Research Professor in the University of Washington's Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs. He directs the Center on Reinventing Public Education. The Center, which is funded by foundations and businesses, develops, tests, and helps communities adopt alternative governance systems for public k-12 education. He is also a Non-Resident Senior Fellow in the Brookings Institution's Brown Center on Education Policy.

John F. (Jack) Jennings is the founder and director of the Center on Education Policy. From 1967 to 1994, he worked in the area of federal aid to education for the U.S. Congress where he was involved in nearly every major education debate held at the national level. In addition to editing several books, writing a national legislative newsletter, and publishing numerous articles, he has written a book, Why National Standards and Tests?, which was published by Sage Publications in April 1998.

Carl F. Kaestle is University Professor and Professor of Education, History, and Public Policy at Brown University. He studies the history of American education and its relationship to education policy today. His current research traces the federal role in education from the 1940's to the present.

Susan L. Moffitt is a doctoral candidate in Political Science at the University of Michigan. Her research explores public policy implementation, the capacity of government agencies, and the relationship between knowledge and public policy.

Elizabeth Pinkerton, a native of northern Wisconsin, is the Director of State and Federal Programs for the Elk Grove Unified School District in Sacramento County, California. She is past president of the California Association of Administrators of State and Federal Programs and the National Association of Federal Education Program Administrators.

Richard Rothstein is a research associate of the Washington, D.C.-based Economic Policy Institute, and the national education columnist of The New York Times. He is also an Adjunct Professor of Public Policy at Occidental College in Los Angeles, and a senior correspondent for The American Prospect magazine.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
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