

NOMINATION OF MARGARET SPELLINGS

HEARING OF THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS UNITED STATES SENATE ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

NOMINATION OF MARGARET SPELLINGS, OF TEXAS, TO BE SECRETARY,
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

JANUARY 6, 2005

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NOMINATION OF MARGARET SPELLINGS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 2005

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m., in room SD-430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Michael B. Enzi (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Enzi, Gregg, Alexander, Burr, Isakson, Sessions, Kennedy, Dodd, Harkin, Jeffords, Reed, and Clinton.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ENZI

The CHAIRMAN. I will call the hearing to order.

Good morning, and welcome to the hearing on the President's nomination of Margaret Spellings to serve as our next Secretary of Education.

It is a pleasure to welcome Ms. Spellings and all those in attendance to our first hearing of the 109th Congress.

Before we begin, I want to mention that it has been the tradition of the committee that the chairman and the ranking member are the only ones who give statements; anyone else with a statement can have it included in the record or can add oral comments as part of their questioning period.

There are several "firsts" that are happening. For me, it is the first committee hearing that I will be conducting as the chairman, and I cannot think of a better or more important opening hearing for the committee than talking about the State of education in this country and how to make it better for students of all ages.

It is also my first opportunity to welcome to the committee and thank for their willingness to serve on it our new members, Senator Burr from North Carolina and Senator Isakson of Georgia, who will be here later, and also, I believe that the former chairman of the committee, Senator Hatch, will be here.

Today's hearing is the first on the President's nominees for his Cabinet for his second term, and it is also the beginning of what I hope will be a continuing dialogue between this committee, the Administration, and you and your staff at the Department of Education.

Looking back, I believe that we have made an excellent start, and we will have some real progress to show for our work on education issues which have such a strong and direct impact on our children. The centerpiece of that effort, the President's No Child Left Behind Act, emphasized the accountability and importance of getting results in the classroom. As the President's domestic advi-

sor, you were part of that effort. Now you will be taking up the reins of the Department of Education and bringing your own style and substance to the task at hand.

You have more than 10 years of experience with these issues on the local, State and national levels, and I do not think anyone has a better understanding of the President's position on them. Having had the chance to spend some time discussing these issues with you, I know that you share my commitment to ensuring that children receive the education they will need to take their place in a workplace that continues to change and evolve. Your record on those issues is very clear. You believe as I do that every school can be a good one, and every student can be a star achiever.

That has been my experience as the father of three college graduates, one of whom is a former school teacher and principal who has returned to teaching.

It is also my hope as the grandpa of a little boy—I know he is counting on his grandpa and the other parents and grandparents on this committee to ensure that he receives the kind of education that he will need to find a good job and the continuing training he will need to keep it.

We must provide a lifetime of learning to our students and the workers of today and tomorrow that will enable the United States to retain its competitive edge. It may sound like I am jumping the gun by expressing my concerns about the kind of world that my grandson will face in the years to come, but as the old adage says so well, "The future will be here before we know it." It is our job to ensure that we are prepared for it when it arrives.

That is why these reforms that we have been working on must continue to be put in place as soon as possible. Our schools need to take action today for the sake of tomorrow. Reforms that will make our schools better in 10 years or more will not help our children who need the foundation that only a good education can provide now. They are looking to us to keep the promise of No Child Left Behind and ensuring that they leave school with the education they need to be prepared for the challenges that await them as they join the workforce and begin their careers.

I believe you also share my concerns about current workers and the importance of ensuring that they have access to the kind of skills training they will need to keep their abilities up-to-date. The workplace is not what it used to be. Time was that graduation day marked the beginning of a career that would last a lifetime and the end of classes and the learning experience. It is not like that anymore. In this global economy, school is never out. A child starting school today will probably have 14 different occupations, 10 of which have not even been invented yet.

Today's workplace demands an ever-changing workforce that can adapt to the requirements and skills of the new high-tech jobs that are in such high demand. Keeping our workforce abilities and skills current will be vital to not only our Nation's families but our economy as well. That will mean integrating our education programs so that they support a lifetime of learning and changing the way that we think about school and the education process.

In the past, we too often looked at the process of education as if it existed in separate, distinct silos—preschool, elementary, sec-

ondary, postsecondary, the end. This perspective is often reflected in local, State, and Federal policies. If we are going to be successful as a nation in preparing the next generation of engineers, teachers, health care professionals, and the thousands of other jobs in demand, we need to make sure there is a seamless transition all the way from preschool through postsecondary and beyond.

When we met to discuss your goals and your unique vision for the Department of Education, you made it clear that you understand the need for flexibility in our approach to education. Each State has its unique needs, and we as policymakers need to address each State's challenges individually.

In my own State of Wyoming, for example, every school and classroom is different. Some schools require teachers to handle several subjects. Others require them to be highly specialized. Rural areas like Wyoming face a unique challenge in this area because we receive fewer dollars for almost every Federal program because we have the smallest population. Complicating matters, Wyoming also has one of the largest physical areas of any State. That means that some schools exist to serve a relative handful of students. If forced to close, those children would have to travel 60 miles or more to school. We do not consider that to be acceptable. It also makes teacher recruitment and retention a very real problem that must be constantly addressed. Unique demands of rural education needs may require unique education solutions.

As a former mayor and now as I serve in the Senate, it has always been my belief that the system that works best is the one that keeps the decisionmaking process as close to home as possible. There is a lot of wisdom at the kitchen dinner table. We need to do all that we can to promote each parent's active participation in the education of their children. That is a vital component of the process.

In the end, it will not be enough for us to ensure that each child has access to a good education, but we must ensure that we produce well-educated young adults. Best of all, when teachers, students, and parents work together, the teamwork that results will help our children to gain a greater respect for our historical traditions and a better appreciation of the ideals and values that made our country great.

I believe that each child is born with a special gift, destined to make a unique contribution in the world, a contribution that only he or she can make. An integrated system of education will cultivate the child's gift and help to develop it so that it can be expressed and shared.

It is not an easy thing for us to do, but it must be done. Providing a lifetime of learning for our children and continued training to current workers is the key that they need to find good jobs and keep them. Our success in that effort will ensure that every child's life will be a success story and that the cherished American dream is within every child's grasp, no matter what school they attend, everything from early education to career and higher education.

Today we have before us an excellent nominee who possesses the skills, experience, and character to help shepherd our students of all ages and backgrounds along the pathway of the American dream. I look forward to Ms. Spellings' speedy confirmation, and I

look forward to working with her in her new role as Secretary of Education to help achieve this goal.

[The prepared statement of Senator Enzi follows:]

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ENZI

Good Morning and welcome to today's hearing on the President's nomination of Margaret Spellings to serve as our next Secretary of Education. It is a pleasure to welcome Mrs. Spellings and all those in attendance to this, our first hearing of the 109th Congress.

Before we begin, we are marking several firsts today and I would like to take a moment to call attention to a few of them.

For me, this is the first committee hearing that I will conduct as its Chairman. I can't think of a better or more important opening hearing for the committee than to spend this morning talking about the State of education in the country and how to make it better for students of all ages.

It is also my first opportunity to welcome to the committee and thank for their willingness to serve on it our new members, Senator Burr of North Carolina and Senator Isakson of Georgia. In addition, it is a pleasure to welcome back a former Chairman of this committee, Senator Hatch. It is good to be here with you and my other colleagues who are returning to serve on this committee, especially my good friend and our ranking member, Senator Kennedy.

Today's hearing is one of the first on the President's nominees for his Cabinet for his second term. It is also the beginning of what I hope will be a continuing dialogue between this committee, the Administration, and you and your staff at the Department of Education.

Looking back, I believe we have made an excellent start. We have some real progress to show for our work on the education issues that have such a strong and direct impact on our children.

The centerpiece of that effort, the President's No Child Left Behind Act, emphasized accountability and the importance of getting results in the classroom. Thanks to that important legislation, our Nation's classrooms are more effective and efficient places of learning and our children are benefiting from that.

As the President's Domestic Advisor, you were a part of that effort. Now you will be taking up the reins at the Department of Education and bringing your own style and substance to the task at hand. It will be difficult but I am confident you will do a good job. You have more than 10 years of experience with these issues on the local, State and national level and I don't think anyone has a better understanding of the President's position on them. You will now be in the perfect position to promote his agenda and ensure that we continue to make progress on an issue that I know is as important to you as it is to him.

Having had the chance to spend some time discussing these issues with you, I know you share my commitment to ensuring our children receive the education they will need to take their place in a workplace that continues to change and evolve. Your record on these issues is clear—you believe, as I do, that every school can be a good one and every student can be a star achiever. That has been my experience as the father of three college graduates, one of

whom is a former school teacher and current principal. It is also my hope as the grandfather of a little boy. I know he is counting on his grandfather and the other parents and grandparents on this committee to ensure he receives the kind of education he will need to find a good job and the continuing training he will need to keep it. We must provide a lifetime of learning to our students and workers of today and tomorrow that will enable the United States to retain its competitive edge.

It may sound like I am jumping the gun by expressing my concerns about the kind of world my grandson will face in the years to come, but, as the old adage says so well, the future will be here before we know it. It's our job to ensure we're prepared for it when it arrives.

That is why these reforms we have been working on must continue to be put in place as soon as possible. Our schools need us to take action today, for tomorrow may be too late. Reforms that will make our schools better in ten or more years won't help our children who need the foundation only a good education can provide now. They are looking to us to keep the promise of No Child Left Behind and ensure they leave school with the education they will need to be prepared for the challenges that await them as they join the workforce and begin their careers.

We have all heard the horror stories of young adults graduating from High School or College unable to fully participate in society—unable to even read the diploma they have just been given by their school. The programs we will work to support and improve here in committee and on the Senate floor will continue to make those stories a thing of the past.

I believe you also share my concerns about current workers, and the importance of ensuring that they have access to the kind of skills training they will need to keep their abilities up to date. The workplace isn't what it used to be. Time was that graduation day marked the beginning of a career that would last a lifetime and the end of classes and the learning experience. It isn't like that anymore. In this global, technology-driven economy, school is never out. Today's workplace demands an ever changing workforce that can adapt to the requirements and skills of the new high tech jobs that are in such high demand. Keeping our workforce's abilities current will be vital if workers are to continue to find the kind of good jobs they will need to support their families and maintain a constant and consistent standard of living.

That will mean integrating our education programs so they support a lifetime of learning and changing the way we think about school and the education process. In the past, we too often looked at the process of education as if it existed in separate, distinct silos. Preschool, elementary, secondary and postsecondary education were thought of as separate programs and, often, considered in isolation. This perspective was often reflected in local, State and Federal policies. If we are going to be successful as a nation in preparing the next generation of engineers, teachers, healthcare professionals, and the thousands of other jobs in demand, we need to make sure there is a seamless transition all the way from preschool through postsecondary education and beyond.

When we met to discuss your goals and your unique vision for the Department of Education, you made it clear that you understand the need for flexibility in our approach to education. Each State has its own unique needs and we need to address each State's challenges individually. In my own State of Wyoming, for example, every school and classroom is different. Some schools require teachers to handle several subjects—others require them to be highly specialized. Rural areas, like Wyoming, face a unique challenge in this area because we receive fewer dollars for almost every Federal program because we have the smallest population. Complicating matters, Wyoming also has one of the largest physical areas of any State. That means some schools exist to serve a relative handful of students. If forced to close, those children would have to travel 60 miles or more to school and that would be unacceptable. The problem of providing good schools over such a widespread area makes unique demands on our school system that have to be dealt with on a case by case basis. It also makes teacher recruitment and retention a very real problem that must be constantly addressed.

As a former Mayor and now as I serve in the Senate, it has always been my belief that the system that works best is the one that keeps the decision making process as close to home as possible. There is a lot of wisdom at the kitchen dinner table and we need to do all we can to promote each parent's active participation in the education of their children. That is a vital component of the process because, in the end, it will not be enough for us to ensure each child has access to a good education. We must ensure we produce well educated young adults. Increasing the level of parental involvement in our children's education will help to make sure that happens. Best of all, when teachers, students and parents work together—the teamwork that results will help our children to gain a greater respect for our historical traditions and a better appreciation of the ideals and values that made our country great.

Looking ahead, studies show that today's workers will change jobs and careers more times than they might change cars. It is estimated that a worker starting a job today will have around 14 different careers in their lifetime. It is also suggested that 10 of those careers haven't been invented yet. With each change, that person must learn a new skill set or apply their current skills in a different way.

To meet this challenge, the Federal Government can and should do a better job of coordinating Federal education programs with Federal workforce preparation and anti-poverty programs. Some programs are even working at odds with each other. The lack of consistent objective outcome standards across Federal programs creates unnecessary burdens for students, schools, State and local governments, and just about anyone else involved with more than one Federal education or workforce program.

Congress needs to look at ways that we can ensure these programs work together and meet the needs of business at all levels of government, from city hall all the way up to the halls of Congress. When we are successful at integrating these programs, we will be successful at leveraging scarce resources in a way that will

have an immediate and immense impact on outcomes for our students, our workers, and our businesses.

I believe every child is born with a special gift, destined to make a unique contribution to the world that only he or she can make. An integrated system of education will cultivate that child's gift and help to develop it so that it can be expressed and shared.

It won't be an easy thing for us to do, but it must be done. Providing a lifetime of learning to our children and continued training to current workers is the key they will need to find good jobs and keep them. Our success in that effort will ensure that every child's life will be a success story and the cherished American Dream a possibility that will be within every child's grasp, no matter where they live or what school they attend.

Today, we have before us an excellent nominee who possesses the skills, experience and character to help bring our students of all ages and backgrounds along the pathway to the American Dream.

I look forward to Mrs. Spellings' speedy confirmation, and I look forward to working with her in her new role as Secretary of Education to help achieve this goal.

Senator Kennedy?

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR KENNEDY

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

All of us on this side of the aisle want to congratulate you as the chairman of this committee. All of us have had a warm experience and a valuable professional experience working with you on many of the issues that have been before this committee over a very considerable period of time. I can think just personally of working with you on a WIA reauthorization. We were unable to get that achieved in the last session, but I think all of us know you as a hard-working, dedicated, committed leader, and we are looking forward to working closely with you to meet the responsibilities that we have before this committee.

It is nice to see our old chairman, Senator Gregg, here as well.

Senator GREGG. Old? [Laughter.]

Senator KENNEDY. Our old chairman—that he has not gone off the reservation to other, greener pastures. We know he is out there on the Budget Committee, and we know he will keep a close eye on education issues as the chairman of the Budget Committee.

We welcome back Orrin Hatch, who was chairman of this committee for so many years, and we all enjoyed working very closely with him on the Ryan White legislation and a host of other pieces of legislation.

I want to say personally that we welcome our two new members on the other side of the aisle, Senator Burr and Senator Isakson, and we look forward to working with you as well. We know that you have been interested in the issues that have been before the committee. This is something that I think, of all of our committees that at least I have had the chance to serve on, is one that can really get some important things done for families in this country.

It is a special privilege to join in welcoming Margaret Spellings to our committee, and I commend her for her nomination. She has an impressive record on domestic policy, especially in education.

She has been a champion for public education. I look forward very much to working with her as Secretary.

There is nothing more basic to our values as Americans than good schools. Our Nation's founders understood this when they put forward our first commitments to a free public education for all citizens. John Adams' admonition to the citizens of Massachusetts could not have been clearer in indicating the responsibility that future legislators had to the education of the children of our Commonwealth, and much of that language is incorporated in State constitutions across the country.

As our former colleague Claiborne Pell used to say, the real strength and security of our Nation lies in the education of our people, and over our history, we have come to learn that a quality education is the golden gateway for fulfilling the American dream, ensuring greater opportunity for our citizens, encouraging good citizenship, commitment to community, for building an economy that rises to modern challenges, and for helping young Americans reach for the stars.

Today our commitment to education must be strengthened to meet the challenges and opportunities posed by the global economy. There is not a parent in America who doesn't want a quality education for their children. We have an obligation to provide everyone, whatever their background, with the best possible education to develop their God-given talents to the best of their abilities.

Now more than ever, we owe it to our citizens and to our country to provide world-class public schools, more help with the cost of college, and a new commitment in math and science. These are the keys to American progress in the new century, and they must be among our Nation's highest priorities as we look to the future. The investments that we make today in stronger schools and better teachers will bring rewards for tomorrow.

We have made some progress in recent years. The No Child Left Behind Act marked a new national commitment to improve public schools and raise student achievement. And the recent reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act added to that progress.

We have seen the results in my own State of Massachusetts. Student achievement is up across the board in both reading and math, and we have made significant progress in educating children with disabilities. We are seeing the results of the No Child Left Behind reforms in other parts of the country, too. High academic standards in reading, math and science are working. Eighty-four percent of the States agree that the law's standards have had a positive effect on student achievement, an effect that can already be measured in almost every grade in Illinois.

Research-based instruction, assessments, targeted interventions are working. The Barrister Elementary School in Baltimore has helped many more children reach the standards in reading over the past 2 years, raising achievement by 34 points in grade three and virtually eliminating the achievement gap between poor students and other students.

Professional development is working. In Cuervo, TX, every one of the district's African American students now meet the State's standard in math, writing, and social studies in both elementary

school and middle school, and the district says that progress comes from its streamlined professional development.

But these results are not possible without new investments. We simply cannot reform our public schools and expand access to college education on a tin cup education budget. You knew you were going to hear that, Madam Secretary. [Laughter.] If we are to move forward in this new century to meet the demands of the global economy, we must overcome the deficiencies in today's schools with continuing reforms and new resources.

Here is what we still see across the country: $\frac{2}{3}$ of 4th-graders are not proficient readers, and $\frac{1}{3}$ are unable to read even at minimum level. Less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Nation's students are proficient in math and science. In fact, the most recent study ranked America 29th out of the 40 most developed nations in math and science. Access to qualified teachers is still a promise denied for many children, especially in the poorest schools, where the turnover of teachers is $\frac{1}{3}$ higher than in other schools and where $\frac{1}{3}$ of all classes are taught by teachers with no background in the subject matter. And half of all public school districts are facing funding cuts at a time when the Nation is in demand that they do more, not less. I can take you to Holyoke, MA, where 45 percent of the students come from poverty families. They are strongly committed to trying to make the No Child Left Behind Act work, but they are under increasing demands under the bill, and they are even going to see reductions in the title I program.

Twenty percent of public schools are on watch lists in their States. Over 10,000 schools have been identified as needing improvement under No Child Left Behind, and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the students who begin high school fail to earn a diploma. The high school dropout rate is four times as high for Latinos, twice as high for African Americans, the rate for whites. Under the leadership provided by Senator Bingaman on this issue, we hope we can work with the Administration.

College tuition climbed 35 percent in the past 4 years, yet the Pell grants for students remain stalled. The typical financial aid package for needy students today consists of 60 percent grants and 40 percent loans, the exact opposite of 20 years ago. Once they reach college, 30 percent of students need remedial courses in math and writing—30 percent of the students. So barely half of those who enter college earn a degree in 6 years, let alone four.

It is impossible to justify numbers like these. The public schools need a partner at the Department of Education and a road map for effective implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. That means more help for low-performing schools, greater support for teachers, and the development of better tests and accountability.

It is critical for Congress and the Administration to work together to fully fund the act's essential reforms and to see that they are fully implemented. We must do more as well to extend opportunities in higher education. The dream of college should come true for any student with the talent, desire, and drive to pursue it. It is ridiculous in this day and age to allow a dollar sign to bar the door to college for anyone or to open it grudgingly at the price of crushing student debt.

And we must do more for our youngest children. There is a scientific consensus that what we do for our children's education and development starting at birth does more to ensure success later in life than any other investment.

I hope it is not a kiss of death for the right wing, but I welcome the opportunity to work with Margaret Spellings. Over the past 4 years on education, we have had our differences, but I believe she is an inspired choice to be Secretary of Education at this critical moment in our Nation's history. I look forward very much to working with her in the years ahead.

I want to just announce that I have just left our friend—Senator Cornyn, I was listening to you about 15 minutes ago down in the Judiciary Committee with Judge Gonzales, and since I am ranking member there, I am going down to question Judge Gonzales and will be back shortly. I apologize for that absence, but I will read closely your statement and look forward to asking questions. You are very welcome to the committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Hutchison wanted to be here today but was unable to do so due to a scheduling conflict. She has sent us a statement that I ask unanimous consent to enter in the record.

[The prepared statement of Senator Hutchison follows:]

STATEMENT OF SENATOR HUTCHISON

Mr. Chairman, I strongly support the nomination of Margaret Spellings as the eighth Secretary of Education. Ms. Spellings is a longtime public servant who for the past 4 years has served as President Bush's chief domestic policy advisor. In her White House efforts, she has helped implement policies on education, health, labor and housing. Her familiarity with America's students and teachers will prove invaluable in her new role managing our public educational system.

Ms. Spellings also assisted President Bush when he was Governor of our home State of Texas, where they worked together on a number of important education programs including the Texas Reading Initiative to improve literacy, the Student Success Initiative to eliminate social promotion, and the State's accountability standard which is the forerunner to the No Child Left Behind Act. Because of her educational accomplishments, each year the United States develops more qualified teachers, better facilities and superior resources.

A veteran of the Texas Association of School Boards, Ms. Spellings knows firsthand the advantages afforded by education and has pledged to ensure every child acquires the skills necessary to realize the American Dream. I am proud to support her in that effort, and to support her nomination. I urge my colleagues to vote swiftly to confirm her so she may continue her important work.

The CHAIRMAN. We are fortunate today to have with us our distinguished colleague from Texas, Senator Cornyn, to introduce Ms. Spellings, and we know from the previous conversation and from seeing you on television that you have had a lot of work this morning with Texas connections.

Senator Cornyn?

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. JOHN CORNYN, A U.S. SENATOR
FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Senator. CORNYN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

It is a pleasure to be with you this morning, and Senator Kennedy and I have and will continue to shuttle back and forth because of two great Texans who have been nominated for positions of such importance in our Nation's government.

It is a real pleasure for me to say a few words of praise for a personal friend and an outstanding nominee, and I must say it was worth the price of coming here just to hear Senator Kennedy's endorsement of the nominee.

Like you, I want to ensure that the Senate confirms someone ready and able to continue this Administration's strong leadership and the establishment of high standards that are improving education for the Nation. It is critical that the person who takes the helm at the U.S. Department of Education be capable of leadership on a national scale, an innovator willing to challenge conventional wisdom, someone who is dedicated to the principle that people's lives are enriched through learning and our country is made stronger through education.

I am confident that today you will discover, if you do not already know, that Margaret Spellings is a consummate professional with the knowledge and experience to exceed every expectation. She has a comprehensive knowledge of the education system at the local, State, and Federal levels, and she is dedicated to achieving challenging goals and, in short, an ideal person to take up the mantle of Secretary of Education.

In Texas, Margaret played a significant role in every major educational reform in the State for the last 2 decades. As you well know, she brought this experience and success to the national level and helped to transform Federal education policy through the landmark No Child Left Behind legislation. The results of her labor are higher levels of accountability for schools, meaningful incentives that promote school improvement, greater options for parents, increased support for teachers, and solid improvements in fundamental subject areas.

On a personal level, I know that Margaret is a woman of intelligence and compassion. You will never meet a more genuinely devoted and passionate advocate for our Nation's children and the quality of their education. She herself is a proud product of Texas public schools and a mother of two, which makes her both a consumer and an advocate. The combination of her professional accomplishments and her personal strengths makes Margaret an ideal candidate, one who will be an excellent leader as part of the Administration and an important partner to Congress in formulating education policy.

Under the guidance of Rod Paige, another skilled Texan, the Department of Education has achieved a more efficient and meaningful Federal role in education. The United States must continue the landmark efforts of the past years as well as doggedly pursue the country's education needs in years to come.

There is no greater component of our Nation's quality of life and global economic competitiveness than a well-educated population. I

am confident that Margaret Spellings will do an outstanding job and is a wonderful choice to lead us in these education challenges of this century, to challenge our education system to new goals and to raise our Nation's prominence in the world.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and members, for allowing me to come and say these few words.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for being here and for that great introduction.

The CHAIRMAN. Before your statement, Ms. Spellings, would you like to introduce your family members who are here today?

Ms. SPELLINGS. I would. They are in my remarks as well, but my husband Robert is sitting right there, and my daughter Mary LaMontagne and daughter Grace LaMontagne; also, my sister and brother-in-law, Nan and John Lawson, are here with me, and I am thrilled that they are.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for being here, and we look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF MARGARET SPELLINGS, OF TEXAS, NOMINATED TO BE SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Kennedy, and members of the committee, I am gratified for the opportunity to appear this morning before you as President Bush's nominee to be Secretary of Education.

There is no more important obligation each of us has to the American people than to educate our citizens. In our diverse country, we share the belief that education is the great equalizer. It is the key to success for individual Americans and the key to the success of our Nation—not just economic success but civic and democratic success. In our country, we believe that a great education must be available to each and every American.

It is in that spirit that I am honored and humbled to be nominated to this post, and I am most grateful to President Bush for asking me to serve our country and our children in this important way.

I am further gratified to be the first order of business before this reorganized Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, and I congratulate you, Senator Enzi, on your chairmanship. I have had the opportunity to work with members and staff of this committee under the able leadership of Senator Gregg and Senator Kennedy, with whom I worked on No Child Left Behind, and I am grateful to them as well.

I appreciate very much the kind remarks of Senator Cornyn. I am sorry that Senator Hutchison could not be here as well. I am proud to be represented by them in this body, and I have known both of them for many years.

I too want to thank Secretary Rod Paige, who has given his life in service to children. There is no more passionate advocate for leaving no child behind than Secretary Paige. He has laid the foundation for improving education, and if confirmed, I will work to honor his lifelong commitment to children by continuing the good work he started.

As I mentioned a minute ago, my family is with me—my husband Robert and my daughters Mary and Grace. As you all know well, public service is a commitment for families, and I love mine dearly for their sacrifices on my behalf.

I have been involved in our public schools for more than 2 decades and in many different ways. I am the parent of school-age children, one in private school and one in public school. I have worked in public education as a policy wonk and a legislative advocate. I have worked in both the legislative and executive branches of government as well as at the local, State, and Federal levels. From parent to policymaker, I have seen public education from many angles and often been in the other person's shoes. As a proprietor of shoe stores, Mr. Chairman, I know you will appreciate that.

In short, in 2 decades in public education, I have learned two main lessons. First, I have learned that every player in education has an important and rightful place. Those involved in education are people of good will who mean to serve children. There is plenty to do, and we must respect the role that we each play. In other words, not everybody should do everything. That is not always the case.

In the early and mid-1980's, we focused on fixes and fads with little attention to results for kids. At the State level, we dictated who could play in the game on Friday night; we created career ladders for teachers; we established school councils, and on and on. We looked at averages and felt satisfied and complacent about the needs of individual children, especially poor and minority children.

By the mid-1990's, the tide was beginning to turn. Through the implementation of sound data gathering and analysis, through standards and assessment, through enhanced accountability, we gained clarity of purpose and a clarity of roles and responsibilities that is now getting results for children and schools.

Second, I have learned specifically about the appropriate role for each of us who works on behalf of students—in other words, what should we all do? Parents must be active participants in a child's education. They deserve information about their child's school, they deserve to know who is teaching their children, and they deserve options when their schools are not serving their children.

Teachers—those loving adults who work with our children day to day—must have the support and tools necessary to teach all children. They deserve curricula based on the best research science has to offer about how best to teach. They deserve to know how their students are doing and who needs help with what. They deserve to teach in safe schools and orderly classrooms, and they deserve our deepest gratitude and utmost professional respect.

Principals, superintendents and school boards, as leaders and managers of our schools, need data to evaluate programs and practices and to know what students and teachers need. They need resources aligned with priorities and results. They need to know what is working outside their communities as well as within them.

State policymakers, who typically devote more than half their State budgets to education, expect that the students in their States will be prepared to compete in our country and the world. They

need flexibility to meet the needs of their unique States and communities, and they need to be trusted to do right by their students.

Federal officials, like us, have a responsibility to set strategic goals and provide resources aligned to these goals to ensure that our Nation is preparing our students to compete in the global economy. We must assist States in holding our schools accountable for the education of every child and promote access to high-quality education for all students irrespective of economic status, geography, or disability. We must foster the sharing of best practices and commission the research to keep our education system moving forward.

This new governance paradigm, which is the foundation upon which the No Child Left Behind Act is built, is working for children across the land. We are investing resources and calling for results. In States all over our country, like in Maryland, Georgia, New Mexico, and Minnesota, students are scoring higher on State reading and math tests, and the achievement gap between African American, Hispanic, and low-income students and their white peers is beginning to close.

We have laid the foundation, and now we must take the necessary next steps in three key areas.

First, we must do so politically. There is no more important example of real bipartisanship in this Congress or in this Administration than our work together on education. The recent enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as well as No Child Left Behind, are proof that education is an area where we can truly come together. IDEA passed this body by unanimous consent, and NCLB passed by a vote of 87 to 10.

Do we agree on everything? Of course we do not, and we will not. But if confirmed, I pledge to do all I can on behalf of the President to work with you to continue the spirit of bipartisanship that has been built. When we do so, we serve children by enacting policies and programs in their interest, and we model how government should work. I am committed to be a part of that lesson in good government for America's students.

Second, we must build on the policy foundation that has been laid in NCLB. The focus of the act was establishing an accountability framework for schools. We called for annual assessment in grades 3 through 8 and called for attention to each student and each student group. It was largely focused on elementary and middle schools, and it gave special attention to the importance of reading. All were necessary and right.

With only 67 of every 100 9th graders graduating from high school on time, and with the United States lagging behind in math, as recently reported in the Program for International Student Assessment Study, or PISA, we must turn our attention to high schools and to math and science.

President Bush has called for additional resources to help middle and high school students who have fallen behind in reading and math. To ensure that high school principals and faculty have the data they need to improve instruction, the President has called for extending assessments to grades 3 through 11 and for a high school intervention initiative which focuses on reading skills and the critical 9th grade year.

We must also focus on the needs of adult learners. Of those 100 9th graders I just spoke about, only 26 will still be in college in their sophomore year in a day and time when the fastest-growing jobs require at least that level of education. In this area, the President has called for additional resources for community colleges and other institutions to implement dual enrollment programs and ease student transfers. The President has also called on Congress to integrate a rigorous academic program for students in career and technology programs.

With our authorizations of the Higher Education Act, the Workforce Investment Act, and the Carl A. Perkins Act which funds vocational education, we have a great opportunity to meet the needs of older students and adults to help them compete and succeed in our ever more competitive world.

We must address the issues of affordability and accessibility by increasing resources for Pell grants and revamping the student aid system to better meet the needs of today's college students, 2/3 of whom are nontraditional students.

Finally, we must work together to improve the process of implementing this new law. No Child Left Behind is transforming our system of education. We must listen to States and localities, to parents and reformers, about their experience with the act. We must stay true to the sound principles of leaving no child behind, but we in the Administration must engage with those closest to children to embed these principles in a sensible and workable way.

I know there are many other areas of interest and concern to all of us, from charters to choice, from funding to families. My time today does not allow me to delve into all I would like. I would simply say that as we confront other policy areas together, we should do so in a way that supports the policies we have put in place in No Child Left Behind. In fact, we will celebrate the third anniversary of NCLB just 2 days from now. This law set in motion an historic transformation of American education that says every child matters, and every child can learn.

We have begun that journey together, and if confirmed, I pledge to continue to travel that road with you, to work alongside you, to fulfill the promise of our great Nation to each and every citizen.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I appreciate very much the courtesy I have been shown by you and your staff. I look forward to listening to you, getting to know you better, and working together on behalf of America's children.

I would be pleased to respond to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Spellings follows:]

STATEMENT OF MARGARET SPELLINGS

Mr. Chairman, Senator Kennedy, and members of the committee, I am gratified for the opportunity to appear this morning before you as President Bush's nominee to be Secretary of Education. There is no more important obligation each of us has to the American people than to educate our citizens. In our diverse country we share the belief that education is the great equalizer. It is the key to success for individual Americans and the key to the success of our Nation. Not just economic success but civic and democratic success. In our country we believe that a great education must be available to each and every American. It is in that spirit that I am honored and humbled to be nominated to this post and I am most grateful to President Bush for asking me to serve our country and our children in this important way.

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I appreciate very much the kind remarks of Senator Cornyn. I am sorry Senator Hutchison could not be here as well. I have known both of them for many years and am proud to be represented by them in this body.

I wish to thank Secretary Rod Paige who has given his life in service to children. There is no more passionate advocate for leaving no child behind than Secretary Paige. He has laid the foundation for improving education and if confirmed I will work to honor his lifelong commitment to children by continuing the good work he started.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge my family; my husband, Robert, my daughters, Mary and Grace, and sons, Robert and Britain. My husband, Robert, and my daughters are here today. As you all know well, public service is a commitment for families and I love my family dearly for their sacrifices on my behalf.

I have been involved in our public schools for more than 2 decades and in many different ways. I am a parent of school-aged children—one in public school and one in a private parochial school. I have worked in public education as a policy wonk and as a legislative advocate. I have worked in both the legislative and executive branches of government as well as at the local, State and Federal levels. From parent to policy maker, I have seen public education from many angles and often been in the other person's shoes. As a proprietor of shoe stores, Mr. Chairman I know you will appreciate that.

In short, in 2 decades in public education I have learned two main lessons. First, I have learned that every player in education has an important and rightful place. Those involved in education are people of good will who mean to serve children—there is plenty to do and we must respect the role we each play. In other words, not everybody should do everything. That was not always the case.

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Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I appreciate the courtesy I have been shown by you and your staff. I look forward to listening to you, getting to know you better, and working together on behalf of America's children. I will be pleased to respond to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for your testimony.

You have generated a lot of interest. So far, we have received 63 letters of support for you as the next Secretary of Education, and they come from a wide variety of stakeholders—they are teachers, administrators, school board members, and a number of other groups—and I would ask unanimous consent that these be made a part of the record.

Without objection. [Letters follow:]

ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS, INC. (ABC),
ARLINGTON, VA 22203,
January 7, 2005.

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR: On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) and its 23,000 construction and construction-related member firms, I urge you to support the nomination of Margaret Spellings as the U.S. Secretary of Education.

Ms. Spellings' prior experience working with the State of Texas educational system, coupled with her recent experience serving as domestic policy advisor for the Bush Administration, makes her an excellent candidate to lead this vital Department.

ABC has long been involved with the Department of Education's efforts to strengthen the quality of career and technical education programs at the secondary school level. We share the vision that students who are well prepared through career and technical education programs will have an array of college and career choices, and will ultimately be ready to step into the workforce and make an immediate contribution.

There are more than 240,000 job opportunities opening every year in the construction industry due to the aging and retiring of our workforce. Most of the skilled trade positions are experiencing job growth rates of 10 percent and above, while unemployment among the skilled trades is below 2 percent. Many high school students are eager to enter the workforce immediately following graduation and apply the academics they have learned in a hands-on, practical manner. ABC craft training and apprenticeship programs offer today's youth pathways into a high-skilled career with corresponding high wages.

Again, I urge you to support the confirmation of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education when her nomination is considered by the U.S. Senate. ABC looks forward to continued collaboration with the Department of Education and the 109th Congress, particularly in the reauthorizations of the Workforce Investment Act and the Carl Perkins Act.

Sincerely,

GARY D. RODEN,
2005 National Chairman.

AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE
FOR PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH,
WASHINGTON, DC 20036,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: I am honored to have the opportunity to write this letter in support of Margaret Spellings' nomination to serve as U.S. Secretary of Education. Margaret Spellings is a committed and experienced reformer who has been at the forefront of efforts to promote educational excellence in the State of Texas and in the United States. She is superbly suited to lead the U.S. Department of Education in its effort to improve schools across the Nation.

Ms. Spellings is highly regarded by analysts, observers, and partisans across the breadth of the education community. She is widely recognized for her acumen, mastery of complex issues, and leadership in school improvement. She is particularly

well-known for her efforts to make school performance transparent and ensure that all families have a choice of effective schools.

Those of us who follow education policy on a routine basis have been impressed by the critical role Ms. Spellings has played in shaping and enacting education legislation, most notably the landmark No Child Left Behind Act. Those who have negotiated and worked closely with her have testified to her knowledge, passion, and steadfastness while working to improve education. It is a testament to Ms. Spellings' character that she has endeavored to maintain a modest profile during the past 4 years while assisting Secretary Paige and his team in their efforts to implement No Child Left Behind. Ms. Spellings seems especially well-suited for the position at this point in time, when ongoing negotiations with States may be best accomplished by a measured tone and a steady hand.

Ms. Spellings is a committed education reformer and an ally of those who would use the principles of accountability, competition, flexibility, and reinvention to help ensure that our Nation's schools are equal to the challenges of the 21st century. I wholeheartedly support her nomination for U.S. Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

FREDERICK M. HESS,
Director of Education Policy Studies.

STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
MONTGOMERY, AL 36130-2101,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MIKE ENZI,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: I am writing to request your support for the confirmation of Mrs. Margaret Spellings who, as you know, has been nominated by President Bush for the position of Secretary of Education. I believe that Mrs. Spellings has proven that she is an energetic reformer and will be an outstanding Secretary of Education. She shares your deep commitment to education and your passionate desire to make America's schools the finest in the world. She also understands that it is through the education of America's children that the strength and greatness of America will continue.

Mrs. Margaret Spellings, like Dr. Rod Paige, has held a lifelong commitment to children and has distinguished herself as an education and domestic policy advisor and a champion for the strengthening of public schools. Through her work with the Texas Association of School Boards, two Texas governors, and the U.S. Domestic Policy Council, Mrs. Spellings displayed the intellect, discipline, and determination needed of a person who serves as the highest education official in America. I believe that her talent, idealism, good humor, and her grounded perspective on life make her ideal to become one of the most effective Secretary's of Education in our Nation's history. It is with this belief that I ask for your support for Mrs. Spellings confirmation as Secretary of Education.

Thank you for your leadership, your intolerance of failure, and your inspired commitment to all students in America's public schools. As State Director of Special Education in Alabama, I know that every child can learn and that no child should be left behind. It is up to you, me, and leaders like Mrs. Spellings to ensure that every child, including a student with disabilities, has the skills and qualities necessary to realize the American Dream. We cannot fail. We must keep this promise that our Nation has made to ALL our children.

Sincerely,

MABREY WHETSTONE,
State Director,
Special Education Services.

BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE,
WASHINGTON, DC 20036-5610,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI AND SENATOR KENNEDY: On behalf of Business Roundtable, an association of CEOs of leading corporations with a combined workforce of more than 10 million employees in the United States, I would like to convey our strong support for the confirmation of Margaret Spellings as U.S. Secretary of Education. We are confident that Ms. Spellings has the necessary experience and character to lead the Department of Education at a time when knowledge and skills increasingly provide the foundation for both individual and national success.

Improving U.S. education performance is one of Business Roundtable's top priorities, and we are encouraged by early signs of progress since passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. However, as recently released international assessments of student performance indicate, we still have a long way to go. We are particularly concerned about the need for a stronger national commitment to science, technology, engineering and mathematics education. We urge you to confirm Ms. Spellings as quickly as possible so that she can begin to work on these critical issues.

As Members of Congress and the Administration work to promote policies that help build a healthy, prosperous economy and secure America's future, Ms. Spellings is a strong education leader who deserves speedy confirmation.

Thank you for your tireless leadership in working to improve education for all of our children. The CEOs of Business Roundtable are eager to work with you to support education reform aggressively throughout the country.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH M. TUCCI,
Chairman, Education & the Workforce Task Force,
Business Roundtable,
President and CEO,
EMC Corporation.

AMERICAN YOUTH POLICY FORUM (AYPF),
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: I am writing in support of the nomination of Margaret Spellings to be U.S. Secretary of Education.

As Director of the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that provides information on effective education and youth policies and programs to policymakers, I have had an opportunity to become familiar with Margaret Spellings and her work as Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy. I have been particularly encouraged by her leadership of the White House Task Force on Disadvantaged Youth, which has highlighted a number of serious issues affecting youth populations such as foster care youth, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, and those who drop out of high school. As an organization that focuses to a large extent on high school reform, I am also very pleased by the interest expressed by the President to ensure that the Nation's secondary schools prepare every student to graduate with the skills needed to succeed in today's economy and society, and am certain that Ms. Spellings will be a forceful advocate for this position. The Administration's policy focus on educational standards and accountability for high schools has been needed, but it is balanced and supplemented by an emphasis on improving adolescent literacy and helping youth improve their reading skills, which Ms. Spellings has helped articulate.

I look forward to working with Ms. Spellings and the Administration as it continues efforts to strengthen educational opportunities and outcomes for all American youth.

Sincerely,

BETSY BRAND,
Director.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION,
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0440,
January 3, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: In the deliberations ahead regarding President Bush's nominee to be the next Secretary of Education, I respectfully encourage your support for Margaret Spellings. It's my understanding of Ms. Spellings' background that she is a former teacher. Nominating a teacher to be the key policymaker in education in our Nation would send a clear signal to the education community that the time has come for a new level of collaboration with the frontline education professionals in our Nation.

My principal reason in writing to express support for Ms. Spelling is because of her longstanding commitment for our Federal special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Ms. Spellings was also instrumental in designing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that has so dramatically altered the plane of focus in American education. With the reauthorization of the IDEA we have seen an increased alignment of the IDEA with NCLB. It is imperative at this critical juncture that an individual who is truly knowledgeable about all aspects of both of these major pieces of Federal legislation be guiding the U.S. Department of Education. I am confident that Ms. Spellings would keep in mind the needs of our Nation's students who have disabilities, their families, and the educators who work so tirelessly to serve them.

Your consideration of Margaret Spellings to be the next Secretary of Education would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

ROBERT RUTTEN,
Director of Special Education.

January 4, 2005.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

Re: Nomination of Margaret Spellings as U.S. Secretary of Education

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: I am writing in support of the nomination of Margaret Spelling as U.S. Secretary of Education. I have known Mrs. Spellings since April of 1999, and I give her my strongest endorsement.

I am a research fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, where I specialize in education policy. I am the editor of and a contributor to a number of books on K-12 education, as well as having written articles for newspapers and magazines. On a practical level, I am an elected member of the Santa Clara County School Board and the former board president of the East Palo Alto Charter School. I also serve on official California State panels that approve K-8 history textbooks, run training programs for K-12 history teaching, and write and approve test questions in mathematics and in history for the statewide program of student testing. I served as a member of the U.S. Department of Education's National Educational Research Policy and Priorities Board, from 2001 to 2002.

I worked with Mrs. Spellings during the 2000 George W. Bush campaign and during her tenure as domestic policy adviser to the President. She gave me counsel before and while I was in Iraq as senior education adviser to Ambassador Paul Bremer (July-December 2003).

I have found Mrs. Spellings to be unfailingly straightforward, friendly, sensible and realistic. In my experience, she has always shown herself to be a person of good judgment. She is dedicated to every child attaining his or her academic potential and wants to ensure that all of our schools are effective in this endeavor. She is thoroughly knowledgeable about education policy at the various levels of government and has a broad and extensive familiarity with research on education.

I give her my wholehearted endorsement.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAMSON M. EVERS,
Research Fellow,
Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

(The views in this letter are those of the author and not necessarily the views of Stanford University or the Hoover Institution.)

THOMAS B. FORDHAM INSTITUTE,
WASHINGTON, DC 20006,
December 27, 2004.

Senator MIKE ENZI,
Chairman-designate,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I want to applaud and endorse the nomination of Margaret Spellings to become the 8th U.S. Secretary of Education and to encourage the committee and the Senate to confirm her in that position.

Though Margaret and I are not always in complete agreement on issues of education policy, she is an accomplished and knowledgeable policymaker in this field. She is conversant with a wide range of issues. She enjoys the President's complete confidence. She is a major architect of the No Child Left Behind Act, the successful implementation of which is probably the greatest single challenge facing the Education Department during the President's second term. She is capable of working closely with the Congress. She has ample state-level experience. She is not intimidated by education's army of interest groups. And she will assemble a capable team.

In sum, she's a fine choice for this important position. Thanks very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

CHESTER E. FINN, JR.,
President.

THE INTERNATIONAL DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION,
BALTIMORE, MD 21286-2044,
January 5, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Member Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

Re: Confirmation of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: The one area where Republicans, Democrats, Liberals, and Conservatives display a mutuality of interest, concern, and dedication is education. "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance!" (Peter Drucker) Forty percent of children in this country are significantly delayed in their acquisition of literacy skills by the 3rd grade. This is not a mere fact, it is an indictment. In the United States our policy has been to respond to failure not the risk of failure. If medicine followed the same policy a doctor would tell a patient whose cancer was detected early to comeback when his ability to walk is affected. In education the impact goes beyond the life of the individual; the economy suffers, society suffers, and future generations suffer. John Kenneth Galbraith (in comparing freedom, democracy, and literacy) has said that, "the conquest of literacy comes first." The conquest of literacy is a war we can all agree to fight in our country, in our time. This war is bloodless, everyone wins, and the rest of the world will learn by our example.

Margaret Spellings is the right person at the right time to lead us in this campaign and to move our front lines from research to practice. She is dedicated to a model of early intervention that prevents rather than merely responds to failure.

No Child Left Behind is like a huge lumbering cargo ship; its holds need to be filled with quality goods and it has to be sailed with finesse and restraint by someone who respects what works, recognizes what doesn't, and knows where to look for answers. There could be no better leader in this time of change than someone who values prevention and who has drawn close the most informed, expert, and respected advisors in the field of education. Margaret Spellings does not merely bring her individual talents to the position, but more significantly, she brings a team of the most talented, expert, and experienced advisors that are available.

As President, President-Elect, and Executive Director of the International Dyslexia Association we respectfully encourage you to support and move quickly to confirm the nomination of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education.

Respectfully submitted,

NANCY HENNESSY,
President.
G. EMERSON DICKMAN,
President-Elect.
J. THOMAS VIALL,
Executive Director.

MANHATTAN INSTITUTE FOR POLICY RESEARCH,
NEW YORK, NY 10017,
January 4, 2005.

DEAR SENATORS ENZI AND KENNEDY: I was pleased to learn that President Bush nominated Margaret Spellings to be Secretary of Education.

From my experience with her in Austin and Washington, I believe that she is extremely capable and dedicated to improving the quality of American education. She appears to share the President's commitment to an education reform strategy based on the twin pillars of increasing choice and accountability. In particular, I understand that she played key roles in passing the No Child Left Behind legislation as well as Washington, DC's pilot voucher program.

I expect that upon confirmation by the Senate she will continue her promotion of choice and accountability as Secretary. I look forward to working with her in that role to assess the effectiveness of reform efforts and advocate for policies that help children achieve greater success in school and their later lives.

Sincerely,

JAY P. GREENE, PH.D.,
Senior Fellow.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS,
WASHINGTON, DC 20004-1790,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Ranking Member,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI AND RANKING MEMBER KENNEDY: On behalf of the members of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), the Nation's largest industrial trade association, representing small and large manufacturers in every industrial sector and in all 50 States, I write to express our strong support for the nomination of Margaret Spellings to serve as Secretary of Education.

Ms. Spellings is eminently qualified to serve as the Nation's Secretary of Education. Ms. Spellings understands the importance of a strong education system in ensuring America's economic competitiveness in a challenging global economy. Perhaps more importantly, she appreciates the critical role that education plays in providing hope and opportunity and believes strongly that every child can succeed. In Texas, where she served as then-Governor Bush's chief education advisor, Ms. Spellings was instrumental in developing and implementing strong standards, good assessments and tough accountability measures in Texas schools. That first hand

experience and know-how served her well as the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy where she, among other things, advised President Bush on No Child Left Behind. I believe Ms. Spellings has the experience, commitment and passion for education to fully realize the promise of that law in addition to the all other matters under the purview of the Department of Education.

I hope that you will act promptly and favorable upon Ms. Spellings nomination. If there is any way that the NAM can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

JOHN ENGLER,
President and CEO.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE DIRECTORS
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, INC. (NASDSE),
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314,
January 3, 2005.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,
President,
United States of America,
Washington, DC 20510.

Attn: Ms. Joey Lee, Office of Public Liaison

DEAR PRESIDENT BUSH: On behalf of the members of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), I am writing in support of your nomination of Margaret Spellings to be the Secretary of Education. NASDSE represents the directors of special education in the States, the District of Columbia, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Department of Defense and other Federal jurisdictions and Freely Associated States.

Ms. Spellings is uniquely qualified to be our Nation's next Secretary of Education and we look forward to her confirmation by the U.S. Senate. Her background at the State level in Texas and involvement with the enactment and implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) will enable her to work well with the States, not only on the ongoing implementation of NCLB, but also on the newly enacted Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA).

NASDSE's members are eager to begin implementation of the new IDEA and look forward to working with Ms. Spellings to ensure that all students with disabilities achieve to their maximum potential.

Sincerely,

BILL EAST, ED.D.,
Executive Director.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES, INC. (NCLD),
NEW YORK, NY 10016-8806,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

Re: Nomination of Margaret Spellings, U.S. Secretary of Education

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI: The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) strongly supports the nomination of Margaret Spellings as the U.S. Secretary of Education. As a leading organization in support of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), as well as the recently signed Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), we believe that millions of students nationwide will benefit from Ms. Spellings' forthright commitment to improving achievement for all students. As one of the Nation's leading experts in education policy, she has been a driving force behind Federal policy in support of scientifically-based research and instruction.

NCLD has noted Ms. Spellings' dedication to improving public schools. We have begun to see the results of NCLB as it seeks to close the achievement gap for students with disabilities. Although States have fought the implementation of the NCLB accountability measures, Ms. Spellings and her staff have led the way for policy makers to preserve the integrity and intent of the law. NCLD supports these efforts to raise expectations for all students, especially those with learning disabil-

ities, who are most likely to be in the general classroom for the majority of their day.

As one of our close advisors told us, "Margaret Spellings is absolutely committed to improving results for students, all students. Her integrity is backed by her intelligence, tenacity, toughness, and administrative skills." All of those qualities are needed as the Department, State and local education agencies, nonprofit education organizations like NCLD, business leaders, and parents work together to implement and align NCLB and IDEA.

Thank you for the opportunity to recommend Margaret Spellings as U.S. Secretary of Education. We respectfully request that you give Ms. Spellings your full consideration.

Sincerely,

JAMES H. WENDORF,
Executive Director.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION,
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22911,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Ranking Member,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: On behalf of The National Council for Agricultural Education, I would like to express our support for the nomination of Margaret Spellings to become the Nation's next Secretary of Education.

Agricultural Education and the National FFA Organization have worked closely with the Administration and the Department of Education to reach out to the Career and Technical Education community in support of national goals for education. Further, the proven, integrated model of academic, personal, and career development through agricultural education and FFA provides a compelling strategy for increasing the effectiveness and accountability of the Nation's secondary school systems. We believe Margaret Spellings will provide effective leadership for extending this model, to even, more local communities.

Having been granted a Federal charter in 1950, the National FFA Organization today provides ½ million students with opportunities to develop leadership skills. It also delivers important recognition programs that encourage students to apply academic knowledge in competitive and work based experiential contexts. With studies in animal science, horticulture, biotechnology, and numerous other areas, secondary agricultural education and PTA are enabling students to succeed in their academic pursuits, careers, and communities. We believe the contributions of our program and others in Career and Technical Education are essential in broadly educating all of our young people, regardless of background or individual learning needs.

Please know that all of us in agricultural education—our State leaders, university teacher educators, classroom teachers, FFA staff, and industry supporters—will continue to work with the Department of Education to achieve success for all of our students.

Sincerely,

ED OSBORNE,
President.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-5901,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-5004.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: I am writing to urge you to confirm Ms. Margaret Spellings as the Secretary of Education. The education of our youth is among our most vital responsibilities, one that can only be fulfilled through the dedicated effort of individuals like Margaret Spellings. For 20 years, Ms. Spellings has demonstrated a commitment to excellence in developing and implementing programs and policies

that give our children and youth the rigorous, world-class education they will need to be the contributing 21st Century citizens whom our great country deserves and needs.

As Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction and Director of Special Education for the California Department of Education, Ms Spellings' efforts and beliefs have enhanced the work I do to ensure that California's 680,000 children with disabilities are able to participate in and benefit from the general education curricula. Her advocacy for high quality educational opportunity for all children, including children with disabilities, has moved forward a national agenda with great promise!

In my role, first as President, and currently as Past President of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, I have seen the benefit from No Child Left Behind on systems' change efforts in schools, school districts and State education agencies. This is due in no small part to Ms. Spellings' leadership and advocacy in this landmark education reform effort.

Your approval and confirmation of Ms. Spellings as Secretary of Education will help our Nation's schools and school systems continue this critical work to move beyond adequate to exemplary for each child in the public system and to solidify America's educational system as the leader in the world.

I urge you to quickly confirm Ms. Spellings' appointment so that our national promise to all children will be achieved.

Sincerely,

ALICE D. PARKER, ED.D.,
*Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction,
Director of Special Education.*

SERGEANTS BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION (SBA),
NEW YORK, NY 10013,
December 13, 2004.

Senator MICHAEL ENZI,
*U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.*

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: The New York City Sergeants Benevolent Association, whose 10,000 members make it the fourth largest police union in the country, wholeheartedly support President Bush's nomination of Margaret Spellings for Secretary of Education of the United States.

Her long and distinguished educational career makes her well-suited for this position. Although she now serves as Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, where she is responsible for the development and implementation of White House policy on education, health care, labor, transportation, justice, and housing, she has a rich and illustrious educational legacy.

During President Bush's tenure as Governor of Texas, she was the Associate Executive Director of the Texas Association of School Boards. Besides developing the Nation's strongest school assessment and accountability system, she oversaw strong reading programs and innovative charter school law.

On a national level, she was instrumental in the development of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, which is producing significant improvements in reading and math for America's children.

As Secretary of Education, Ms. Spellings will work tirelessly to eliminate social promotion, while also promoting accountability among educational institutions, and improving the educational system at all levels for every student in this country.

In the past few years the Sergeants Benevolent Association has implemented numerous scholarship programs for the children and dependents of its members. In addition, we have initiated art and writing contests for those children in grades K-12. Being a very educationally-oriented organization, we have researched Ms. Spellings' credentials and believe her to be the best candidate for this position.

American schoolchildren have the right to dream the American Dream, and they have an even greater right to see their dreams come to fruition if they are willing to work hard enough to attain them. Ms. Spellings has already proven her commitment to this Nation's youth, and we at the SBA are honored to support the President's nomination of her to such a crucial post. We encourage you to do the same.

Sincerely,

ED MULLINS,
President.

ASSOCIATION FOR SUPERVISION
AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT (ASCD),
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22311-1714,
January 3, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: On behalf of the 165,000 members of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), I write to support the nomination of Margaret Spellings for U.S. Secretary of Education. We have been impressed with her ability, candor, and willingness to work with the educational community in her current post as Domestic Policy Advisor to the President. Ms. Spellings will bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the Department. We are also confident she will help build stronger relationships with the professional education community for the benefit of our Nation's students.

ASCD is an international, nonprofit education association with affiliates in all 50 States. Our focus is on learning and teaching and the necessary professional development to support best practices and innovation. We provide fair, balanced, and research-based information to our members, professional educators, and policy makers across the United States and worldwide.

Again, on behalf of the dedicated members of ASCD and the young people we serve, I appreciate the opportunity to offer our support for Margaret Spellings as the next Secretary of Education. If you need any additional information, please contact me. Best wishes for a successful hearing and confirmation.

With warmest personal regards,

GENE R. CARTER,
Executive Director and CEO.

BEST FRIENDS FOUNDATION,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Ranking Member,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

Re: Letter of Commendation for Margaret Spellings

DEAR SENATOR ENZI AND SENATOR KENNEDY: I am writing to lend my unequivocal support to Margaret Spellings' candidacy for the critical position of President Bush's Secretary of Education. As one of the principal authors of President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" initiative, Margaret Spellings has shown admirable wisdom and determination in seeing the legislation through to nationwide implementation, and even more importantly has demonstrated a commitment to ongoing rigorous research and support of methods that work to improve student learning and achievement. In my work which takes me to over 150 public schools in Washington, DC and across the Nation, I have seen the benefits of the "No Child Left Behind" initiative. Even in the inner city schools there has been improvement in standardized test scores.

My area of expertise is in adolescent development in primary and secondary school students. As the founder of one of the longest running abstinence education programs in the United States, *Best Friends*, I have seen first-hand how important high standards, both behavioral and academic, are to school achievement. Our extensive work which spans almost 20 years with at-risk youth in Washington, DC, Milwaukee, Newark, Charlotte and many other cities has clearly demonstrated the link between behavioral standards, reduction of risk behavior and increased academic achievement. *Best Friends* is an in school, long-term program which helps students reject premarital sex, drugs, alcohol and violence and encourages achievement and positive peer activities.

Mrs. Spellings has taken the time to request our research and review our curriculum. She is especially interested in education programs for urban youth and the effectiveness of their models. She has impressed me with her intelligent questions and thorough understanding of the important issues. Mrs. Spellings believes that abstinence is best taught in a developmental framework which promotes cognitive development and reasoning skills. We share her philosophy and her adherence to consistent and rigorous evaluation of intervention programs. Margaret Spellings knows that risk behavior is often clustered and that drugs and alcohol are consistently linked with sexual activity. She has reviewed our research data (see the following) which supports her belief that school-based risk prevention programs are wise to treat multiple risk behaviors.

The 2003–04 Best Friends students' behavior as compared to their peers evaluated by the YRBS (Youth Risk Behavior Survey) survey from the Center for Disease Control demonstrates that in DC public schools:

- Alcohol use is 24 percent among Best Friends, as compared to 55 percent among their peers.
- Drug use is 3 percent among Best Friends, as compared to 36 percent among their peers.
- Sexual activity is 6 percent among Best Friends, as compared to 30 percent among their peers.

Similar differences in risk behavior have been demonstrated in the Best Men program. Especially noteworthy is the increase in academic achievement and higher standardized test scores. We are gratified that our research is an additional validation of the accuracy of her position.

In my conversations with her, I have seen that Margaret Spellings is an astute judge of worthwhile educational programs. I am confident that under Margaret Spellings' energetic leadership, the Department's dedication to reform and the interest in research and the use of accountability standards will flourish. As a researcher and program implementer, I wholeheartedly endorse her candidacy, and I look forward to working with her, for the future of our children and our country's public schools. We would indeed be fortunate to have Margaret Spellings as the U.S. Secretary of Education.

Most sincerely,

ELAYNE BENNETT,
President and Founder,
Best Friends Foundation.

COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN PRIVATE EDUCATION,
GERMANTOWN, MD 20874,
December 21, 2004.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510–6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: We at the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) are very much looking forward to working with Margaret Spellings as the next U.S. Secretary of Education. Her distinguished service as the President's domestic policy adviser gives every indication that she will have an outstanding tenure as secretary.

In her remarks upon being nominated, Ms. Spellings committed herself "to make our schools the finest in the world." In pursuit of that goal, she pledged "to work alongside America's educators." CAPE is equally eager to work with her and to bring the private school point of view to discussions about school reform. The 17 member organizations of CAPE and our extensive State CAPE network collectively represent about 80 percent of the Nation's private school community. One in four of the Nation's schools is a private school; 11 percent of all students attend them. That translates into 29,000 schools and 6.2 million students. One of CAPE's purposes is to foster communication and cooperation with policymakers to improve the quality of education for all the Nation's children. In pursuit of that purpose, we anticipate an effective and enduring alliance with Secretary Spellings.

Ms. Spellings' comments have demonstrated strong support for pluralism and choice in education. That is especially reassuring now that she will be the chief spokesperson and advocate for the entirety of American education. Our Nation is blessed by a rich diversity of schools—some rooted in religious tradition, some that provide intensive academic experiences, and some that are specialized for specific

populations. Whether public or private, these diverse schools constitute the American educational experience and share a worthy goal: the education of our country's children. Together, public and private schools work to ensure an educated citizenry; together they strive to help students reach their potential and contribute to the common good. It is essential that the country's top educator be a solid advocate for educational pluralism, and we believe Ms. Spellings is one.

CAPE's relationships with past secretaries of education have been excellent. We expect to continue that pattern with Secretary Spellings. CAPE is committed to working with the new secretary to shape the future of education in America, and we are eager to share with her a perspective shaped by the private school experience.

Sincerely,

JOE MCTIGHE,
Executive Director.

CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM,
WASHINGTON, DC 20036,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: I am writing to express my support for the nomination of Margaret L. Spellings to serve as U.S. Secretary of Education.

Ms. Spellings possesses a wealth of knowledge and offers years of experience in handling delicate public policy issues concerning education. These attributes are the most critical part of being able to manage well the affairs of the Federal education programs that are such an important part of our Nation's commitment to children.

The Center for Education Reform is a nonprofit organization that combines education policy with grassroots advocacy to work deep within the Nation's communities to foster positive and bold education reforms.

We represent thousands of supporters who bring more choices to children and higher standards to all of our Nation's schools.

We look forward to the possibility of working with Ms. Spellings in the capacity of education secretary.

Best Regards,

JEANNE ALLEN,
President.

HISPANIC COUNCIL FOR REFORM AND
EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS (HISPANIC CREO),
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: On the behalf of the Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options (Hispanic CREO), I write to acknowledge and support the recent presidential nomination of Mrs. Margaret Spellings for the Secretary of Education position. Hispanic CREO recognizes her consistent dedication to improving the educational outcomes of our Nation's children. As the organization's President and CEO, I look forward to working with Mrs. Spellings as we move forward, particularly among the Nation's Hispanic communities in addressing the educational crisis among Latinos. It will be with our united efforts, as community based organizations, national leaders in education reform, the Department of Education, and legislators that we will successfully improve the educational outcomes of our children.

As the Nation's only Latino organization focused on improving educational outcomes for Hispanic children specifically by empowering families through parental choice in education, we recognize that to decrease the educational gaps among Latinos, it takes a united effort. We look forward to moving forward in collaboration to empower parents to know their educational options, to increase parental participation, and to the creation of greater access to all educational options that exist.

During the past year, Hispanic CREO effectively established parent, community, and school resource operations with the goal of building public awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the options available under the No Child Left Behind Act. With the support of the Office of Innovation and Improvement, Project CREO works in collaboration with the public schools, and community organizations, to strengthen their ability to service students and Hispanic families. Currently, this project has touched over 21 million families through media and is directly working with over 20,000 parent leaders. The project has developed Spanish-language communication tools and disseminates the information locally.

I am confident that our combined efforts will directly impact our communities, especially the Latino community which is in dire need of access to high quality education options. I thank you for your dedication to education reform and commitment to working together.

Sincerely,

REBECA NIEVES HUFFMAN,
President and CEO.

THE MEDICAL INSTITUTE FOR SEXUAL HEALTH,
AUSTIN, TX 78716-2306,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: It's my privilege to recommend Margaret Spellings for the position of Secretary of Education of the United States. I have known Margaret since 1996 when she was in the Texas Governor's office in charge of then Governor Bush's education initiatives. I worked with her during that time and observed her involvement and leadership in extremely creative and necessary initiatives to benefit the children of Texas. It became obvious to me that she was a woman of great energy, effectiveness, and intelligence.

I have also had the pleasure of working closely with Margaret on a number of occasions since she has been in Washington, DC with President Bush as Domestic Policy Advisor. I further recognized her enormous capacity for comprehending and working through delicate and difficult issues.

One of the qualities I must appreciate about Margaret is that she is totally committed to President Bush, his philosophy and his goals. I have observed her furthering his agenda in a most competent and effective manner.

I am totally confident that Margaret Spellings is the ideal person for the position for which she has been nominated. Her years of experience, interest and understanding concerning educational issues, and her intense desire to see young Americans well-educated to enable them to achieve their potential, well qualify her for this position.

I highly recommend Margaret Spellings for the position of Secretary of Education for the United States.

Sincerely,

JOE S. MCILHANEY, JR., M.D.,
President and Founder.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS (NACSA),
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-3513,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI: The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) is pleased to support the nomination of Margaret Spellings for U.S. Secretary of Education.

NACSA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization composed of chartering entities from across the country. Our mission is to promote the establishment

and operation of quality charter schools through responsible oversight in the public interest. Established in 2000 by a diverse group of charter school authorizers nationwide, NACSA is dedicated to supporting and strengthening the capacities of authorizers to charter quality schools. We believe that charter schools can improve public education by increasing educational opportunities for students and educators and increasing educational accountability for all public schools.

Ms. Spellings is a proven education reformer and she has been a valuable adviser to President George Bush and the U.S. Congress, especially during the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. Based on her past accomplishments with the Texas Association of School Boards, as a senior advisor for 6 years to, then, Governor Bush and as a White House Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy since 2001, we are confident Ms. Spellings will serve the Nation well if you confirm her cabinet appointment to lead the U.S. Department of Education.

Under the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act, this Nation has embarked on a revitalization of the public education system by insisting on strong measures of accountability, embracing parental choice, improving and targeting resources to those students most at risk and making high student achievement the hallmark of public education. We need a caring and committed advocate for youth to work with the Administration, the Congress, States, districts and the education community to carry on this important effort and address other needed reforms, and Ms. Spelling is well-equipped to lead in this fashion.

We hope our comments have been helpful to your committee's deliberations. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

GREG RICHMOND,
President.

MARK CANNON,
Executive Director.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR FAMILY LITERACY,
LOUISVILLE, KY 40202-4237,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: On behalf of the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), I support President George W. Bush's nomination of Margaret Spellings as the next U.S. Secretary of Education. I have known Ms. Spellings for many years, originally when she worked to improve education for children in Texas. She is passionate, energetic and knowledgeable about working to, improve America's schools. I support the nomination of Margaret Spellings in the strongest manner possible and without reservation.

Ms. Spellings is a dynamic leader that is both dedicated and principled as she brings about change in our education system. Her goal to ensure that every child can learn and every school can be successful is one that she pursues with great tenacity. We have made great progress in the last 4 years, but much remains to be accomplished. I believe that Margaret Spellings is the person to help us continue climbing the ladder to success.

The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) fully supports Ms. Spellings' confirmation in the Senate. Moreover, we look forward to working with her to achieve our mutual goal of a literate Nation, accomplished by pursuing success for parents as well as their children.

As a proponent of family literacy, I look forward to working with Ms. Spellings. Together, we can move family literacy forward by investing in research and the application of proven techniques for achieving results in multiple generations, as family literacy has proven.

Please let me know if you would like additional information on our support of Ms. Spellings' nomination or the work of NCFL.

Sincerely,

SHARON DARLING,
President & Founder.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA (NCLR),
 WASHINGTON, DC 20036,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

GENTLEMEN: I write on behalf of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national constituency-based Hispanic organization in the U.S., on the nomination of Margaret Spellings for Secretary of Education. NCLR views the post of Secretary of Education as vitally important to the Latino community, and believes that Ms. Spellings has the opportunity to be an extraordinarily effective Secretary at a critical time in our Nation's history. Thus, we welcome her nomination.

In the future America's schoolhouses will largely comprise Hispanic children. The number of Latino children attending the U.S. public schools has grown significantly over the last 30 years. In 1975, only 3 million Latinos were attending public schools, accounting for 6.7 percent of the K-12 student population. By 2000, more than 7.6 million Latinos were enrolled in public schools, representing 16.6 percent of K-12 students.

Hispanic students are a growing presence in public schools in every region of the U.S. The proportion of Hispanic K-12 public school students in the West grew from 14.8 percent in 1975 to 31.6 percent in 2000. During that same period, the Hispanic student population also increased in the South (6.6 percent to 16.0 percent), the Northeast (6.1 percent to 11.4 percent), and the Midwest (1.6 percent to 5.5 percent).

A large number of these children are English language learner (ELL) students. During the 2000-2001 school year, there were a reported 4.7 million ELL students enrolled in public schools, representing 9.8 percent of the total K-12 public school enrollment. This represents a 95 percent growth since the 1991-92 academic year.

NCLR believes that a nominee for Secretary of Education should understand and be responsive to the needs of Latino children, and should be prepared and committed to ensuring their academic success. NCLR has studied the path toward education reform in Texas, and we are aware of the critical role Ms. Spellings played as a key advisor to then-Governor George W. Bush in designing reforms in that State. Thus, NCLR is encouraged by Ms. Spellings' nomination and hopes to work with her, President Bush, and Congress to pursue an agenda that will provide Latino students with the opportunity to meet the academic standards set by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), complete high school at higher rates, and pursue postsecondary education. We believe NCLR and the Department of Education can share a common agenda for Latino children and that we can work effectively with Ms. Spellings, as Secretary, in the areas outlined below:

- **No Child Left Behind Act Implementation.** NCLR supports the principles of NCLB because it requires schools to help ELL students make strides in acquiring English and improving their reading and math skills, and it supports greater parental involvement. Over the past several fiscal years, however, Federal funding for ELL programs and parental involvement has been inadequate. Furthermore, we believe that the Department has not been as effective as it could have been in assisting States and districts in developing authentic assessment and accountability systems to maximize performance of ELL children under NCLB. Based on her record in overseeing education reform in Texas, we expect Ms. Spellings to work with us toward promoting more authentic accountability systems, and to pursue increased funding for ELL and parental involvement programs under NCLB.

- **Immigrant Students.** Every year, our Nation's high schools graduate thousands of talented immigrant students, many of whom have grown up in the U.S., attended the same elementary and secondary schools as native-born students, and excelled at the same academic requirements as their classmates. Unfortunately, many of these students are blocked from the opportunity to pursue postsecondary education and legally enter our Nation's workforce simply due to their immigration status. In response, Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Richard Durbin (D-IL), and Representatives Chris Cannon (R-UT), Howard Berman (D-CA), and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) introduced bipartisan bills. These bills, the "DREAM Act" and the "Student Adjustment Act," seek to facilitate college access for certain immigrant stu-

dents and put them on the path to U.S. citizenship. We expect to work with Ms. Spellings to vigorously support passage of these bills in the next Congress.

- **Charter School Development.** Charter schools have become a significant part of the education landscape. This is especially true for Latino students. There are currently more than 90 charter schools in NCLR's network of affiliates, providing quality services to children from various backgrounds. However, some charter schools continue to face challenges in obtaining quality facilities, meeting NCLB benchmarks, and recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. We pledge to work with Ms. Spellings, who has a long history of supporting the charter school movement, to provide charter schools the support they need to provide their students with quality education services.

- **High School Reform.** NCLB has the potential to ensure that low-income, minority, and ELL students graduate in greater numbers with a diploma that prepares them for postsecondary education or meaningful employment. However, some high schools face the challenge under NCLB to help ELL and recently-arrived immigrant high school students acquire English, meet academic benchmarks, and graduate; all this must occur in a very short time frame. As the Department develops its emerging high school reform proposals, we expect to work closely with Ms. Spellings to develop high school reform proposals that address the myriad challenges that recently-arrived immigrant students face in pursuing high school diplomas that prepare them for college and the workforce.

It is clear that ensuring a well-prepared Hispanic workforce is in the best interest of the Nation as a whole, and that carrying out these proposals will achieve that. We have every expectation that, if confirmed, Ms. Spellings will work closely with the Hispanic community to make it happen. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Raul Gonzalez of my staff at (202) 776-1760.

Sincerely,

JANET MURGUIA,
President and CEO.

NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (NIEA),
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314,
January 12, 2005.

Hon. MIKE ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

Hon. TED KENNEDY,
Ranking Minority Member,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI AND SENATOR KENNEDY: I am writing to express the support of the National Indian Education Association for the confirmation of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education.

At her confirmation hearing, Ms. Spellings noted, "In our diverse country we have the belief that education is the great equalizer. It is the key to success for individual Americans and the key to the success of our Nation. . . . In our country we believe that a great education must be available to each and every American." NIEA welcomes her words, and even more her extraordinary commitment over the years, whether as a government official at the State or Federal level, or as an advocate on behalf of Texas school boards, to expanding educational opportunity for all citizens. Education truly is the key to success for Native students and, indeed, the key to survival for Native cultures. And yet, Native students for a variety of reasons that have still not adequately been addressed, continue to struggle in the mainstream education system.

The great Lakota leader Sitting Bull said, "Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children." In that spirit, we look forward to working closely with Ms. Spellings on implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act and on Education Department budget issues. The NCLB Act generally expanded the Federal Government's role in education. Of course, for Indian tribes, who have a government-to-government relationship with the United States and to whom the United States has a trust obligation, Federal involvement in education is an old, and all too often tragic, story. However, NIEA supports the NCLB Act and lauds President

Bush for responding to tribal concerns that the implementation of the act needed to be tailored to the unique needs of Native peoples by signing an executive order whose purpose is to assist American Indian and Alaska Native students to meet the challenging academic standards of the No Child Left Behind Act *in a manner consistent with tribal traditions, languages and cultures* (BO 13336). We look forward to working with Ms. Spellings on the implementation of this executive order.

We also look forward to working with Ms. Spellings on the Department of Education budget. In recent years, the Department of Education, as a whole, has received budget increases on the order of 3 percent; however, inexplicably, the Native programs within the Department during this same period have received no increases despite the extraordinary educational needs in Indian Country.

Native communities understand that it is essential that we improve the educational opportunities for our youth. I thank the committee for its consideration of these comments and look forward to working with the committee this year on the important educational issues that will come before you.

Sincerely,

DAVID BEAULIEU, PH.D.,
President.

THE LATINO COALITION (TLC),
WASHINGTON, DC 20003,
December 20, 2004.

THE LATINO COALITION SUPPORTS THE NOMINATION OF MARGARET SPELLINGS AS THE
NEXT SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Washington, DC—The Board of Directors of The Latino Coalition (TLC) today announced their support for the nomination of Margaret Spellings as the next U.S. Secretary of Education, and urged the members of the U.S. Senate to quickly move on confirming this outstanding nominee.

“Margaret Spellings is one of President Bush’s closest and most trusted advisors,” said TLC Vice Chairman Susan Alvarado. “She has been an instrumental part of the President’s efforts to reform education since his days as Governor of Texas and then as President. We can think of no better person to expand on the historic and successful reforms of No Child Left Behind. Her nomination clearly indicates that President Bush wants to make improving education one of his top priorities in his second term.”

Aside from her experience and her successful record reforming education in both Texas and as the Advisor to the President for Domestic Policy, the Board of Directors considers her closeness to President Bush will bring new energy and access to the U.S. Department of Education. “Everyone knows that Margaret Spellings is one of President Bush’s most trusted advisors,” said TLC President Robert Deposada. “She will have the opportunity to bring to the Education Department more access to the White House than any of her predecessors. She also brings a strong commitment to implement and expand the reforms which are close to the heart of President Bush. We know of no one who better understands President Bush’s views and passions on education reform as much as Margaret Spellings. She has been there with the President at every step of the way, and will make sure that one of President Bush’s legacies is improving the education of all our children.”

The Latino Coalition is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Washington, DC. TLC was established to address policy issues that directly affect the wellbeing of Hispanics in the United States. TLC’s agenda is to develop and promote policies that will foster economic equivalency and enhance overall business, economic, and social development of Hispanics. For more information please visit our Web site at www.TheLatinoCoalition.com.

THE WASHINGTON CENTER FOR
 INTERNSHIPS AND ACADEMIC SEMINARS,
 WASHINGTON, DC 20037-1427,
December 20, 2004.

Hon. MIKE ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: On behalf of The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars, I would like to extend congratulations on the nomination of Margaret Spellings for Secretary of Education.

For the past 30 years, The Washington Center has brought over 33,000 students to intern and study in our Nation's capital. Our success can be attributed to developing educational and strategic partnership with such Federal agencies as the Department of Education. We look forward to working with Ms. Spellings in ensuring our country's future educated workforce.

We look forward to working with the future Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

ARLEEN BORYSIEWICZ,
Vice President for External Affairs.

WOMEN IMPACTING PUBLIC POLICY,
 WASHINGTON, DC 20036,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP), on behalf of the 505,000 women business owners its represents, would like to express its support of Margaret Spellings for Secretary of Education.

There has been no greater champion in the White House for women business owners than Margaret Spellings. As the Domestic Policy Advisor to the President, she has not only listened to the concerns of women in business, she has also been proactive in finding solutions to those concerns.

Margaret is to be commended for her leadership in the flextime initiative because of its importance on small businesses and the challenges all women face with regard to balancing their work and their families.

As Secretary of Education, we feel confident that she will take the same proactive approach to the challenges facing the educational system in this country. As women business owners, we know firsthand the importance a good education plays in the quality of our workforce. We view education as a vital component of this Nation's ability to compete in the global marketplace.

We believe Margaret Spellings will continue to be a strong leader and wholeheartedly endorse her nomination.

Sincerely,

TERRY NEESE,
President and Co-Founder.
 BARBARA KASOFF,
COO and Co-Founder.

WOMEN PRESIDENTS' ORGANIZATION,
 NEW YORK, NY 1022,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: I am writing to you to endorse the appointment of Margaret Spelling as Secretary of Education.

I have had the pleasure of working with her in the past year and am aware of how instrumental she has been in helping to improve our Nation's elementary and secondary schools.

As the president of a women's business organization with 50 chapters in the United States and Canada, one of the ongoing issues for our members is hiring and retaining competent employees. Our members average \$11M in annual revenue, 199 employees and have been in business an average of 16 years. In order to accelerate their company's growth, it is my belief that we must first face the lack of education among today's youth. Without a proper education from the very beginning, young people face challenges of not being able to find economically sound employment. In order to build confidence and succeed on a personal and professional level, they need to be better equipped to face the demands the adult world can bring.

I am positive that Margaret Spellings as the Secretary of Education will not only address today's ongoing issues with education, but also can change the direction of education and help today's limited youth become tomorrow's educated adult.

Again, it is my pleasure to endorse the appointment of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

MARSHA FIRESTONE, PH.D.,
Women Presidents' Organization.

ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES (AESAs),
ARLINGTON, VA 22203,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: The Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESAs) is proud to submit a letter in support of the nomination of Margaret Spellings as U.S. Secretary of Education.

Ms. Spellings is a product of public schools and has spent her entire professional life dedicated to improving the quality of schools in Texas and throughout the United States. The Texas Education Service Centers have worked with Ms. Spellings throughout her distinguished career in Texas. Our Texas members have worked with her in a variety of programs and activities: when she was working in the Texas Legislature as clerk of the House Public Education Committee under a Democratic chair, as lobbyist for the Texas Association of School Boards, and as political and education advisor to the then Texas Governor George W. Bush. She gained trust and respect with our AESA members for her interpersonal, analytical and political skills.

Margaret Spellings is a practical, no nonsense manager who supports high standards and accountability. While in Texas she was involved in a campaign to end social promotion, a campaign that we support. Ms. Spellings has always supported flexibility and funding for public education, which she lobbied for when at the Texas Association of School Boards. While in the Governor's Office, she listened to stakeholders' concerns and addressed them.

While working at the White House, she worked with Congress in drafting and helping pass the No Child Left Behind Act. We believe Ms. Spellings will work hard to maintain the fundamental principals of NCLB while tweaking rules and regulations for greater implementation success in our schools. She also is well versed in the important issues of early childhood, high school reform and higher education.

We also believe that because of her communication skills and practical approach to solving problems that Ms. Spellings appointment will insure that the U.S. Department of Education continues to be responsive to the educational needs of educational service agencies and the districts they serve.

It is our belief that with her knowledge of White House operations and the inner workings of Congress, Margaret Spellings is the right nominee for U.S. Secretary of Education. We urge the Senate to confirm Margaret Spellings as our next Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

BRIAN L. TALBOTT PH.D.,
Executive Director.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS,
WASHINGTON, DC 20001,
January 5, 2005.

Hon. JUDD GREGG,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR GREGG: The American Federation of Teachers represents more than 1.3 million members, including K–12 teachers, paraprofessionals and higher education faculty and staff. Our members care deeply about their students; AFT members also care about the myriad issues they face in their role as education professionals, including how to give their students the best possible education. Much of what our members and their students deal with on a day to day basis is directly affected by decisions made by the U.S. Department of Education. This is one of the reasons why the decision as to who will head the Department is so important.

Margaret Spellings, the nominee for this position, has been accessible, open and willing to listen to AFT positions and concerns in the past. We are sure that the good working relationship we have established with Ms. Spellings will continue, and our union is ready to work with her and others in the Administration who share our goal of ensuring that all students have access to the high-quality education they deserve.

Certainly, one challenge in meeting our shared goal will be correcting the structural problems of the No Child Left Behind Act, including adequate funding. But the Nation faces a host of other challenges that are outside the scope of NCLB; these include better working conditions and compensation to attract and keep good teachers; better preparation for those entering the profession; and greater access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education.

We look forward to working with Ms. Spellings on these and other issues upon her confirmation.

Sincerely,

EDWARD J. MCELROY,
President.

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS,
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814,
November 23, 2004.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI: I am writing to voice our strong and enthusiastic support for the President's nomination of Margaret Spellings as the U.S. Secretary of Education. There is no better test for the credibility of education policy makers in Washington DC than the reputation they possess at the local level in States, towns and local school agencies across the Nation. In California, Margaret Spellings is known well by school officials because she has always taken the time to listen and understand the issues we face.

We worked collaboratively with Margaret for many years during her tenure with the Texas School Boards Association and while she has served at the White House on critical education issues including the President's No Child Left Behind Act and special education reauthorization. Margaret's solid grasp of complex issues in education is the result of years of direct involvement in the development of thoughtful policies and recommendations on behalf of local schools. Representing the interests of local schools, she has fought in the trenches for better education funding, accountability and higher achievement.

Margaret is a wonderful collaborator and knows how to get things done. Her personal style is always friendly and open and she also possesses a wonderful sense of humor. She always exhibits the utmost professionalism and above all, has a passion for education and the well being of children. It is not surprising that she enjoys strong bipartisan support including the endorsement of Representative George Mil-

ler (D) California. We are very excited about this nomination and hope you will quickly grant Margaret Spellings the confirmation she deserves.

Sincerely,

KEVIN R. GORDON,
Executive Director.

COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS (CCSSO),
WASHINGTON, DC 20001-1431,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: As Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), I am writing in my official capacity regarding the nomination of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education. It is with great excitement that CCSSO heartily endorses Ms. Spellings' nomination—we are very pleased with this nomination and believe it holds great promise for the future of education in our Nation.

Ms. Spellings is viewed by our members as hard working, knowledgeable, honest and forthright—traits we believe are essential to building and maintaining the confidence of the public and the education community as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) continues to be implemented. From her days working for the Texas School Boards Association to her role in the White House, Ms. Spellings has consistently exhibited the traits mentioned previously. In short, with Ms. Spellings we know that while we might not always like her answers, she will always “tell it to you straight,” and we believe this is critical to successful implementation of NCLB, IDEA and the other education programs under the purview of the Secretary of Education.

Clearly Ms. Spellings has a firm grasp and understanding of the vision of No Child Left Behind. In addition she understands that implementation and ideology sometimes need to blend to make a new vision successful. Yet at the same time, Ms. Spellings has the backbone to stand strong in the face of opposition and to exhibit a sense of calm confidence in getting the job done. She is both a policy person and an implementation person—two traits we believe are essential to the success of education improvement in the United States.

We at the Council of Chief State School Officers lend our unqualified support for the nomination of Margaret Spellings as the next Secretary of Education. We are thrilled with this nomination, look forward to working with Ms. Spellings, and believe her role as Secretary of Education will advance educational improvement across the Nation.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on this important decision by the Senate. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call or write. Best wishes for a positive and productive new Congressional session.

Sincerely yours,

G. THOMAS HOULIHAN,
Executive Director.

COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS,
WASHINGTON, DC 20004,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing on behalf of the Council of the Great City Schools, the Nation's primary coalition of large urban public school systems, to express our enthusiastic support for Margaret Spellings' nomination as Secretary of Education.

Our organization has worked closely with Ms. Spellings over the last 4 years and has always found her to be knowledgeable, responsive, and committed to the Nation's schoolchildren. She is a person of enormous capacity and integrity, and is sure to bring a practical and forward-looking perspective to her job as Secretary just as the Nation's schools are struggling with some of the most challenging parts of No Child Left Behind.

The Administration and the Congress will face a number of important education issues in the next few years, including the reauthorization and possible expansion of NCLB, the renewal of the Vocational Education Act, the Higher Education Act, and other critical pieces of legislation.

The Council of the Great City Schools is confident that Ms. Spellings will make an excellent Secretary and will provide the leadership necessary to move the Nation's schools forward. We support her confirmation as the next Secretary of Education and would welcome any questions you might have. Thank you.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL CASSERLY,
Executive Director.

LUCE & WILLIAMS,
DALLAS, TEXAS 75225,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR: It is with great pleasure that I write to urge the nomination of Ms. Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education. I have worked on education issues with her for the past 21 years and have always found her to be smart, absolutely dedicated to the improvement of education for all our children and possessing great leadership skills. She is a person of great integrity.

If I can supply any additional information regarding her career, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for holding a prompt hearing.

Cordially,

TOM LUCE.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY,
SCHOOL PRINCIPLES (NAESP),
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-3483,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: On behalf of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, representing 30,000 elementary and middle level principals in the United States and abroad, I write to encourage the HELP Committee's confirmation of Margaret Spellings as U.S. Secretary of Education.

NAESP appreciates Ms. Spellings' longstanding commitment to education and her strong interest in literacy, early childhood education, and other issues that are important to principals. We look forward to working with Secretary-designee Spellings and her colleagues at the U.S. Department of Education on these matters.

As principals and other educators strive to implement No Child Left Behind, the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, and other Federal education laws, NAESP will continue to offer suggestions designed to improve these laws while continuing to support their laudable goals. We are optimistic that Ms. Spellings will lead by example in promoting positive and productive communication between the Bush Administration and interested stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments, and best wishes for your work with your colleagues on the HELP Committee in the 109th Congress.

Sincerely,

VINCENT L. FERRANDINO,
Executive Director.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION (NASBE),
 ARLINGTON, VA 22314,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI: On behalf of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), representing the Nation's State and territorial boards of education, I would like to express our support for the nomination and confirmation of Margaret Spellings as United States Secretary of Education.

Margaret Spellings has been instrumental in shaping and promoting President Bush's education reform initiatives. The result of these efforts was the passage of the landmark No Child Left Behind Act that includes high State academic standards, the use of state assessments to measure school progress in meeting such standards, and rigorous accountability measures for schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress in improving student proficiency in reading and math.

As you know, the No Child Left Behind Act was enacted with overwhelming bipartisan support and embodies a new Federal education vision of concentrating attention on the academic performance of all children, increasing resources for schools, empowering parents, and emphasizing literacy skills. The success of these policies is due in no small part to the work of Margaret Spellings.

In addition to her accomplishments during President Bush's first term, Margaret Spellings has strived for more than 2 decades to improve education at both the local and State levels. As such, she brings a far-ranging perspective and invaluable expertise about the advantages and challenges of education reform at all three levels of government.

Again, we commend the selection of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education and urge her quick and unanimous confirmation.

Sincerely,

BRENDA LILIENTHAL WELBURN,
Executive Director.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS,
 RESTON, VA 20191-1537,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: On behalf of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)—the preeminent school leadership organization representing the Nation's middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and aspiring principals—I write to encourage confirmation of Margaret Spellings as U.S. Secretary of Education.

Today's schools are vast different from the institutions of the past. Middle level and high school leaders are meeting new challenges in order to transform schools into high quality educational institutions for all students, and will look to the Nation's new education secretary for the support that is necessary in order to turn visionary goals into reality.

NASSP admires Secretary-designate Spellings' passion for school improvement, and we look forward to working closely with her to help develop Federal education policies that are fair, effective, and beneficial to all students.

Sincerely,

GERALD TIROZZI, PH.D.,
Executive Director.

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (NEA),
 WASHINGTON, DC 20036-3290,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MIKE ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI: On behalf of the National Education Association's (NEA) 2.7 million members, we would like to express our support for the nomination of Margaret Spellings as United States Secretary of Education. We believe Ms. Spellings has the experience and perspective necessary to serve effectively in this capacity.

Ms. Spellings has a long history in the education arena. Her experience as Associate Executive Director of the Texas Association of School Boards allowed her to understand first-hand the concerns of those working every day in America's public schools. Public education advocates who have worked closely with her, including the Texas State Teachers Association, have admired her professionalism, knowledge, and passion for issues.

We look forward to working with Ms. Spellings to ensure great public schools for every child. We hope the committee will move quickly to confirm her nomination.

Sincerely,

REG WEAVER,
President.

PBS,
 ARLINGTON, VA 22314-1698,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: It is with great pleasure that I write in support of Margaret Spellings' nomination to be the U.S. Secretary of Education. We believe her leadership of the Department of Education would serve the parents, teachers and children of America very well.

The U.S. Department of Education is a critical partner for PBS and PBS stations as the administrator of the "Ready To Learn" cooperative agreement, a national effort to improve the school readiness of young children through the reach of public broadcasting. Thanks to the generosity of the department, PBS reaches 97 million households with high-quality educational children's programs, and has impacted over 1 million children and 8 million parents and teachers through workshops and outreach activities promoting literacy and school readiness. Additionally, for the past 5 years, PBS has administered TeacherLine through the "Ready To Teach" program that provides more than 100 online professional development courses to improve teacher quality.

Mrs. Spellings has been a tireless advocate for children and quality education throughout her career. She has served at both the State and national levels of policy development, and shares PBS' commitment to seeing that each and every child has the skills and qualities necessary to begin school ready to learn.

PBS would like to urge the committee to approve Ms. Spellings' nomination with all due consideration.

Most sincerely,

PAT MITCHELL,
President and Chief Executive Officer.

TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS,
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78767-0400,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: It is with great pleasure and pride that I write to support the nomination of Margaret Spellings to the position of Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. Ms. Spellings will be an outstanding Secretary and a passionate advocate for our Nation's schools.

I have known Ms. Spellings for more than 20 years, dating back to her service as a staff member in the Texas Legislature. Subsequently, we were colleagues at the Texas Association of School Boards and we worked closely on education issues during her tenure on then-Governor George W. Bush's staff. Throughout this period, she maintained a focus on improving education through high standards and strong accountability.

"No child left behind" is more than a landmark piece of legislation to Ms. Spellings. Based on many conversations with her through the years, it is clear to me that she holds a passionate conviction that every child can learn if given the opportunity to be educated in an environment with academic rigor and a focus on results. I have no doubt that Ms. Spellings will work tirelessly to ensure that every school in America creates this type of environment.

To characterize Ms. Spellings in a few words is difficult, but two traits stand out when I think of her career and accomplishments. First, Ms. Spellings is a true leader. Her leadership skills result from her intelligence, her listening skills, and her sense of humor. She is keenly intelligent and is a quick-study on issues about which she is unfamiliar. In dealing with others, she listens to all points-of-view and perspectives, even when different from her own. Her sense of humor is legendary and she uses it effectively to make others feel at ease and connected to the cause. The other characteristic that Ms. Spellings possesses is the ability to get things done. She has a strong work ethic, outstanding organizational skills, and the tenacity to see any goal or project through to completion. The combination of these two qualities will serve her well in the capacity to which she has been nominated.

Without reservation, I commend Margaret Spellings to you and encourage you to confirm her to the position of Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

JAMES B. CROW,
Executive Director.

TEXAS ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS AND
SUPERVISORS ASSOCIATION (TEPSA),
AUSTIN, TX 78701-2697,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: This letter is in support of Margaret Spellings for Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. As Executive Director of the Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA), I wish to commend Margaret to you and your esteemed colleagues in the Senate. Margaret has earned the admiration of the education community. With extraordinary professionalism, integrity and willingness to do dialectical thinking on important issues, Margaret has mobilized action and resources on behalf of children.

Since 1987, I have had the privilege of working with Margaret in various capacities. Throughout this time, mutual respect has undergirded our efforts as we collaborated to craft the Texas Reading and Student Success Initiatives. During President Bush's gubernatorial leadership, these successful programs included Accelerated Reading Instruction time for children, Reading Academies for K-3 teachers and Reading Leaders. As a result, Texas elementary schools significantly closed the gap between diverse student groups, even as 60 percent of the new children entering Texas schools were English language learners from poverty or had special learning needs.

TEPSA represents 5,500 Texas elementary principals and supervisors. These administrators supervise 153,000 teachers who direct the activities of 2.3 million school children.

Margaret Spellings' leadership exemplifies Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's words: "The future belongs to those who give the next generation reason to hope."

Respectfully,

SANDI BORDEN,
Executive Director.

TEACH FOR AMERICA,
NEW YORK, NY 10018,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI: I am writing to express my strong support for Margaret Spellings' nomination for Secretary of Education. In all of our interactions with Ms. Spellings, we have admired her commitment to doing what's right for children in low-income communities, as well as her pragmatism and work ethic in pursuit of dramatically expanding their educational opportunities.

Ms. Spellings is a leader in the effort to close the achievement gap that exists between students who grow up in low-income and high-income communities. Furthermore, her support for innovative education programs with proven results demonstrates her commitment to creative solutions that address the needs of low-income children.

Teach For America's commitment to these same objectives has led us to strongly believe that the focus on student achievement and academic outcomes championed by Ms. Spellings as part of No Child Left Behind is critical. Through our work running a highly selective national teacher corps, we have seen first-hand that students in low-income communities can achieve at the same levels on an absolute scale as their wealthier peers. We remain fueled by the potential of these students and motivated by the reality that despite this potential, there remains a large achievement gap in low-income areas.

Margaret Spellings has been a key ally for those of us working on the ground to help fulfill the promise of public education in America. She shares the same belief that children of all backgrounds can achieve great things when given the proper resources and tools. It is a great pleasure to support Ms. Margaret Spellings' nomination for Secretary of Education.

Best Regards,

WENDY KOPP,
President & Founder.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES (AACC),
WASHINGTON, DC 20036,
ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES (ACCT),
WASHINGTON, DC 20035,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Ranking Member,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI AND SENATOR KENNEDY: On behalf of America's community college leadership, we respectfully urge speedy confirmation for the President's nominee for Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings.

We believe that Ms. Spellings is more than qualified to be the next Secretary of Education and America's community college leadership looks forward to working

with her and the committee on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and Carl D. Perkins Act during the next Congress.

We appreciate your leadership on behalf of education and for the continuing support of the Nation's community colleges.

Most respectfully,

GEORGE R. BOGGS,
AACC *President and CEO*.
RAY TAYLOR,
ACCT *President and CEO*.

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN EDUCATORS,
LAGUNA HILLS, CA 92653-4627,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: The Association of American Educators is pleased to support the nomination of Ms. Margaret Spellings for U.S. Secretary of Education. We feel that her extensive policy experience in public education will serve America's teachers well. In particular, her detailed understanding of the No Child Left Behind Act—including both the needed requirements that it places on States and the areas in which flexibility and decision-making are left to State policy-makers—should help to move the public discussion forward to more positive and productive ground.

This positive dialogue is essential if educators and policy-makers are to work together to evaluate and improve the implementation of NCLB. This professional approach is in the best interest of all involved, but especially that of America's children and their teachers.

Ms. Spellings' experience as a former Associate Executive Director of the Texas Association of School Boards is also a significant asset and gives her a "hands-on" perspective that school board members across the country should recognize and respect.

But perhaps her most unique qualification is the leadership role that she has taken in shaping education policy, both in Texas in the 1990's and in the White House over the last 4 years. These experiences give her unmatched insight into the President's education policies.

This familiarity and experience in shaping current education policy should also help her articulate clearly to the public and to the Nation's teachers the reasons that the Administration supports certain policy details. We know that teachers are best served when they receive accurate, candid, and direct information on the policies that affect them—and Ms. Spellings has a reputation for being both direct and extremely knowledgeable on education policy.

The members of our association are professionals who have chosen to belong to a nonunion organization—and they will certainly appreciate this candor. Our members may agree with Ms. Spellings on many issues, and may have legitimate concerns and disagreements on others, but we will always approach the issues from a perspective of mutual professional respect and the foremost concern for what is best for our Nation's students.

Our organization, the Association of American Educators (AAE), is a nonprofit, nonpartisan professional association for America's teachers. We are a national organization and are part of a coalition of over 250,000 teachers nationwide who have chosen to belong to a professional association rather than to a teachers' labor union. AAE is not a labor union and does not engage in collective bargaining, but is focused on professional development and support for our teachers.

We look forward to working with Ms. Spellings on behalf of America's teachers and students.

Sincerely,

Executive Director.

ASSOCIATION OF STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (AASCU),
 WASHINGTON, DC 20005-4701,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Ranking Member,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATORS ENZI AND KENNEDY: The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), an organization representing more than 430 public colleges and universities and more than 3.5 million students, is pleased to support the nomination of Margaret Spellings to be Secretary of Education. President Bush makes an excellent choice for this important position, and we urge the members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to recommend confirmation by the full Senate.

While serving as the chief education advisor for the State of Texas, Secretary-Designate Spellings demonstrated a facile knowledge of education policies and their implementation. Her tenure as Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy has given her the experience needed to work within the Federal Government and has sharpened her passionate advocacy for education. She has likewise demonstrated a genuine interest in working with the higher education community.

There are many challenges facing the new secretary, particularly the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. We are confident Ms. Spellings will serve as an excellent steward for the Department of Education and work tirelessly to ensure this process produces the best possible outcome.

Thank you for your continued good work on behalf of the higher education community and particularly for public colleges and universities.

With kind regards,

CONSTANTINE W. CURRIS,
President.

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION,
January 3, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: I write on behalf of the American Council on Education and the higher education associations listed below—representing the Nation's 2- and 4-year, public and private colleges—regarding the nomination of Margaret Spellings to be Secretary of Education.

Secretary-designate Spellings has been involved in education policy at the Federal and State levels for many years. As the President's primary advisor on domestic policy, Ms. Spellings has worked directly with Members of Congress and their staffs on a wide array of issues and is deeply respected for her knowledge and commitment to expanding educational opportunities for all Americans. She has overseen the Department of Education and is familiar with the agency's management of the student aid programs. Our member institutions in Texas, where she has spent much of her career, uniformly report that she is a willing listener who seeks to find common ground and build consensus.

The next Secretary of Education will confront a host of complex and multifaceted public policy issues involving higher education, including the pending reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Successfully addressing these issues will ensure that higher education remains a platform for economic growth and social progress. I believe that her extensive experience will be a great asset as we move to address these matters in the years ahead.

We are pleased that President Bush has chosen to nominate Ms. Spellings to fill this important position and we ask the members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to approve her nomination as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

DAVID WARD,
President.

On behalf of: American Association of Community Colleges; American Association of State Colleges and Universities; American Council on Education; Association of American Universities; National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities; and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

BLACK ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS (BAEO),
WASHINGTON, DC 20036,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington DC 20510.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI: The Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO) is pleased to support the nomination of Margaret Spellings for the 8th U.S. Secretary of Education.

The Black Alliance for Educational Options is a national, nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization whose mission is to actively support parental choice to empower families and increase quality educational options for Black children. Our organization was founded December of 1999. BAEO is focused on making sure that low income and working class black families have the expanded educational options that are available to more affluent families in our society.

Ms. Spellings is the type of committed individual that the country needs to continue on the path of education reform established by her predecessor, Rod Paige. We believe her experience with the Texas Association of School Boards and her experience as a White House Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy has prepared her well to assume this important position. It is clear that Ms. Spellings is a trusted advisor to the President and that bodes well for her ability to be an effective advocate with him on the issues facing the Department and the Nation's schools and more importantly the Nation's children.

There is much work to be done in this country to meet the oft-stated goal of "leaving no child behind." We believe the bi-partisan No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has set the tone for progress by establishing standards for accountability, making the case for making sure all of our children have highly qualified teachers, and most importantly giving parents the ability to either opt out of schools that are not making adequate yearly progress or giving them the capacity to involve their children in supplementary educational services. We believe that if given the opportunity Ms. Spelling will continue to work on these and other crucial issues involved in the implementation of NCLB, as well as other critical areas that come under the scope of authority of the Department.

We sincerely believe that Ms. Spelling is the type of caring and focused individual needed to keep the Department moving forward to help all of the Nation's children but particularly the children who are being most ill-served by our traditional systems of education. We are certain that if confirmed, Ms. Spelling will be an effective U.S. Secretary of Education.

If we can be of any further assistance to the committee during your deliberations, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

HOWARD L. FULLER, PH.D.,
Chair of the Board.
LAWRENCE C. PATRICK III,
President & CEO.

CAREER COLLEGE ASSOCIATION (CCA),
WASHINGTON, DC 20002-4213,
January 3, 2005.

Hon. MIKE ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: On behalf of the 1270 member institutions in the Career College Association, I write in support of President Bush's nomination of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education.

The Career College Association (CCA) is a voluntary membership organization of postsecondary schools, institutes, colleges and universities that comprise the for-profit sector of higher education. In addition, our sector represents 46 percent of postsecondary education and educates, prepares and supports 1 million students each year in more than 200 occupational fields.

CCA was the first postsecondary association to support the President's *No Child Left Behind* initiative. I found that Ms. Spellings has a deep commitment and passion for reform of our education system by setting high standards and providing the necessary resources to meet those standards. Ms. Spellings' commitment to access and accountability has been a bright spot in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. CCA believes that with the President's nomination of Margaret Spellings at this critical time during the reauthorization of the HEA, she will provide the leadership needed to work with Congress and stakeholders to provide the very best policies not only for students attending career colleges but all higher education students.

Again, we applaud President Bush on his nomination of Ms. Spellings as Secretary of Education and I ask that you and your colleagues on the HELP Committee support and confirm her nomination. We believe that she is the best person for the students of America. If you desire additional comments, I may be reached at 202-336-6756 or via email at brucel@career.org.

Sincerely,

BRUCE D. LEFTWICH,
Vice President,
Government Relations.

CONGRESS OF RACIAL EQUALITY,
NEW YORK, NY 10003,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. WILLIAM H. FRIST, M.D.,
U.S. Senate,
Washington DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR FRIST: On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Congress of Racial Equality, it is with great honor that we support President George W. Bush's nomination of Ms. Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education. As a close confidant to the President, Ms. Spellings' experience and sincere concern for quality education are significant traits that are of vital importance for today's youth.

We at CORE congratulate Ms. Spellings in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

ROY INNIS,
National Chairman.
NIGER INNIS,
National Spokesman.

EDUCATION FINANCE COUNCIL,
WASHINGTON, DC 20036,
January 3, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC. 20510.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: The Education Finance Council (EFC), requests your endorsement of the appointment of Margaret Spellings as the next Secretary of Edu-

cation. Ms. Spellings's extensive background in education policy-making on both the State and Federal level makes her a natural fit to guide our Nation's education policy. As you know, Spellings's service as the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy earned her the respect of Department of Education staff, as well as the broader education community and Members of Congress. EFC fully supports her appointment and we welcome the opportunity to work with Ms. Spellings in the coming year as the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act progresses.

Education Finance Council is a national trade association representing not-for-profit, and state-based education loan secondary markets from all around the country. Each year, EFC member organizations finance the issuance of billions of dollars of student loans to millions of postsecondary students. EFC members operate in every State helping families finance postsecondary education by ensuring the availability of private funding for education loans. As public-purpose organizations, EFC members are dedicated to ensuring that every qualified student can access the resources and financial support necessary to attend college.

We thank you for your consideration of this request and your continued support of our mission.

Sincerely,

STEVEN McCULLOUGH,
Chair.

INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND REFORM IN EDUCATION,
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19102,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Ranking Member,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

MESSRS. ENZI AND KENNEDY: I am writing in support of Mrs. Margaret Spellings' nomination for Secretary of Education. As founder and president of the Institute for Research and Reform in Education (IRRE), I have had the opportunity to work with the Department of Education over the past 6 years in its effort to improve secondary education in America with a particular focus on improving high schools serving economically disadvantaged communities.

My colleagues and I at IRRE support wholeheartedly the continuation and strengthening of these efforts. We hope the appointment of Mrs. Spelling signals the President's and his Administration's continued commitment to strengthen this critical and culminating phase of our young people's transition from childhood to young adulthood.

The work on high schools has begun, but there is much more to do. The Department and its leadership have created urgency at the State and local level—to look hard and do something meaningful about how our high schools are organized and how teaching and learning occur. These investments in research and program development must continue, in my view, if these initial efforts are going to pay off—and particularly for those millions of students who depend deeply on public education to launch them toward successful adult lives.

Mrs. Spellings' experience working at the State and Federal level on education and other central components of the President's agenda, brings a broad perspective to the Department that will serve it and the American education system well. I strongly support her nomination and urge you and your colleagues to do so as well.

Sincerely,

JAMES P. CONNELL, PH.D.,
President.

KNOWLEDGEWORKS FOUNDATION,
CINCINNATI, OH 45202-3611,
December 22, 2004.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: KnowledgeWorks Foundation fully supports the appointment of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education. We have confidence that her past experience in the education arena and commitment to public schools will enable her to continue the positive reform efforts the Department of Education has engineered over the past 4 years.

The Foundation partnered with the Department of Education on the largest state-wide high school transformation initiative in the country. The initiative aims to bring rigor, relevance and relationships back to the forefront of the high school experience. The Department's generous financial support, constant championing of our efforts, and guidance on the technical assistance provided to each school and district involved has led to the conversion of 17 large urban high schools into over 70 new, autonomous small schools.

The President's commitment to making high schools a key part of the Administration's agenda is directly aligned with our efforts. We believe Ms. Spellings will effectively implement the President's interests and help to maintain and improve upon the progress that has already been made on the renewal of the American high school and the public education system as a whole.

Sincerely,

CHAD P. WICK,
President and CEO.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF HIGHER
EDUCATION LOAN PROGRAMS, INC.,
WASHINGTON, DC 20036,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI: On behalf of the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs (NCHELP), I would like to express support for the nomination of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education.

With her commitment to a strong and accountable public education system, we believe Ms. Spellings is an excellent candidate to lead the Department of Education. In her role as the Senior Domestic Policy Adviser to the President, Ms. Spellings has had a unique opportunity to see the role education plays in a broader, national context. As the higher education community prepares to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, we need a leader with a keen understanding of the policies and procedures involved. Ms. Spellings' contributions to the No Child Left Behind Act provide a foundation for ensuring the success of this important legislation.

NCHELP members are committed to improving college access and affordability for America's students. We commend the efforts of President Bush to ensure that Federal funds are available to students and their families in pursuing postsecondary goals and believe that his choice in Ms. Spellings to carry on this important work at the Department of Education will be rewarded.

Sincerely,

BRETT E. LIEF,
President.

NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION,
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-3493,
January 5, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL B. ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

Re: Senate Confirmation Hearing on Ms. Margaret Spellings as United States Secretary of Education

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI: The National School Boards Association, representing 95,000 school board members and our State school boards associations across the Nation, is pleased to support the nomination of Ms. Margaret Spellings as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

Ms. Spellings has had a distinguished career as a strong advocate and policy-maker in the field of public education. From her earlier experience with the Texas Association of School Boards, followed by her experience as a key official on the staff of the Governor of Texas, to her most recent experience as Domestic Policy Advisor to the President of The United States, Ms. Spellings has demonstrated her strong commitment to quality public education.

Perhaps of utmost importance in her career has been her intense leadership in ensuring that public schools and school districts across the country are held to a higher level of accountability for the academic performance of all students regardless of socio-economic conditions, race, ethnicity, or disability. Such increased emphasis has sparked renewed energy and innovation in securing major reforms in delivering quality education to all students.

We believe that Ms. Spellings brings the credentials, commitment, and experience to this position to ensure that the goals of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act and other Federal programs will be achieved. Additionally, she will bring strong leadership to cause continuous improvements in the design of Federal education programs and in the manner in which these programs are administered by the Department of Education,

We look forward to working closely with Ms. Spellings on major issues affecting our public schools and urge you to move expeditiously in confirming Ms. Spellings.
Sincerely,

ANNE L. BRYANT,
Executive Director.
GEORGE H. MCSHAN,
President.

PROJECT GRAD USA,
HOUSTON, TX 77002,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: I am writing to express my unqualified support for the nomination of Margaret Spellings to be the next Secretary of Education. I have been deeply involved in improving public education for many years, first as the CEO and Chairman of Tenneco, a Texas-based Fortune 500 company, and later as the founder and Chairman of Project GRAD USA, a school reform organization which began in Texas and now serves low-income schools across the country. As someone who has had the opportunity to work directly with Ms. Spellings and observe her work for more than a decade, I strongly believe that the President could not have made a better choice.

The *No Child Left Behind* Act is one of the most significant pieces of Federal public school legislation ever passed. I know from our work at Project GRAD with more than a dozen of the Nation's most challenged public school districts that a strong accountability framework must be in place before real improvements can be made. It's a lesson that I learned in my days running Tenneco—without a strong focus on results, you don't get results.

As a Nation, we find ourselves at a crossroad. Any change on the scale of what the *No Child Left Behind* Act demands often meets with resistance. Some people

of good will who share a commitment to provide a sound education to all of our children want to make commonsense improvements to the law. Others, I'm afraid, want to scuttle it. If we falter, and turn back, we will have squandered an historic opportunity.

Above all, we need someone who can lead us through what promises to be a trying period to consolidate the gains we have made and extend them to high school and other areas. Ms. Spellings is the ideal choice to be that leader. Our Secretary of Education must be grounded by a deeply felt commitment to improving educational opportunities for all of our children. No one who has worked with Ms. Spellings doubts the depth of her commitment.

But what uniquely qualifies Ms. Spellings to be Secretary is that she brings the strengths and skills to translate that commitment into reality. Her strong principles give her the freedom to be pragmatic and the ability to judge when flexibility is needed to get the job done. She has a thorough understanding of the policymaking process, which will be crucial in an arena in which Federal, State, and local officials all play significant roles. She is well-liked and has earned the respect both of those at the highest levels of government and of educators across the political spectrum and throughout the country.

For the sake of our Nation's children, I urge you to give your consent to the nomination of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

JAMES L. KETELSEN,
Founder and Chairman.

SALLIE MAE,
RESTON, VA 20190,
January 5, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Chairman,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENZI: I am writing to express my support for President Bush's nomination of Margaret Spellings to be Secretary of Education.

As a major employer in Texas, Sallie Mae became acquainted with Ms. Spellings when she served as a top education advisor to Governor Bush in 1997. We were impressed with her knowledge of higher education and her willingness to openly consider issues facing higher education.

In her role as a chief domestic policy advisor to the President, Ms. Spellings has exhibited an exceptional understanding of problems facing education in our Nation. Margaret served as one of the chief architects of a plan that President Bush introduced in his first week in office to reform our Nation's elementary and secondary schools to ensure that all children are proficient in reading and math by the 2013-14 school year. Passed by Congress with overwhelming bipartisan majorities and signed into law by President Bush, the No Child Left Behind Act represents the most important Federal education reform in a generation. The testing, accountability and high standards contained in this law, together with record new funding, will help ensure the opportunity for educational excellence for every child in the country. From all accounts, we are already seeing progress.

From my perspective, the more children that successfully complete high school and move into post secondary education, the stronger our economy and our Nation will be. Ms. Spellings' commitment to improving education and her proven record of success make her an excellent candidate to be our Nation's next Secretary of Education.

I respectfully urge the committee to move quickly to approve her nomination.

Sincerely,

ALBERT L. LORD,
Vice Chairman and CEO.

SKILLSUSA,
LEESBURG, VA 20177-0300,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SIR: SkillsUSA looks forward to the swift confirmation of Margaret Spellings as the next U.S. Secretary of Education so the Administration and Congress may return to the important work of reauthorizing career and technical education and the Higher Education Act. We have read news stories and public statements quoting leaders in Congress, as well as representatives of organizations such as the National Educational Association, the American Federation of Teachers and the National School Boards Association, commending Ms. Spellings on her accessibility, willingness to listen, her strong belief in assessments and accountability and her dedication to excellence in student achievement.

SkillsUSA will be happy to work with a secretary of education exhibiting these qualities. They are, after all, the kind of employability and leadership skills we teach and attitudes we work to develop in our students. We also appreciate the fact that Ms. Spellings will have the direct and personal confidence of the President.

SkillsUSA continues to welcome opportunities to work with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education to explore the important role of career and technical education in No Child Left Behind and in high school renewal. We look forward to being a partner in transforming American education—through high quality career and technical education in high schools, colleges and apprenticeship programs—to meet the education and training needs of students and employers.

Thank you for your consideration and thank you for your continuing work on behalf of public career and technical education.

Sincerely,

TIMOTHY W. LAWRENCE,
Executive Director.

SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD,
ATLANTA, GA 30318-5790,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: You will be considering the nomination of Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education. While many persons in Washington know Margaret Spellings as a policy advisor to the President and for her role as part of an impressive coalition that drafted the No Child Left Behind Act, I think Margaret Spellings' experiences in Texas are more important to her preparation to be Secretary of Education. In Texas, in her role with the legislature and with Governor George W. Bush, Margaret Spellings was working with educators who were skeptical about proposed education reforms from the new Governor and with a legislature that was controlled by members of the Democratic party. It was in this environment that the Texas version of the No Child Left Behind Act was developed and its early implementation begun.

The skills and experiences that characterized Margaret Spellings' work with the legislature in Texas and later with the Governor of Texas on statewide education issues could be important and instructive for the approach and actions that will be needed in the further implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. Education reform and educational improvement in Texas, or at the national level, will not occur unless we know clearly the direction in which we want to move. Even then it takes a spearheaded effort to move an enterprise of millions of children and millions of persons who want to do the right thing for children, but for which there are many different opinions and for which there is the powerful natural inertia of a large enterprise.

What Margaret Spellings showed in Texas was that while she was certain, as was the Governor, about the direction that needed to be taken she was also willing to listen to the views of education and political leaders and to recognize that while one

may be certain about the initial direction to be taken there are changes and adjustments that are needed on the journey.

I think Margaret Spellings is a realist and a pragmatist. While she believes very strongly in fundamental principles, she also recognizes that sometimes it is necessary to change speeds and to alter directions to achieve the goals. In my opinion, the task facing the Secretary of Education is to adhere to the fundamental goals of the No Child Left Behind Act and to discern from all that she hears from around the country the pragmatic course and the actions that are necessary to help States and our Nation reach the fundamental goals.

My years of experience working with Margaret Spellings were primarily when she was in Austin, Texas but I have been in touch with her several times in her role as policy advisor to the President. I know of no personal or professional reason that the Senate should not confirm her appointment.

Sincerely,

MARK MUSICK,
President.

THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOLARSHIP FUND, INC.,
NEW YORK, NY 10038,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

DEAR HONORABLE ENZI: The Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund (TMSF) enthusiastically supports the nomination of Margaret Spellings to become the next Secretary to the U.S. Department of Education. We respectfully urge the Senate to move quickly toward her confirmation.

As you may know, founded in 1987 and headquartered in New York, the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund is the only organization chosen by Thurgood Marshall, Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, to bear his name, and is the only national organization that provides merit scholarships, programmatic, and capacity building support to the 47 Public HBCUs and the five historically Black law schools. TMSF's mission is to prepare a new generation of leaders by bridging the technological, financial, and programmatic gap between public and private Historically Black Colleges and Universities, making the dream of a college education a reality. Nearly 80 percent of all HBCU students attend one of our member institutions.

Through the development of the No Child Left Behind Act, Margaret Spellings exemplifies initiative, leadership and devotion to education reform. These traits provide a strong indication of her ability for tremendous success as Secretary of Education. TMSF is also confident that Ms. Spellings will continue the Bush Administration's strong support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), by creating strong partnerships with HBCUs and their national organizations.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. If you should have any questions or need any additional support, please contact our Director of Government Affairs, Charles L. Mason, Jr. at (202) 715-3070 or cmason@tmsf.org.

Sincerely,

DWAYNE ASHLEY,
President and CEO.

HISPANIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND,
January 4, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6300.

SENATOR ENZI: It is with great enthusiasm that I write you to recommend the rapid confirmation of Margaret Spellings as U.S. Secretary of Education.

You have stated that one of your priorities is to develop "a comprehensive approach to education and training that promotes a lifetime of learning for the American workforce and (that) ensures our long-term competitiveness in the global market." The best foundation for this is to ensure that America's students graduate from high school college-ready. Margaret has played an instrumental role in devel-

oping legislation that holds our public school systems accountable for accomplishing this.

I have had the opportunity to view Margaret's work through two lenses—one as president and CEO of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF), the Nation's largest organization supporting the higher education of Hispanic Americans, and the other as a board member of the National Center for Education Accountability, a collaborative effort to improve learning through the effective use of school and student data and the identification of best practices.

Margaret is a strong leader. She is bright, innovative, collaborative and stimulating—encouraging better thinking from those who work with her. But I'd like to focus on two additional attributes that I think make her uniquely qualified to lead the U.S. Department of Education at this time.

One is her curiosity. I first met Margaret in 1998 when she was senior advisor to then Texas Governor George W. Bush. I had written a letter to Governor Bush, commending him for legislation that would improve access to higher education for Texas' Hispanic students. She took the initiative to ask for a briefing on HSF's work. Since then, I have seen Margaret, on numerous occasions, look to connect the work of outside organizations with the policy and legislative work she is creating.

The second is her passion for improving public education. Her achievements in this area have been publicly documented. The quantity and quality of these accomplishments stem, in large part, from her fundamental desire to ensure that all children get the education they deserve and from her willingness to tackle—many times head-on—any obstacle to public education reform.

The continued successful implementation of No Child Left Behind will require both of these attributes, as the hurdles to school success are identified and solutions created.

You also have described your priority for ensuring that “college is accessible, affordable, and within reach of any student who wants to attend, and that students leave college ready for the workforce.” For Hispanic students, that is the core of HSF's work. We know that our success will be enhanced with an Education Secretary who is curious enough to identify all the partners required and passionate enough to see that these partnerships yield results.

In short, I think Margaret Spellings will make an excellent Secretary of Education, and I look forward to working with her to ensure that your committee's priorities are met.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

SARA MARTINEZ TUCKER,
President and CEO,
Hispanic Scholarship Fund.

The CHAIRMAN. I do have a couple of questions. You touched on it briefly, but I would like a little more of an explanation about the President's rationale in looking to expand No Child Left Behind to high schools; what are the Administration's plans to ensure that more students graduate from high school, and how does the Perkins Act reauthorization that we need to do fit into these high school initiatives?

Ms. SPELLINGS. Senator, the President and, I think, NCLB, is showing us that what gets measured gets done. And the assessment and data information systems that we have put in place in No Child Left Behind, the opportunity for every teacher to know how every child is doing in grades 3 through 8, for parents to know how their kids are doing, is really working to improve education. And he believes that that same theory ought to hold true for the high school level as well. Certainly it could be a little more complicated because of different types of offerings and the way a high school is organized, but I do think that that same philosophy can apply that measurement, sound data, more information both for educators, students, and parents is useful to improvement in the system.

With respect to high school completion, as I said, we have too few kids—only about 62 kids of every 100 entering 9th grade really get out of high school. And part of our big problem obviously in college completion is that we do not get enough of them in college in the first place. So we really have to stick to our knitting, I think, as far as preparation in many ways.

The President has called for intervention programs with 9th graders, literally that we make a contract with students and families to see how we are going to get each and every child out of high school. One of the things we have learned as we have implemented the reading initiative is that far too many kids have gotten through junior high and into high school without the requisite reading skills to be able to perform successfully there. So reading is certainly an area of focus.

With respect to career and technology programs and the programs that are embedded in the Perkins Act, the President believes that those programs as well—and I am a product of vocational education; I spent my senior year in high school working in a work-study program—must have academic rigor. We are cheating kids if we do not require them to have the skills necessary to be effective in the workplace, and some day, in postsecondary education if they elect to.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I also want to go into continuing education and adult learning because there is a growing consensus that education at all levels in this country needs to do a better job preparing students for the workforce. Under your leadership, how will the Department of Education ensure that education programs are helping to support a lifetime of learning that will prepare students of all ages for success in the workplace, and how will you coordinate those efforts with similar initiatives administered by the Department of Labor?

Ms. SPELLINGS. Senator, let me take the last part of your question first. In April of last year, the President proposed a Workforce Investment Act proposal which merged about four of the largest programs together and attempted to coordinate some of these funding streams more broadly.

I think the President's philosophy, just as it is in No Child Left Behind, is that we ought to be clear with the States and with employers and with individuals about what we expect from these programs, and we ought to allow State leaders, Governors, mayors, higher education leaders and the like, to effectively tailor programs to meet the needs of those local populations. So, I think, more authority, clearer results.

On the second part, with respect to lifetime of learning, as I said in my testimony, many, many, many of our students these days are what we call nontraditional students. The President has called for a year-around Pell grant. Currently, you can only get Pell aid for two semesters. If kids or adults are willing to go year-around, they ought to be able to get financial aid year-around. He has called for a State Scholars Program that says if you are college-ready as evidenced by a rigorous course of study, you ought to be rewarded to the tune of an additional \$1,000 a year for the first 2 years of college to make college more accessible and more affordable.

We must use technology and eliminate barriers to technology-based course work. I was just reading an article yesterday that many, many kids, particularly community college kids—or adults—are taking technology-based course work that is helping them enhance their careers and doing it on their time.

So I think we need to break down some of these barriers that we have had in higher ed financing that are around the 9-month school year and geared more to people who are going straight from high school into college, more favoring some of these lifelong learners, as you called them.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I am trying to set a precedent here that we take five minutes in a round, and I have one second left. [Laughter.] I will abide by that.

We do have the opening of the electoral college ballots today at 12:30, so we do have some time constraint, but not a great one, so at this point, I will recognize Senator Dodd.

Senator DODD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

When you said “one second left,” I remember doing an interview once on television, and the reporter said, “I have 30 seconds left,” and the Middle East was the question. [Laughter.]

First of all, congratulations, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to our new members, Senator Burr, Senator Isakson, and Senator Hatch coming back to the committee.

And Judd Gregg, we thank you for your leadership of the committee over the past and previous Congress. It was a pleasure to work with you, and I look forward, Mike, to working with you as well on a number of issues that are of interest to all of us.

And Ms. Spellings, congratulations on your nomination.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you, Senator.

Senator DODD. People who are willing to do these jobs and take on these responsibilities regardless of the outcome of votes have earned my enduring appreciation for your willingness to serve our country, and I appreciate very much your willingness to do that.

This morning—and I am not going to indicate any particular bias, but any candidate who has a daughter named “Grace,” I am particularly well-disposed toward as the father of a Grace. So, I welcome Grace to the committee and your family as well for being here.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you.

Senator DODD. This morning, as you know, Ms. Spellings, some 55 million children went off to school, and 50 million of them went to a public school; about 5 million go to private or parochial schools across the country. And we know—Senator Kennedy has talked about it, you have addressed it, the chairman and others have—the tremendous pressures today on so many of these children to guarantee what your predecessor talked about, and that is, of course, an equal access to education and a determination to see to it the quality and the excellence of education for these children, particularly a commitment, obviously, to those in public schools as our primary responsibility. The idea that we are going to accommodate any significant percentage of the 50 million who go to public elementary and secondary schools in a private or parochial school setting is rather unrealistic. Certainly some of that can happen, but

to a large extent, we have to make a commitment to see to it that children who have no other choice but a public education get that quality of education.

Thomas Jefferson said more than 200 years ago that "Any Nation that expects to be ignorant and free expects what never was and never possibly can be." As we enter this information high-technology age, probably the best indicator of a person's success is going to be whether or not they have the quality of education to meet the challenges of a 21st century world in which we are already 5 years into.

I know there are other jobs at the Cabinet table which are often considered more important—Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense. I do not exaggerate when I suggest to you here that in my view, your job is the most important one, because if we fail to do this well, we leave every other challenge that we will face as a nation in the coming years completely to chance and probably less likely success.

So education is the critical piece. It has been fundamental to this country since its founding days. So I commend you for being willing to take on the responsibility. I am assuming you are going to be confirmed. I intend to support you and hope we can work together.

Just a couple of things if I can in the limited time we have in our rounds, and I have an obligation as well that I am going to have to step out—I am going to try to get back a little later—but let me get right to No Child Left Behind.

I commend you in your statement for saying—and I am paraphrasing here—but that you want to listen very carefully to those who are closest to the children—that is, the principals, the educators, the teachers themselves, the parents and others. I know that you have heard this, and we hear it, all of us at this table—No Child Left Behind is a Federal mandate. It is a Federal mandate. And we have heard over the years the concerns of people at the local level about Federal mandates that do not receive adequate funding—the Federal Government telling you to do something and then not being willing to help, at least in a major way, to contribute to the cost of that.

There are many who will argue that we are some \$9.8 billion behind in the funding levels of No Child Left Behind. Two thousand five and 2006 are going to require different requirements be met in that time frame that are going to trigger in, and the shortfalls have already indicated in many States, talking to us already about their concerns given their own budget constraints, their ability to be able to meet and to finance properly the obligations that the No Child Left Behind Act will require.

Can you share with us briefly this morning how we intend to overcome this gap that we hear about every, single day. When every one of us goes back to our States, I do not care where it is in the country, we get this—from our teachers, from our principals, from our superintendents—this growing gap and their inability, without cutting dramatically into existing programs.

For instance, only 8 percent of elementary schools today have any kind of formal gym programs. We heard a lot about obesity and what needs to be done, and I know you care about that as well, but eliminating program after program in order to have the re-

sources necessary to meet the requirements that we have required under this law—how are we going to close that gap? Can we offer more assistance to these States and localities?

Ms. SPELLINGS. Senator, obviously, the President will be presenting his 2006 budget here in early February, and it will speak for itself. Public education has been a priority for funding for him over the course of his Administration. Title I funding is up 45 percent in the course of that time period. Total No Child Left Behind funding is up about 40 percent. And as you all know and do this yourselves, it is always a balancing act to figure out how best to allocate resources.

Further, you know obviously that the Federal Government is essentially a minority investor in public education, with about 8 or 9 percent of the funding coming from the Federal Government and the vast majority of it coming from States and localities.

To the extent that some of the provisions are considered to be mandates, particularly the assessment one, we have upward of \$400 million appropriated in this Act to meet the requirements of assessments, and they have been deemed by various studies to be fully funded, those assessment provisions.

Further—and I know some States have debated this, and of course, this has gone on in previous Administrations about whether No Child Left Behind is for them, and should they leave money on the table and walk away from the requirements of the Act. And happily, in my opinion, no State has elected to do that, because I do think that educators, particularly over the past 4 years or 3 years since this law has been in place, are now buying into the philosophy of this. Yes, I hear a lot about resources, but I also hear a lot of support for the tenets of No Child Left Behind and what it is doing and that they are worth paying for by State and local officials as well.

Senator DODD. My time is up, I presume, Mr. Chairman. I will try to come back a little later.

Thank you very much.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. I now turn over the microphone to the former chairman, my mentor, and the new chairman of the Budget Committee, Senator Gregg.

Senator GREGG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is a great honor and privilege to be here today with you chairing the committee. You have been an incredibly effective and strong member of this committee and to see you move into the chairmanship is something that is going to be very positive for the Congress and for the areas of jurisdiction of this committee, so I congratulate you and look forward to working with you.

It is also a great pleasure to be here with Secretary-designate Spellings, who has played such a huge role in fundamentally changing in a very positive way education in America. No Child Left Behind has had a dramatic impact, and it has caused a massive reevaluation of how we approach education in this Nation. We have gone from an input system to an output system where we are actually finding out what kids are learning and making sure they are learning the right things and hopefully making progress. We're

making sure that kids know how to read and know how to do math at the proper level for their grade.

I congratulate you for what you have already done; it has been impressive.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you, Senator.

Senator GREGG. There is still a lot to do, as we all know, so maybe you could give us your thoughts on three particular areas that I am interested in.

First, if you could spell out your position on how we are going to deal with the Pell issue. We know that we are facing a situation where outlays exceed appropriations and where we could run out of money.

Second is the issue of supplemental services, which I view as one of the key elements of No Child Left Behind. How do we make the whole concept of supplemental services have larger visibility and have more people take advantage of it?

And third, we have talked about high school, but let's talk about preschool. The Administration put forward a proposal, an extremely strong, substantive, effective proposal in the area of Head Start, and we have attempted to address that in this committee. I would be interested in your thoughts as to how we should adjust Head Start to reflect the efforts that you made initially in No Child Left Behind in putting education on the agenda in the preschool period.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you, Senator.

With respect to Pell, yes, we are very much committed to that, and in fact the President has called for increases as long ago as the 2000 campaign, and we have raised the award from \$3,750 to \$4,050, as you know, once since he has been in office.

The shortfall is a critical issue and I think has impeded our ability to raise the award for college students, and affordability is something that obviously will be at issue with the reauthorization of the Higher Ed Act. And we are thrilled on this committee—I will speak for all of us—with you in the post that you are going to be in, that you have a great understanding of how all of that works, so we might be doing a little lobbying of our own.

Also, as you know, on the tax tables, this Congress has required that the tax tables upon which the Pell formula is calculated be updated by the Department, and the Department has just done so. And unfortunately, that has caused some students to lose some level of financial aid, and I think it is certainly an area of concern for all of us, and we need to work on it this next Congress. The President will be presenting his 2006 budget, and I am hopeful there will be some pathways through this issue in that document.

On supplemental services, I absolutely agree with you on the hope and promise that is provided there. And I think that while in some places, it got off to a slow start, it is starting to take hold. I think we can do a much better job of notifying parents in a timely way about what their options are. I think we are seeing providers crop up around the country that are high quality. States have put in place rigorous approval processes so that they can create the authorized service provider list. I think we need to work that more and regularly together, both you as elected office holders and those

of us in the Administration, to make parents aware of those options.

I also think it is an integral part of the accountability system that it serves as an incentive for those schools that want to keep kids performing in public schools. So I think there is a real genius to the supplemental service provision in No Child Left Behind, and we need to continue to work it and enhance it, and I pledge to do that.

Last, on preschool and Head Start, as you said, we did put forth a proposal called "Good Start, Grow Smart," about a year and a half ago, and it had several elements including more offerings and more information for parents as the child's first teacher to be able to ingrain reading skills or language skills with young children. It also had a provision that would have allowed Governors to do more coordination of funding within their local preschool systems.

In Texas, we had offered preschool programs that were in the schools for 3- and 4-year-olds as far back as the mid-eighties and had contributed very significant resources. No Child Left Behind says Governors are accountable for having those kids on grade level and reading by the end of 3rd grade, and for us to say hands off everything related to Head Start does not really make sense. I think we can and should trust Governors, those Governors who have been early investors in early childhood education, those Governors who are committed to offering at least the levels of service provided in Head Start, comprehensive services like immunization and nutrition. I think those Governors ought to be trusted to take a look at what we could do in a more coordinated way to offer more access and higher-quality preschool so that we will have kids on track to enter school ready to be successful.

Senator GREGG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Gregg follows:]

STATEMENT OF SENATOR GREGG

As the 109th Congress begins, we face many important issues in the area of education. While we as a nation have made progress in improving our schools, we have much vital work yet to do. It is critical that we have at the helm of the U.S. Department of Education someone dedicated to raising standards and expanding options for all students to prepare them for success in whatever endeavors they choose.

In nominating Margaret Spellings of Texas to be the Secretary of Education, President Bush has underscored his commitment to our Nation's children. Mrs. Spellings is eminently qualified to serve as Secretary, bringing with her a wealth of experience and a great devotion to improving our schools. She currently serves as an Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, and served as then-Governor Bush's senior advisor on education, helping to build in Texas what is widely regarded as one of the strongest State systems of standards accountability in the country.

In recognition of her special passion for education, the President has noted that there is no individual he trusts more on the issue than Mrs. Spellings. However, Mrs. Spellings' dedication and expertise has earned her admiration across the political spectrum. My good friend and colleague, Senator Kennedy, has called her a

“capable, principled leader.” This bipartisan respect will certainly enhance Mrs. Spellings’ efficacy as an advocate for children within the Department and assist her in working with Congress to advance reform.

As a key architect of the policy sea change and landmark education reform known as the No Child Left Behind Act, Mrs. Spellings has helped improve education nationwide. I am proud to have worked with her on this law, which has changed the way we think about education and is already spurring improvement in student achievement among children of every background. This progress is due in no small measure to Mrs. Spellings’ vision and commitment to reform. She knows that every child can learn and every school can succeed, and as Secretary of Education she will dedicate herself to ensuring that this happens. She also believes in expanding educational options for children. She helped develop and has consistently supported the supplemental services and public school choice provisions in No Child Left Behind, and was also instrumental in the passage and implementation of the DC School Choice Incentive Act last year.

This committee will soon be engaged in the reauthorizations of a number of key laws, including the Higher Education Act, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, and in time, the No Child Left Behind Act. I look forward to working with her on these upcoming reauthorizations.

Mrs. Spellings will bring knowledge, experience, energy and integrity to her position at the Department of Education, and will carry on Secretary Paige’s fine work on behalf of our Nation’s schoolchildren. I anticipate her swift confirmation.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Reed?

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me commend you and congratulate you on your first hearing.

Let me also welcome Senator Burr and Senator Isakson and state the obvious to Margaret Spellings. You are an eminently worthy appointee. I commend the President for his nomination. My prediction is that you will get confirmed—and that is the safest bet I have had in a long time—so we can get down to some of the more difficult questions that we will face over the next several years.

Just picking up on the issue of the Pell Grant, I realize that the Department was required legislatively to reevaluate the formula based on tax burden of States, but the stark reality is that about 100,000 students lost all access to Pell Grants, and more than a million had their Pell Grants reduced. And we all sincerely recognize that higher education is becoming more and more difficult to afford for working families, and the impact of this particular change was particularly pronounced among families earning \$50,000 or less—all the people that we say quite sincerely we want to help.

What are we going to do? I mean, people now are without access to Pell Grants, and I know the President is talking about year-around programs, etc, but what do we do?

Ms. SPELLINGS. Well, as you know, unfortunately, that provision was not discretionary with the Department of Education. They were required by this Congress to update those tax tables to reflect

most accurately the income levels of families and the State tax burden that they bear.

My understanding on the burden is that, yes, it was about 90,000 or 80,000 families affected, but that the average level of the grant was about \$400. So it was not the full \$4,000 that we often think about.

And I do think that the Higher Ed reauthorization, the budget, the opportunities before us do give us a chance to address these affordability issues. I think we must do that, and we need to find ways to—obviously, you all worked to close the 9.5 percent loan loophole that was then used to provide loan forgiveness for teachers teaching in critical need areas. But I think that those are the things that we need to address in enhancing affordability, and I pledge to work with you on that.

Senator REED. Let me raise another issue on the President's budget, and that is the LEAP program, which is an incentive program to encourage the States to participate in supporting low-income students in terms of higher education. Several years ago, Senator Collins and I sort of saved that from extinction. It is a bipartisan-supported program.

I would hope also that you would support us in that regard, too, in terms of the President's budget and making sure that there are real resources there.

Ms. SPELLINGS. The President's philosophy about higher ed funding sources, or K-12 funding for that matter, is to have larger funding streams as opposed to singled-out different programs, and I think that that is what was at issue in the LEAP program, but we will certainly look at that. I will look forward to working with you on it. I am not advised as to what the 2006 budget will provide in that regard, but I look forward to working with you, Senator.

Senator REED. Good. Let me turn in the last few moments to another topic, and that is professional development of teachers. We have provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act, the IDEA, the Higher Education Act, the Perkins Act, and I would ask how you are going to try to coordinate these efforts and put more emphasis, because frankly—and this is without any analytical basis, more sort of feeling—my sense is that that is probably one of the most effective levers of improving performance, of having teachers better-prepared, more competent in their subjects. How are you going to do that?

Ms. SPELLINGS. I could not agree more with you. I think that professional development is critical to reading success, to science and math success, to graduation rates, and on and on and on. So I think the Department does have a role to play there.

I think that technology can offer some promise and some efficiencies so that we do not have States and local jurisdictions having to reinvent over and over key practices. The reading initiative, the Reading First Initiative, I think is a good example. It is about a \$1.3 billion program. We have quadrupled funding for reading here with the commitment of you all and the President, and much of that money goes to train teachers in effective reading skills based on the newest brain research. And I am confident that the reason we are getting some of these key results is because teachers

have the best information and tools possible, and that is getting results for kids.

So I absolutely agree with you, and I think it ought to be a key part of any initiative.

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Next is the subcommittee chairman for Education and Early Childhood Development, Senator Alexander.

Senator ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I look forward to working with you and with the other members of the committee and with Margaret Spellings.

Mr. Chairman, I once held the same job that President Bush hopes Margaret Spellings will hold, and at my first Cabinet meeting, I learned that not everyone in Washington thinks it is the most important job in Washington. My seat was at the end of the table, and when they gave us the security briefing, I discovered that the Secretary of Education, at least at that time, was the last to be evacuated. [Laughter.]

But I believe, as Senator Dodd said, that there is no more important job, no more important seat to hold for our country's future. As I look at our future, I see three great challenges. One is terrorism, one is preserving our common culture, and one is keeping our jobs. And in my experience, better schools, colleges, and universities means better jobs. The jobs are going to the countries with the trained workforce, and we have a real challenge ahead of us.

I believe you will be an excellent Secretary. You understand that your job is really not to be the great Education Secretary but to help the President be the great education President, which I believe he fully can be during this 8-year period.

I have two questions. I want to go back to No Child Left Behind, but I won't do that until the second round of questions. I do not want this "tin cup" image to be left hanging there, because we are being a little hard on ourselves as a Congress and hard on the President. Especially if we suggest that a Congress that over 4 years increased K through 12 spending by 40 percent at a time when most States are increasing spending by only 10 or 12 or 15 percent. The tin cup may be in Nashville or in Boston, but it has not been here.

But these are my questions. I would like to ask for your help in looking at the early education and then, as Senator Enzi said, later education. On early education, we talk about Head Start, but that is only \$6 or \$7 billion. There are 69 programs that spend all or part of their funding for children under the age of 5, not including Medicaid or any of the entitlement programs. We spend \$18 or \$21 billion on those programs, \$34 billion in our Department. And I think that working together, we could over the next year or two make sure that at least we are spending that money well.

We have an oversight function, you have a management function, and I would like to ask if you would be willing to work together on that. That is my first question.

My second question is at the other end of the spectrum. I am afraid that we are going to wake up in 10 years and have diminished our secret weapon for job growth, which I believe is higher

education. India and China are creating better colleges and universities. Visa problems are keeping many of our talented foreign students from coming in here. States are reducing their spending for colleges and universities. When I left the Governor's office in Tennessee, we were spending 50 cents of every State dollar on education. Today it is 40 cents, because of the pressure of health care costs. Funding for the physical sciences by the Federal Government is flat.

I would like for us to work together over the next few years to try to get on a trajectory that will refocus this country on the importance of our system of colleges and universities. No other country has the great research universities that we have. No other country has the National Laboratories that we have. We have figured out how to do this, and I do not want us to lose it by attrition.

So would you work with us in helping to take a broader look at the higher education functions that are spread throughout the Government? When I left the Secretary of Education post, I regretted that I had not asked the first President Bush if I could have been the point person for higher education so that it would not get, as the chairman often says, lost in different silos around the Administration. We needed to have a major focus on higher education.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Absolutely. I call early childhood and higher education the bookends of our K-12 system, and I think we have work to do in both of those areas, clearly. You mentioned the number of programs that the Department of Education manages in early childhood development. I think we have not been clear with either parents or with community-based providers or educators about what the expectations are. I think we have lacked offering them research-based materials and programs and guidance to make sure those programs are effective. And absolutely I pledge to work with you on that, because coming from a State where we were early adapters and early investors in early childhood, it is one of the things that gets the biggest payoffs, and if we are going to educate every child and have them reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade, we have got to get about the business of effective pre-K programs, no doubt about it.

On higher education, absolutely, and I do think we have a long way to go in this arena to make sure that we continue to maintain and foster and enhance the higher ed institutions that we have here today. You mentioned India and China. They are on the move, no doubt about it. And I think that parents need more comprehensible information about what higher ed offerings are available to them, at what price—how long does it take to get in and out of this school versus that school, and so on and so forth. I think we can play a role there, absolutely, and I very much look forward to working with you.

I think the fact that we have all of these reauthorizations in these subject areas before us will provide a great opportunity for us to work together on all of this.

Senator ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Alexander follows:]

STATEMENT OF SENATOR LAMAR ALEXANDER

Mr. Chairman, I once held the same job that President Bush hopes Margaret Spellings will hold. At my first Cabinet meeting, I learned that the Secretary of Education sits at the end of the Cabinet table and is the last to be evacuated in case of an emergency. In other words, by some Washington standards, it is not a very important job.

But I believe that there are few jobs in Washington more important than United States Secretary of Education. Our country is faced with three great issues. One is terrorism. One is preserving our common culture. And one is keeping our jobs in an increasingly competitive world marketplace. And nothing is more important to keeping our jobs than having a superior system of education at every level. Jobs will migrate wherever the brainpower exists. In short, better schools and colleges mean better jobs.

I believe Margaret Spellings will be an excellent Secretary because she is uniquely suited to help President Bush be an Education President. The President knows and trusts her. She has played a critical role in education policy in Texas and in domestic policy in Washington, DC. She and the President know that Washington can exhort and encourage standard-setting and provide some funding, but that the quality of our schools, colleges and universities depends primarily upon parents, faculty members, communities, State and local governments and our private sector.

During his 8 years, the President has a great opportunity to be our most important Education President. Here are my suggestions for how he and his Secretary might focus their time during this next 4 years:

I. Establish a point person within the Administration for higher education. One of my great regrets as I left the office of Secretary of Education in 1993 was that I did not ask President George H.W. Bush that I be that point person. The National Academy of Sciences estimates that half of our new jobs since World War II have come from our technological superiority. Much of that brainpower has come from 50 or so research universities and 50 major Federal research laboratories. No other country in the world has anything like this. We spent \$19 billion this past year on Federal dollars for research at these universities. The education of the greatest generation at more than 6,000 institutions of higher education has come primarily because 60 percent of those who attend colleges and universities have a Federal grant or loan that follows them to the school of their choice.

Yet I fear we are taking our higher education system for granted. Other countries, such as China, are waking up. More of their best students are staying home instead of coming to the United States. Visa problems in an age of terrorism discourage the importing of more foreign brainpower. Federal spending for the physical sciences is flat. And States are reducing their support for higher education because of increasing health care costs, among other reasons.

This Administration and this Congress should create a new focus on how to make sure that we don't wake up in 10 years and dis-

cover we have lost our secret weapon in keeping good jobs: our superior colleges, universities and research labs.

II. Find ways to involve parents in the education of their children by giving them more choices of educational opportunities. The genius of Federal policy toward higher education is that we respect the autonomy of individual institutions and allow Federal dollars to follow students to the schools of their choice. This creates opportunity, competition and diversity. Since these policies have created the best colleges, why not use them to help create the best schools?

This President, I believe, should propose that new Federal funding for elementary and secondary education should begin to follow the successful example of Federal funding for higher education and increasingly be given to parents who then spend it at the school or the educational program of their choice.

III. Make sure we are spending Federal dollars for children age 0 to 5 years as well as possible. The Federal Government spends \$18 to \$21 billion each year on 69 different programs that dedicate part of their budgets toward early education and care programs that serve children under age 5. The Department of Education administers 34 of the 69 programs. States and local government spend even more. Almost everyone agrees that the earlier children are helped, the better they learn. But now is an excellent time to examine whether we are spending well what we already spend.

IV. Make sure No Child Left Behind is funded, flexible and working before it is expanded. During the last 4 years President Bush and the Congress have increased Federal funding for K-12 education by 36 percent, while State funding in my own State of Tennessee has increased by 10.7 percent. Despite GAO and Accountability Works findings to the contrary, there are still complaints that the Federal requirements of No Child Left Behind aren't properly funded.

My own experience has been that 70 percent or even more of the consternation about NCLB among local school systems came simply from confusion about what the Federal and State governments did or didn't require. This Congress and, I believe, the Administration have a responsibility to make sure that the current requirements of No Child Left Behind are properly funded and are as flexible as possible so that teachers and principals can use their own common sense and good judgment to reach State standards.

We want to learn as much as we can from the testing already underway in grades 3-8 before authorizing an expansion of No Child Left Behind to the high school levels. A good place for the new Secretary to show good faith in this is to work quickly to implement the new State flexibility that Congress has granted States to define a "highly qualified" teacher for special education students in middle and high schools. About 100,000 teachers are required to meet this new requirement by August—and the authority to set the more flexible requirements was only signed into law last month.

V. Restore the civic mission of our public schools, especially by helping children learn American History. The late Al Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers, once said the rationale for the common school in America was "to

help immigrant children learn the 3 R's and what it means to be an American with the hope they would go home and teach their parents." It is a national embarrassment that high school seniors make lower scores on United States history than on any other subject tested by the National Assessment for Educational Progress.

Congress enacted legislation that Senator Reid and I sponsored last year to authorize summer academies for outstanding teachers and students of American history and civics. I strongly urge the Secretary to ensure that a few of these Presidential Academies for Teachers and Congressional Academies for Students are up and running in the summer of 2005. Senator Kennedy and I have sponsored legislation that will allow 10 States to compare scores on U.S. history NAEP exams in the 8th and 12th grades. The Congress and the new Secretary can work together to coordinate a variety of Federal programs designed to restore the civic purpose of our public schools. The rudiments of our common culture are our common language, English, our common history, and our common ideals, like liberty and equal opportunity, which we are constantly striving to achieve. The common school exists to help make sure each generation knows this.

I look forward to working with the President, his new Secretary and members of this committee to place the proper national spotlight on education. If confirmed, Mrs. Spellings may sit at the end of the Cabinet table and be the last to be evacuated in case of an emergency, but in my judgment there is no more important chair at the table than the one she has been nominated to sit in.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The very patient Senator Clinton.

Senator CLINTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations. I am looking forward to working with you—and also with you, Ms. Spellings. I am delighted that the President has nominated you for this important position.

I have several questions, and I would like to ask them in order, and I know we do not have the time for a lot of in-depth response, but perhaps we could get written responses that would provide some additional information.

First, though, let me thank you for your response to an earlier question about the President's commitment with respect to non-traditional students. That is something that I have worked on and have legislation that I introduced with former Senator Bob Graham, the Nontraditional Students Success Act, and I am excited to work with you on this because I think it is an area that goes to what Senator Alexander was saying. Our higher education system is not only the best in the world, it is unique because it is filled with second chances, and the community colleges are such a tremendous resource for so many people and for our Nation as a whole.

My first question goes to the provision in No Child Left Behind with respect to transfer opportunities. The Administration's regulation for carrying out public school choice says that school districts cannot use lack of capacity to deny students the option to transfer. Now, this has forced many districts to make a very difficult choice, and in New York City, which as you know tried very hard to comply with this, we have been transferring tens of thousands of stu-

dents. The result is that we now have overcrowded schools that occasionally become violent. We have a lot of difficulty getting access to the resources that the good students need, because often what is required in order to comply with the choice provision is to overcrowd a school that was actually doing quite well before it became overcrowded. It is a very specific problem for New York City, and it may be a problem elsewhere, but I would particularly like to work with you to try to find some ways to realistically deal with this, because as it stands now, many of our schools are facing some very difficult issues and do not have the resources that they would want in order for the students transferring in to get an adequate education.

Along with several of my colleagues on this committee, I have introduced legislation that would give us a start. It would prevent school districts from allowing transfers into overcrowded schools when doing so would violate health and safety regulations. The reason that is important is another provision in the No Child Left Behind Act which I authorized which asks the Department to conduct an investigation into health and learning impacts of poor environmental conditions in schools.

The report has just come out—it was a survey of all existing literature—and it is quite shocking, because what it says is that there is direct impact on children's performance in school because of poor environmental conditions—inadequate ventilation, mold, dampness, all of those problems.

So I think these two issues go hand-in-hand. We are creating some health and safety problems in some of the schools that are now being overcrowded, but we have a tremendous number of schools throughout our country that do not really present quality conditions for our children. And I would like to work with you to try to see ways that we can creatively address this. We need to continue to get more information, obviously, but it is something that I see as a continuing issue. Particularly with the rise in special education problems, there are health and environmental linkages to many of these conditions that I think we should do more to determine how to deal with.

My next concern is on title IX. I would hope that as Secretary of Education, you would continue a commitment to keep the long-standing title IX policies in place. This is an issue that is of great concern. In fact, a recent poll showed that 7 of 10 adults familiar with title IX think the law should actually be strengthened, but it certainly should be left alone. We had some issue about that in the first term of the Administration. I hope that you would commit to making sure that title IX stays in place and strongly enforced.

My next issue concerns this new data system that I have been reading about that would create a data system that would put an enormous amount of information about our children into it, and I am quite concerned about the privacy provisions connected with that. On November 29, I wrote Secretary Paige inquiring about the feasibility study on the overhaul of what is called the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. I have not received a response to that letter, but I would appreciate one as soon as possible.

Finally, two other quick points. One, on Perkins. The Perkins Program has been, like the Pell Grant Program, a tremendous assistance in helping a lot of students enter lucrative and rewarding technical careers. We marked up a bill out of this committee unanimously that asked that we maintain the current funding structure, and I would hope you would look at that.

And finally, my last question, Mr. Chairman, is on the research issues that come out of the delays in the National Assessment Governing Board, its independence, and the National Center for Education Statistics. I think it is critical that they remain independent, that they have credibility in the information they put forth. I do not expect you to answer all of these questions, but I, like so many of my colleagues, cannot stay for a second round, and I just wanted to express both my strong support for you but my concern about these issues.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you very much, Senator. Let me dive in as best I can.

With respect to NCLB transfer opportunities, I think that is a fair point, and we do need to work on the capacity issues. But also I think, now that we are several years into this, supplemental service options may be more viable for some of those parents and families as well. So, as I said to Senator Gregg a bit ago, I think we obviously need to continue work on that.

The other thing, I think, the whole reason for the service provisions obviously is to provide parents an opportunity when schools are not working, and in a place like New York City—and I know they have worked a lot on this—to make sure that the schools are working in the first place, to avoid the provisions kicking in in the first place. I think that is going on, particularly in the area of reading.

With respect to the health study, I have just learned of it. You are right, it has just come out. I know the EPA is reviewing it, and I am anxious to see what the findings are. I do agree that those are issues for schools and for families and for parents, not only in our schools but elsewhere.

With respect to title IX, as you know, Secretary Paige appointed a commission to look at that issue, and it was very bipartisan, if you will. They had hearings all over the country and so forth. And I think what they recommended was that we continue to be committed to title IX, that it is a good law, and that there are three prongs to the test to meeting compliance. One is substantial proportionality, which had been largely used by institutions, but also, a history of continuing to work on and grow programs for women as the second prong; and the third prong is ascertaining levels of interest. We have talked a lot about nontraditional students, and interest levels certainly come into play there. We are very committed to the act, to the law, but I do think there are other tools available to institutions besides strict proportionality. The Department has held some regional forums and provided information to provide best practices. Some schools, some institutions, have used the survey instruments effectively and have withstood litigation and the like. So we are committed to finding ways to more fully implement title IX.

With respect to the data system, I will certainly look into that. I am not familiar with the November 29 letter that you wrote, but I certainly will be.

On research, NAGBE and NCES, absolutely, we share your belief that they ought to be independent. I think they have worked well, and I think they are validating the good practices of No Child Left Behind and are a good, valid check on the system.

As for Perkins funding, as I said, the President's budget will be forthcoming here shortly, and it will speak to the issue of Perkins funding.

So, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Burr?

Senator BURR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your very gracious welcome to the committee and the inclusion to Senator Kennedy for his remarks.

Mr. Chairman, I find myself here today, the first day of work for myself here in the Senate, not as a member of the U.S. Senate per se, even though the title exists, but as a parent, because I think that parents have to be included in the decisions that are made about education of their children. They are certainly the ones who understand whether they have hit the threshold long before we even test. It is a mother or a father who sees the trend.

I welcome our nominee here today. It was Thomas Jefferson who said, "I am not an advocate of frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but laws and institutions must advance to keep pace with the progress of the human mind."

There are many people who would like tomorrow to be like yesterday. You said in your written statement that 67 of every 100 9th-graders graduate from high school, and only 26 of 100 complete their sophomore year of college. I think that that displays that you have a tremendous understanding of the challenge that we are faced with in the education system of our country, because given that scenario and the economic changes that have happened and the job changes that have happened, we understand how deficient a large section of the population will be, lacking the skills to compete in the job market.

So I look forward to and welcome the bipartisan support that everyone has shown to your confirmation.

Like many States, North Carolina has a growing immigrant population. Did the Bush Administration factor in that trend when setting the education goals for the next 4 years?

Ms. SPELLINGS. Yes, absolutely, Senator. You come from North Carolina, and North Carolina and Texas were some of the early pioneers in what became kind of the policy principles of No Child Left Behind, making sure that we disaggregate data, that we find out how Hispanic kids are doing, how African American kids are doing, how poor kids are doing.

And as you know, in No Child Left Behind, the law requires that States establish proficiency standards for students—those are state-set—and that all children be required to meet those over a trajectory by the 2013–14 school year.

So, yes, it was factored in. I do think it is important for us all to believe that those folks who are coming here to our country and

doing so legally and are in our schools need to be able to have the skills necessary to compete in this workforce as well, and a high-quality education is integral to that. So absolutely we take that into consideration. In a State like Texas, that is something that we have struggled with and addressed. I think we know that we have curricula reforms that are similar in the Hispanic culture and in alphabetic language as we do in reading, so I think we have made some progress in reading with Hispanic populations around the country, and I think we will continue to do so.

Senator BURR. I think most around the country see North Carolina's community college structure as a model of success, with 59 institutions strategically throughout the State, vitally important to worker retraining, to really being a staple of our State's continued economic growth. How do you see the future of community colleges in the mix of the educational changes that this country will go through?

Ms. SPELLINGS. I think they are our first line of providers for training and job retraining. I have worked at a community college before, providing professional development services, ongoing continuing education to various professional groups. The President has called for a very creative program where companies, public sector institutions like community colleges and private sector employers, guarantee employment and basically tailor a curriculum for particular individuals to go through and complete a course of study and then be employed. We are seeing a lot of that in health care around the country. We are seeing that in Tennessee, Senator; North Carolina obviously is a model for community colleges. The President has visited some down there, as I recall.

But I think they are our front-line providers. I think they can be responsive quickly. I think they tailor curricula to local employers and to local students. So I believe they are our best bet.

Senator BURR. Once again, a welcome to you and a thank you to you and to your family for the commitment to serve.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Welcome back, Senator Kennedy. We appreciate you being here.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you.

It is nice to see my old friend and colleague Senator Hatch. I do not usually see him at the far end of the table. [Laughter.]

Senator HATCH. But you like me there, I am sure.

Senator KENNEDY. Yes. We will keep you right down on that end. [Laughter.]

Thank you, and I have seen in your statement the focus and emphasis—Senator Jeffords, you were here during the time; I would be glad to yield if you want to go ahead.

Senator JEFFORDS. Thank you.

Senator Enzi, I know you are not officially the chairman yet, but I want to congratulate you for what you have done. We have worked together closely since we acme into Congress together.

I also want to welcome the new members, particularly Senator Hatch; it is good to have him back.

And now I would like to turn to Ms. Spellings, if I may. As you know, since 1965, the year the Federal Government began playing a key role in education, there has been a struggle to define that

role. What is your vision of the Federal role in balancing Federal programs with State and local efforts?

Ms. SPELLINGS. Senator, thank you for that question. I tried to speak to some of that in my opening statement. I have worked on behalf of local school boards. I have worked obviously at a Governor's office and in a State legislature and now here. So I do have some appreciation for how those various levels fit together, and I think at the Federal level, our job is to set key strategic roles, particularly around our neediest children—special ed kids, title I kids. That has been the longstanding role since the mid-sixties, as you said, of our public Federal role. And I think we must be clear about what we expect from schools and States about that, and I think we ought to align the resources around those goals and expectations. I think that No Child Left Behind is a major step forward in doing so. I think the new IDEA reauthorization is certainly part of that as well. But I think it is to see about, irrespective of geography, disability, or economic status, an educational opportunity for all children around the country.

Senator JEFFORDS. I would like to turn to higher education. In your testimony, you mentioned the reauthorizations that will come before the committee this year. When can we expect a detailed higher education proposal from the Administration? I have not seen much activity in that area.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Senator, the President has called for various things around higher education policy, including more recognition that there are many nontraditional students, that we need to free up the way that we manage financial aid, look at technology-based courses and allow financial aid to be used for those in a more robust way, allow for year-around financial aid, allow for students to be rewarded who take a rigorous course of study, and so on.

Obviously, you all are working on the fine print of the various financing systems and loan details. Obviously, the President just signed the closing of the 9.5 percent loan loophole. But he will be offering as part of his 2006 budget some key parameters around a higher ed agenda, and we look forward to working with you on that.

Senator JEFFORDS. We look forward to seeing your proposals. Thank you.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Isakson?

Senator ISAKSON. First of all, Mr. Chairman, I am delighted to be on your committee and look forward to serving with you and Senator Kennedy and the other members, and I am delighted to join the chorus—and it obviously is a chorus when you look at all the endorsements and hear this morning's statements—of Margaret Spellings as the next Secretary of Education. She has a distinguished record, and I am delighted to be a part of a committee that I am sure will confirm that appointment.

Before I ask the question that I want to ask, I do want to make a couple of comments, if not for anything, for the record. Eight-and-a-half years ago, at a time of trouble in my State at least in education, I found myself appointed in a rather emergency situation as chairman of the State Board of Education. And on a Sunday night,

I watched "60 Minutes" do a special on what was called the TASK, the Texas Assessment of Students, which was the beginning of student assessment and accountability and the reform that then Governor Bush and Ms. Spellings put in place in the State of Texas. And I remember the great questions and concerns about assessment and accountability and the predictions of doom that had made it to that broadcast.

As chairman of the State Board of Education in Georgia that was itself having great difficulty, I followed closely and began working with the State Department of Education in the State of Texas, and I want to commend you and the President, because what was predicted in that projection of doom that night on that television show actually ended up being the reverse, that inner-city minority children, rural poor children, nonEnglish-speaking children, began testing at remarkable improved rates in terms of their language arts ability, their reading ability, and their mathematics ability, which became the fundamental foundation of No Child Left Behind.

So we are very fortunate, Mr. Chairman, to have a distinguished woman who has been an advisor to a Governor and a President, who initiated what I believe is the best reform of education this country has ever done and one that the States are buying into at a remarkably successful and rapid rate.

To that brings, I guess, my comment and my question. One of my great frustrations in 28 years of elected office is that we tend to seem to want to reform education every 6 years, yet it takes 13 years for a child to go from kindergarten through the 12th grade.

I think your tenure of service in the next 4 years will be the essential ingredient or the glue, if you will, that will hold us to our commitment of leaving no child behind, giving parents more choice, giving the assessment to the teachers and the parents, and understanding that we do not have social promotion anymore in this country, but we have a country that provides opportunity for all.

So I just want you to elaborate on three words in your statement, "sensible and workable," because those three words you made about the approach toward seeing no child left behind through, I think will be the essence in dealing with the issues of assessment, special education as a disaggregated component and the effect it has had.

So would you just for our benefit talk about "sensible and workable" approach as a Secretary of Education toward those challenges?

Ms. SPELLINGS. I will be glad to, and thank you for asking me to do that.

I think we have learned some things since this act was put in place. I think educators have learned some things. I think policymakers have learned some things, and I think we ought to inform the policy that we have put in place as we go forward. I intend to listen to educators on the ground, to look at what urban districts are finding, what rural districts are finding, and see what we can do administratively, as I said, to embed the principles of this act.

No one is served, not the children and not this policy, with horror story type examples that undermine the credibility of the law and undermine service to children.

So I am going to do a lot of listening, and I am going to look at ways that we can improve our interactions with States and local communities on a whole realm of things, and we are not necessarily always going to agree about the calls that come down, but I do think we have learned some things in 4 years, and we ought to work from there.

With respect to the Texas record, thank you. I will try not to be a Texas braggadocio, but I do think that as this act becomes more mature, we are seeing educators buying into this and starting to see—and we certainly saw this in Texas—that it is working for them, that it is really in their interest to know how kids are doing and to figure out that it is in a principal's interest to see how is Curriculum A working compared to Curriculum B across town. And I think the information, the data, and this focus on each and every child is critical.

We talk a lot about special education students and limited English students, and it is thrilling for me, let me say, to know that we are having these discussions around the technicalities of how to put this law into place. Without No Child Left Behind, we would not be talking about how those kids are doing.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, ma'am.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Kennedy?

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Ms. Spellings, we have noted in particular in your opening statement about the importance of math and science emphasis, and we want to work closely with you. I think if we are going to try to deal, both for our national security and defense as well as international competition as well as our industry and innovativeness and creativity here, this is going to have to be an important priority. So we are particularly looking forward to working with you.

I have looked through your comments, and I know you have been asked a number of questions. In the area of the funding, we have talked about this very extensively, and we see the important increases particularly in the 1st year of the Administration, some modest reduction, \$90 million, in the 1st year and \$2.2 billion in the second, but then Congress responded with some increase.

I think the best way of finding out about the adequacy is going to be you traveling the country and listening and making your own assessment, talking to parents, to teachers, and to school boards as to whether we are going to make sure that all of the children—as you well remember, in that legislation, it was going to be that all children by the end of the 12 years were going to reach proficiency. And we want to make sure that we are giving that opportunity. That is always what the President said, and maybe there are other ways that we can do it, but we appreciate you recognizing, particularly in the next 2 years—yearly progress will rise in 35 States this year; for the first time, schools will be required to demonstrate a higher number of students proficient on State standards, as you know. Next year, every State has to have on line tests in grades 3 through 8, new science standards, and in nonrural areas, a highly-qualified teacher in every classroom, as has been mentioned by some of our colleagues and by our chairman, the challenge and dif-

faculties. And more schools than ever, over 100 in Michigan alone, will be reconstituted and demanding the additional resources.

So this is the reality, and we want to try to make sure that we get the job done on it. We will certainly work with you. We are mindful of the budget pressures and the rest, but I think, as we hear from all of our members, the priorities in terms of education—with 2.2 or 3 percent, whatever, of the budget on education, I think most parents would feel that of whatever taxpayers' dollars that we are spending, education probably ought to have a higher priority. We will have to wrestle with that, but I know that you are well aware of the new kinds of demands that we are placing on the schools and also the general reduction in terms of title I, to which I referred earlier.

So I welcome the fact that you are going to keep an eye out, and we are going to have a chance—I know that with Senator Dodd you responded to this, so I do not want to take up much time going through it.

On the areas of higher education and the area of retention and graduation rates in postsecondary education, I am interested in whether you think colleges ought to be held accountable for these gross disparities in retention rates, geographically, demographically, and just by groups. In particular, we have Federal funding for some of these that are going out in scholarships and others, and many universities, even some of those that have a higher concentration of sports, have exemplary records in terms of graduating their athletes; others just do not, and we have an increasing problem in this area.

I do not know if you have some ideas on it, and I know that it is not the subject of today's hearing, but have you given this some thought?

Ms. SPELLINGS. I have, Senator, and thank you for asking that. K through 12 education, as we talked about, the Federal Government provides 8 or 9 percent of the funding, but in higher education, we provide nearly $\frac{1}{3}$, including the research dollars that we allocate. So we are a major investor in higher education in this country and rightfully so.

I think what we have learned in a lot of policy areas, including and especially No Child Left Behind, is that when we provide information to parents and to policymakers, people can act on it, and I think the Department of Education can do a better job. Currently, we require lots of data from higher ed institutions. It is not necessarily presented in a very usable format for either policymakers or for parents to figure out what is the best value for me and my kid. I am literally going through this with my own child just now, who is graduating from high school this year, to figure out is it a better value if my kid gets out of "X" school in 6 years, or State U in 4, and so on and so forth.

I think parents are confused about it. There are some private commercial—U.S. News, Princeton Review, and other places—that put out data, but I am not fully confident that we really have much truth-in-advertising about what the state of the world is with respect to getting out of college.

Senator KENNEDY. We want to work with you on it, because I know this is an increasing problem.

I know my time is up, but if I could just ask one more question, Mr. Chairman.

You have referenced early education. I know that Senator Gregg has talked about tying Head Start into the K through 12, and we want to be able to achieve that. In terms of early education, a number of States are moving ahead in this area. You are familiar with Jack Shonkoff's wonderful book, "Neurons to Neighborhoods," that brings together all of the National Academy of Science's research, and it is even more compelling now, about the development of the mind of the child at a very, very early time. We understand that the first teacher is the parent, and we certainly understand and respect that, but we also understand that there are some important opportunities in this area. I know that Mrs. Bush has been very interested in it. So I would be interested if you want to make a brief comment about whether you think we might be able to make some progress in this area.

Ms. SPELLINGS. I do, and I think we must. I do not know if you were in the room at the time, but I think if we are going to be true to holding Governors and States accountable for achieving results at 3rd grade, we certainly need to make sure that kids enter school ready to be successful there. I think there are multiple programs that Senator Alexander asked me about, housed over at the Department of Education, with somewhat conflicting goals, and I do think it is an area that we can very much improve and work together on.

Senator KENNEDY. I want to thank you. I will submit some other questions, but I welcomed having had the chance in the past to work with you and talk with you prior to the hearing. We have a lot of work to do in this committee and on education, and we look forward to it.

I would just mention—I mentioned this earlier to you—if you would be good enough at different times to maybe just come up in groups, and we could talk informally as well. I think that would be very valuable. We started that with Secretary Paige, and in the last year or two, we got off-track on it, but it was enormously helpful in terms of helping us to kind of reflect on what we are getting back home and having you listen to this and help us to try to deal with some of these issues. We look forward to following up on that.

I want to thank you very much, and I thank the chair.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

At this point, you have been questioned by three former chairs of the education committee. Now you get a fourth.

Senator Hatch, welcome back to the committee.

Senator HATCH. Thank you so much, Senator Enzi, and congratulations to you. I expect you to be a great chairman of this committee. It is a very important committee.

And commiseration to Senator Kennedy for having to put up with me again after all these years, but I am very appreciative to be on this committee because it does so much good for our society.

Ms. Spellings, I welcome you to the committee. I am a strong supporter of yours. I know how competent you are and how great you are, and I just want you to know that I am sure this committee

will put you through as quickly as possible so that you can get about the work of doing what you should.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you, Senator.

Senator HATCH. I would also like to take a moment to thank our outgoing Secretary Rod Paige for his service. During his tenure, he led the implementation of a lot of major education reforms. He showed great commitment in providing our children a quality education notwithstanding their circumstances, thereby honoring the pledge to leave no child behind. And while so doing, Secretary Paige demonstrated willingness to consider certain adjustments in an effort to align the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act within the intent of the law. And we want to thank him for his service as well. I think he deserves our thanks and congratulations.

I have looked forward to this hearing, and I look forward to supporting you not only here in the committee but on the floor, as you serve in this very, very important endeavor.

I would like my full statement to be placed in the record, and let me just say that we are grateful to have your family with us today, Mary and Grace, who I understand are here today with your husband. We are grateful to have all of you here. We welcome you.

Without a doubt, being a mother is the greatest classroom in the world—that is where we really need to teach. But I attended public schools. All of our children have attended public schools, and our grandchildren are attending public schools, and I have faith in our Nation's schools.

During the past 28 years, I have been an active and strong supporter of education, and as you know, education is the hallmark of domestic issues. While I believe that our current education system ranks among the world's greatest and finest, we can still make a lot of improvements. As you know, I have been supportive of the No Child Left Behind Act. Even those who do not agree with everything in the NCLB agree that they are now focused on making sure that every child is progressing and many are using innovative approaches in tracking student achievement and motivating them to meet the new standards. Of course, this does not mean the law is perfect. We need to continue to do what is working in the NCLB but also look to see what is not.

As I travel around my own great State of Utah, there is no single issue of greater concern to us in Utah than education. We spend better than 50 percent of our budget on education in Utah, and of course, we have been in the forefront of the debate on No Child Left Behind, that particular act, because I believe we were the first State to make moves toward possibly opting out. I do not want to see us do that. That was due in part to concerns about retaining State control and objections to Federal mandates without sufficient funding.

I would just like to ask basically one question, or maybe just a couple here. How do you anticipate addressing the concerns that have been raised with the No Child Left Behind Act, like in my home State of Utah, and would you be willing to visit our State of Utah and help address these issues so that we can make sure that our State benefits from that bill?

Ms. SPELLINGS. Absolutely, and I am committed to do that. Obviously, this is a theme here. You all have a lot of concern, as do I, about how this law is working and being implemented in your local communities and in your schools, and absolutely I am committed to listen, to obviously stay true to the principles that we all agree to of leaving no child behind, of proficiency within a period of time, disaggregation of data, regular assessment—but none of us wants to tip the boat over, if you will, with these horror story types of examples. We in the Administration are committed to make this law workable and stable, and I look forward to coming to Utah and hearing what your folks have to say.

Senator HATCH. Well, thank you so much. I want you to know how much I support you, and I hope that I can be of great help to you up here on Capitol Hill.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you, Senator.

Senator HATCH. Nice to have you here and your family.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Hatch follows:]

STATEMENT OF SENATOR HATCH

Thank you for being here today, Ms. Spellings. I have been impressed by the President's complete confidence in you and your ability to serve our Nation and its most valuable asset, our children, as our top educator.

I would like to take a moment to note outgoing Secretary Roderick Paige's service. During his tenure, he led the implementation of major education reforms. He showed great commitment to providing our children a quality education, notwithstanding their circumstances, thereby honoring the pledge to leave no child behind. While so doing, Secretary Paige demonstrated willingness to consider certain adjustments in an effort to align the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act with the intent of the law. We thank him for his service.

Know that I am a strong supporter of education and have been pleased to play an active role in every piece of education reform legislation that has come before the Congress in the past 28 years. I attended public schools, as did my children and now my grandchildren, and I have faith in our Nation's schools.

While your credentials and experience are very impressive, none is greater than your role as a mother and primary educator of your two daughters, Mary and Grace (who are here today with your husband, Robert). Without a doubt, the home is the greatest classroom.

We are aware of your background of service in Texas as chief education advisor to then-Governor George W. Bush. I have been pleased to work with you during the past 4 years in your capacity as the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy.

As you know, education is the hallmark of domestic issues. While I believe our Nation's education system ranks among the finest in the world, we can still make improvements. I believe funding for schools is very important, and I have consistently supported Federal funding to assist our Nation's teachers, schools, and students. I will continue to support programs to enrich and improve our school system.

I have been supportive of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), signed into law by President Bush on January 8, 2002. Even those who don't agree with everything in NCLB agree that they are now focused on making sure every child is progressing, and they are using innovative approaches to tracking student achievement and motivating them to meet the new standards.

Take Granite School District in Salt Lake City, Utah, for example. This is an inner-city school district with a large majority of students in low-income, non-English-speaking families. Granite used funds from NCLB to purchase a student tracking database that shows how each child is doing in each subject with every teacher. They know who needs the extra help and in what areas. They are enlisting the support of parents, teachers, and the community to make sure that these kids get the help they need. And they are having great results. Test scores are up. Honor roll is up. Parents are more satisfied. Students are taking pride in their education. And, that's what NCLB is all about.

But this does not mean the law is perfect. We need to fund it better, and too many schools do not make Annual Yearly Progress or AYP because they just do not understand what is required, or misinterpreted the law. I think it is going to take some time to adjust. We need to continue to do what is working in NCLB and look at what is not.

Make no mistake, I am a strong advocate for local control of education and want to make sure that there is sufficient flexibility for our States. I trust that the Department of Education will keep open lines of communication with the States and localities as we work together to ensure that truly no child is left behind.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Harkin?

Senator HARKIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and first of all, let me congratulate you on assuming the chairmanship of this great committee. I look forward to working with you.

I welcome our new members and also want to pay my respects again to Senator Hatch and our former chairman, Senator Gregg, and our ranking member, Senator Kennedy, who has been unerringly supportive of all of the matters that come before this committee.

I want to again congratulate you, Ms. Spellings, on your selection to be Secretary of Education, and I look forward to working with you in that capacity.

I would just say that for as long as you are going to know me in terms of our association in this committee, you will think that I am a broken record, because I will continue to say over and over and over again: Please do not talk to me about No Child Left Behind unless you also talk to me about kids with disabilities.

The one reason I supported No Child Left Behind—I worked with you and President Bush and others on this committee at that time—was because of my long history working on issues pertaining to disability rights in this country.

We know the long, sad history of what has happened to kids with disabilities in our educational system—the segregation, the denial of any kind of support, the shunning off into State schools for this and for that, the lack of any real involvement with kids with disabilities in education.

Well, we have come a long way, we truly have, in a bipartisan—not one party or the other—but we have come a long way. The one thing that appealed to me about No Child Left Behind was that if we really mean it, this was our opportunity to put the force and power of our entire country behind finally making sure that kids with disabilities get their rightful place in our public education in this country.

So you mentioned—I was not here for your opening statement, and I apologize; we all have other committees that we are paying attention to this morning—but I read your statement, and you mentioned disability in your statement, about not discriminating and about making sure that they are part of No Child Left Behind. But if we are going to do that—and believe me, I have followed this now—you mentioned about 3 years coming up now—I have followed this, and there is a great deal of apprehension on the part of parents of kids with disabilities in our communities that what is happening is that kids with disabilities are not getting the same kind of residual support so that they fit into the rubric or under the umbrella of No Child Left Behind as nondisabled kids.

Now, here is what I mean by that. In order for a kid with a disability to have a quality education and to not be left behind, certain things have to pertain to that child. There have to be better assessments. We have to assess these kids.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Absolutely.

Senator HARKIN. I do not think we are doing a good enough job of that right now, and that means that a kid with a disability gets put in one direction that that kid should not be in because they did not get a good up-front assessment and periodic reassessments.

The second thing is accommodations and making sure that kids with disabilities have the kinds of accommodations that they need in the classroom and in the school so that they too can progress; supplemental services that kids with disabilities need. If we are going to have remedial programs for schools and kids that are not meeting the AYP, what about the kids with disabilities? They are going to need supplemental services, too, whether it is tutoring or after school programs or whatever it is. But that is not really thought about. It may be thought about, but I am not sure it is being pushed very hard, and I think there is probably one reason for it.

A lot of us say that money is not all the answer in education, and we know that. But when it comes to kids with disabilities, it is a big part of the answer. It costs money. You know as well as I do that an up-front investment in early childhood, first of all, in intervention services when a child is born with a disability, early childhood intervention services, early educational help for a child with a disability will save us billions later on. We know that—aside from the quality of life that that individual will have when he or she grows to adulthood.

The IEP teams that are mandated in IDEA for kids with disabilities—how do we get them educated on assessments and supplemental services and accommodations so that they know how to fashion an IEP for a kid? To me, that is missing when we talk about No Child Left Behind.

So again I mention these because there is a big universe out there in education. We talk about higher education, and we talk about other things, and we are all involved and all that. But I have one laser beam, and that is what I am going to focus on, so I will be a broken record on it time and time again. Whether you come here or whomever you send up or when we are talking about the legislation, if we are going to continue with No Child Left Behind—and I supported it because of this—we had better make sure that IDEA fits in and meshes with No Child Left Behind, that all the things we talk about for a kid without a disability, we had better be talking about it with kids with disabilities. And bottom line—how do we pay for it? Our school boards out there in Iowa—and I am sure in other States that I visited—are ready to tear their hair out, because if they are really going to meet this requirement, it is going to cost money, resources, especially for kids with disabilities. And I do not believe—this is just my own philosophy—I do not believe that we as a nation should simply dump upon a local school district the requirement that they have to come up with every penny—something, yes, but not every penny—to ensure that a child with a disability in that school district gets all of the help and support that they need to make No Child Left Behind work. This ought to be a national commitment that we have.

So, Ms. Spellings, I look forward to your thoughts on that, on how we can improve the assessments. Again, a lot of these kids do not do well on tests. They do not have the capability, they do not have the knowledge. They have not been given the early childhood support that we know is so necessary. So that some kids enter school a little bit behind, but kids with disabilities more often than not are way behind.

So in all those areas of accommodations, assessments, supplemental services, the IEP teams, meshing IDEA with No Child Left Behind and resources, again, your thoughts on that and how you view making sure that we do not leave children with disabilities behind.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Senator, thank you very much.

I too share your concern for these kids, and I think that while we obviously do not want school boards pulling their hair out, I do think some of that hair-pulling is for the first time focusing on these kids. We do have a way to go with them, and particularly with respect to measurement systems. And you are right, the Federal Government ought to foster some of these best practices, and we should learn from them. But we are in the early, early stages of figuring out how best to do this with some of these kids, and there are some leaders—Kentucky, Massachusetts, Kansas are starting to pioneer some of this early assessment so that we can provide those opportunities for these kids—but I have to say that without No Child Left Behind, I am not 100 percent sure that that would be going on.

So I think we are making progress. You all obviously took a very big step when you just reauthorized IDEA and aligned it very closely with the principles of No Child Left Behind. There is a quick deadline on the rulemaking provisions that are there, and I am going to work hard to meet those so that we can be clear with our guidance and do it in a timely way so that we can at least have

sound and clear and consistent guidance across our education system.

I do think IEP teams need to know more about what resources are available, what options are available, and what the State of the art is, if you will, with respect to curriculum and assessment. And I think we have a lot of work to do, and I pledge to work with you on that. I know this is a bipartisan issue, absolutely, as you said, and we are in the early stages on some of this stuff, but at least we are in the stages on some of this stuff, and without No Child Left Behind, I am not sure we would be.

Senator HARKIN. I appreciate that.

Thank you very much, Ms. Spellings.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Sessions?

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is an honor to serve with you on this committee, and congratulations on your chairmanship. There is no one in the Senate I admire more, who works harder, who understands the real role out there in the States where teachers and schools are operating. You have great decency and commitment to America, so it is a pleasure to serve with you.

Ms. Spellings, congratulations on your nomination. I have talked with you at some length, and I know how excited you are about this challenge. You are just itching to get it, and I think you are going to do a great job.

I would like to just discuss one issue or focus on one thought that I have. I taught 1 year. My wife taught a number of years in public schools. The teacher's job is more difficult than people realize. If children come to school who have not been encouraged at home, if they have stayed up all night watching some movie on TV and sleep through class, no matter how decent and determined that teacher is, it is hard to reach those children. So we have some difficult challenges out there in education, and I would first like to say let us not blame the teachers too much. They have a difficult challenge.

Second, as part of that, Alabama has developed what we refer to as the Reading Initiative. Other States have a similar reading initiative in which a host of studies of reading that have been done that are authoritative have been analyzed, and the principles that came out of those studies that are demonstrated scientifically to improve a child's ability to read have been put in this program. I have traveled my State and talked to a lot of teachers who are using this new technique throughout their schools, and the first thing I would say is they all like it in every school that I have been in. They have not resisted. They are sold on it, and they are telling me that children learn to read better.

Now, it is my observation that you can build new schools, you can at a certain point reduce classroom size, you can raise teacher pay, you can have more activities in the school, but I am not sure that learning is certain to go up. Sometimes it does, sometimes there is no increase in learning.

But from what I can understand with this initiative, reading scores go up. It takes several weeks of training for the teachers,

maybe some new textbooks, and that is about it as far as cost. As the children go through 12 years of a system that is based on that, we hope there will be even bigger numbers.

The State is also working on a scientifically-based program to teach science called the Science Initiative.

It seems to me that one thing that the Department of Education could do is to study these programs and make sure that some person who just got elected to the school board in Alabama or Texas or wherever has access readily to programs that work so they can ask their principals and superintendents why aren't we doing this, and the examination of these programs show progress or lack of it.

I guess what I am saying is that to me, that would be the number one, foremost role of the Department of Education, is to examine programs around the country to see which ones are working and make sure that information is getting down to the schools.

What are your thoughts on that?

Ms. SPELLINGS. I could not agree more with you, and that is why we have quadrupled funding for the Reading First Initiative, which was based on the work the science, the brain research that came out of the National Institute of Child Health and Development.

When I talked about the role of the Federal Government, this is absolutely it. We have a strong and rich research base that informs these reading practices. I think there are two effective things in educating kids—a great curriculum that works and a great teacher—and I think we have frankly avoided some of this curriculum or left it unattended for too long. I think we are starting to make some good progress in reading. We are going to have the NAEP reading test next year, and I am confident that we are going to see some gains because of these investments, because of the teacher training, and most important, because of the research base that these things are built on.

I think we need to do the same thing for math and science and some of these other areas, as you said. That is an appropriate role for the Department, for the National Institute of Education Science. So I look forward to looking into those things and to fostering these best practices around the country, because we do not need to have every teacher trying to reinvent it every day, when the cure for cancer, if you will, is available and on the shelf.

So thank you.

Senator SESSIONS. I thank you for that, and I think you should be relentlessly looking for techniques in teaching and education that help students learn better. I believe we can do a better job of that.

I would just close with this. You mentioned curriculum. There is a small town in Alabama near the Mississippi line, Winfield, a wonderful community, but it has no particular industry or special universities or anything. Their test scores are at the top of the State of Alabama every year. I visited there and I asked the superintendent, who had been there for many, many years—actually, I ended up talking to one of his new principals, and I asked, “Why? How are you able to do this?” He said the superintendent meets every morning with his principals, and we discuss curriculum, what we are teaching and how we are teaching it.

So I hope that you will focus on that. You and I have talked about it. I think you have a grasp of that important issue.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you. I believe we have a nominee who has had great experience in education from the inside as well as a perspective from the outside, and mostly, a real desire and commitment to get about this job. I am excited for you.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I would now ask unanimous consent that members be allowed to submit statements for the record and that the record would stay open for questions that can be submitted and answered. Is there any objection?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Senator Kennedy and I have been discussing how it would be possible to have a vote to get this out of committee. We have reserved the President's Room for 12:15 today. At 12:30, we begin the opening of the electoral ballots, so that would be the time when people would be congregating over in the chambers to go on over for the opening of the electoral votes. So I would ask everyone to go to the President's Room at 12:15—let us make it 12:20, just to give everybody a little more time—and if everybody will show up at 12:20, we can have a quick vote on it, subject of course to the questions being answered, and that way, on the day of the Inauguration, we can have the floor vote on this nomination.

I want to thank Ms. Spellings for her attendance here today and her outstanding job of answering questions. That is as much enthusiasm and knowledge as I have seen displayed at any hearing for a nominee that I have ever attended. I do look forward to working with you and my colleagues here to make education in America even stronger.

Ms. SPELLINGS. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN. With that, this meeting is adjourned.

We will be convening at 12:20.

[Additional material follows.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKULSKI

Welcome, Ms. Spellings. You have an impressive record working to improve education in this country and I respect your reputation as a reformer and someone who believes in accountability. I agree that each and every child has the skills and qualities necessary to realize the American Dream. Our schools must keep their promise to all our children. It is our responsibility to help both those children and the schools to make sure they have the resources they need to succeed.

I'm a former social worker so I strongly believe in giving people the tools they need to practice self-help. To do that, every child must have access to the opportunity ladder, and the most important rung on that ladder is education. We must make sure we have a public school system that works. That means focusing on achievement and accountability. But to do that, schools need resources from the Federal Government.

For higher education, community colleges are the gateway to the future both for first time students looking for an affordable college education and for mid-career students looking to get ahead in the workplace. Their low cost, convenient location, and open door admissions policy have made them the key to the American dream for so many. As college tuition at 4-year colleges continues to rise, more and more students are turning to community colleges for the education they need to prepare for 21st century jobs from nurses to computer techies, and even lab techs for new industries, like biotechnology.

Yet soon we may not be able to count on our community colleges being available to everyone. They're growing faster than 4-year colleges. Enrollment at Maryland's community colleges is expected to grow 30 percent in the next 10 years, while 4-year colleges will grow by 15 percent. The combination of budget cuts and increased enrollments is forcing community colleges to make tough choices between raising tuition and turning students away. Now, more than ever, it's important to invest not only in our public schools but in our community colleges so they can continue to be affordable and accessible.

I think you are a good choice for our next Secretary of Education and I look forward to working with you on these issues and many others so that each American receives the education they deserve.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF SENATOR ENZI BY MARGARET SPELLINGS

Question 1. Federal education policy has often focused on the needs of urban, high-poverty schools. Accordingly, rural educators are placed in the difficult position of having to implement Federal requirements that were not designed to meet their needs. How will you ensure that the needs of rural educators are met?

Answer 1. I am committed to ensuring that every child, whether in an urban or rural school, receives a high-quality education, and I look forward to working with you to ensure that rural schools have the tools they need to ensure that this goal is met. In April 2003, the Department of Education (ED) established the Rural Education Task Force. The Task Force coordinates the efforts within the entire department concerning rural education's needs and issues. Examples of ED's efforts to respond to rural educators concerns were demonstrated with the additional flexibility granted to small and rural schools in the areas of Highly Qualified Teachers, English as a Second Language students, and allowing a smaller sample size.

Furthermore, outreach to rural educators will increase with the recent establishment within the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) of the Center on Rural Education. The Center will bring attention to the challenges and issues that face rural schools, while also examining what role community colleges can play in meeting the needs of high school students and working adults. Also, the National Research and Development Center on Rural Education was recently established at the University of North Carolina under a 10 million dollar 5-year grant from ED.

Question 2. The President's budget for the past several years has requested additional funding to help offset costs incurred by the Federal direct loan program. When the program was established it was expected to have significant savings over the course of several years. It is my understanding that these savings have never materialized. To date, what savings has the Federal direct loan program generated on a cash flow basis?

Answer 2. A preliminary analysis of the Department's cash records shows that, since its inception in 1994 through 2004, the Federal Direct Loan Program has net cash inflows of \$2.3 billion on loan disbursements of almost \$146 billion. This net cash inflow is the sum of almost \$70 billion in net operating cash outflows and \$72 billion in Treasury financing inflow activity. The table below shows the cash flows. These cash flows are not the same as subsidy estimates under the Credit Reform Act. Costs and savings of Federal loan programs are usually calculated on a net present value basis that look at the life-time cash flows of the loans made in any 1 year.

	Total Cash Activity in Millions
Loan Disbursements to Borrowers	\$145,605
Borrower Interest Payments	(11,462)
Borrower Principal Payments	(60,394)
Borrower Origination Fees	(3,262)
Net Default Collections	(1,060)
Contract Collection Costs	285
Payment of Origination Services	180
 Net Operating Cash Flows, Direct Loans	 69,892
 Loan Capital Borrowings from Treasury	 (150,139)
Net Interest Payments to Treasury	27,480
Principal Payments to Treasury	50,503
 Net Treasury Activity	 (72,156)
Net Cash Flows, Direct Loans	(2,264)

Question 3. The National Native American, Alaskan and Hawaiian Educational Development Center in Sheridan is one of a number of programs receiving funds through the Fund for the Improvement of Education. As you know, this program has had remarkable success in improving student achievement, and recently, that Center has begun an effort to expand its training programs to reach more communities. Please comment on the quality and the operation of the program and any changes that could be made to improve the program and its expansion efforts.

Answer 3. The St. Labre Native American Professional Development Center in Sheridan, Wyoming, was awarded a 1-year fiscal year 2004 earmark grant under the Fund for the Improvement of Education in the amount of \$497,050. The Center was awarded the grant to "expand a program to train teachers serving Native American students in an early literacy learning and math framework." In fiscal year 2005, the National Native American Professional Development Center Foundation in Sheridan, Wyoming, was awarded a second earmark grant for \$100,000 for similar activities. Working in partnership with the Center to gain a greater understanding of the overall work of the Center, the Department hopes to ensure this program carries out the work of No Child Left Behind by providing accountability for results, research-based instruction, and increased flexibility for schools. I look forward to working with you to make projects like this deliver results and improve student outcomes.

Question 4. Technology and distance learning are important tools for helping schools to meet the goals and requirements of No Child Left Behind. How do you envision the Department of Education helping schools to adopt effective technologies

for the instruction, testing, accountability, supplemental services, and other areas to improve and facilitate student achievement?

Answer 4. The Department of Education is helping schools by providing a framework for improving student achievement by focusing on technologies for instruction, assessment, accountability, supplemental services and other areas to empower a transformation in education. Recently, the Department's Office of Educational Technology published the National Educational Technology Plan 2004, titled, *Toward A New Golden Age in American Education: How the Internet, the Law and Today's Students Are Revolutionizing Expectations*. This national long-range technology plan is based on a nationwide assessment of the continuing and future needs of the Nation's schools in effectively using technology to improve student learning. The plan outlines seven key areas for action: (1) Strengthen leadership; (2) Consider innovative budgeting; (3) Improve teacher training; (4) Support e-learning and virtual schools; (5) Encourage broadband access; (6) Move toward digital content; and (7) Integrate data systems.

The Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology is conducting the Nation's first annual survey tracking online learning trends in K–12 schools. The survey will help to identify the number of students enrolled in online courses, the grades and subjects in which online learning is being offered, what technologies are used, and what type of institution provides the courses. The Department is also working with States, districts and e-learning providers to help accommodate e-learning opportunities in their policies and regulations. We will continue to explore ways the Federal Government can assist schools—especially in rural areas—improve education through technological breakthroughs in embedded assessments, curriculum delivery, and data management.

In addition, the Department has created the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative to give teachers clear information about NCLB, high-quality professional development, and access to the latest research through e-learning courses on the web. I will continue to support these initiatives.

Question 5. Studies have shown that afterschool programs provide lasting, positive effects for our Nation's children and our society. The advancement of such programs is most effective when government partners with the private sector. For example, the JCPenney Afterschool is a longstanding example of such a public/private partnership. Please comment on what the Department of Education has done to promote these programs and what do you believe can be done by the Department to foster more partnerships between public and private entities like these?

Answer 5. Central to the success of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program is an unprecedented public/private partnership between the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (Mott Foundation). The ED-Mott Foundation partnership was founded on two related concerns: that unsupervised children will have better outcomes if provided meaningful learning experiences in the afternoon hours, and that communities get no value out of an empty school building. By creating an extended multiyear agenda addressing both organizations' primary concerns, the partnership has provided thousands of children with quality afterschool opportunities. I am committed to continuing this partnership.

National organizations also have had a role in the ongoing operation of the partnership agreement. The National Governors' Association, the National Council of State Legislators, the National League of Cities, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals are working toward expanding afterschool programming through the 21st Century authority and State and local funding streams.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF SENATOR HATCH BY MARGARET SPELLINGS

Question 1. As I travel around the great State of Utah, there is no single issue area of greater concern than education. As you know, Utah has been in the forefront of the debate on the No Child Left Behind Act and was the first State to make moves toward possibly opting out, due in part to concerns about retaining State control and objections to Federal mandates without sufficient funding. Ms. Spellings, how do you anticipate addressing concerns States have with No Child Left Behind and would you be willing to visit Utah and meet with educators and legislators?

Answer 1. Over the coming months I look forward to speaking with educators, legislators, and all other interested parties, both in Utah and the other 49 States, about their concerns with NCLB. I will be happy to work with States and local school districts to make NCLB work on the ground, within the parameters of the

law. And as I indicated at the hearing last week, I look forward to a future visit to Utah to begin this important conversation.

Question 2. An important principle that we must take great care to safeguard is that of federalism, that is, that the Federal Government must only legislate where there is a compelling national interest and allow the States to govern for themselves. That being said, what is your personal philosophy with regard to federalism and the funding of education?

Answer 2. The education of our Nation's children is unquestionably a State and local responsibility. The Federal Government plays, and must only play, a supporting role in this endeavor, especially in helping disadvantaged and low-income students receive a quality education. However, it is appropriate for the Federal Government to demand high expectations and results from our Nation's schools in exchange for the investment of Federal dollars. In return, the Federal Government can and should assist States in the funding of their State and local systems to ensure that no child is left behind. Federal resources can and should be used to assist States and local schools in educating children who are disadvantaged, and to assist them in meeting their Constitutional obligations to educate children with disabilities.

Question 3. I would like to call to your attention another matter involving the calculation of title I and efforts to prevent using recent child poverty data from being used. If the 10-year census, rather than the annual method is used, there will be an unfair distribution of title I funds, and Utah is listed as the ninth most affected State. For example, in fiscal year 2004, Utah would have lost nearly \$2.5 million of title I funds. I have been a long-time advocate for equity, and most recently joined some of my colleagues in letters to the Department of Education and this committee stressing the importance of using the annual data to ensure that title I funding be distributed to school districts with the greatest number of poor children. Are you aware of this aspect of title I funding and what do you think can be done to ensure it is fairly addressed?

Answer 3. It is critically important that title I resources go to schools with the highest needs in terms of educating low-income students. The law clearly requires the use of annually updated LEA poverty estimates in allocating title I funds. The Administration has consistently followed the law and will continue to do so. It is entirely appropriate for Federal dollars to follow the neediest students.

Question 4. It is my understanding that of the 10 States that have received their highly qualified teacher (HQT) monitoring visits from the Department of Education, so far four of them, including Utah, have been informed verbally that their elementary teacher definition of highly qualified is not in compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act. That would mean that the vast majority of elementary teachers are being told that they are no longer highly qualified. What kind of technical assistance did the Department of Education provide to States prior to submitting their HQT plans? Now that teachers are only a year away from having to be highly qualified, what process do States have to appeal the Department's findings that their definition is not in compliance? What is the purpose of State licensing or credentialing or even putting together an HQT plan if the Department of Education is not going to give States flexibility in determining whether teachers are highly qualified?

Answer 4. The Department has worked diligently, through distribution of three versions of nonregulatory guidance, tool kits for States and teachers explaining the highly qualified teacher requirements, and conversations with State officials in all 50 States through the Teacher Assistance Corps, to ensure that State and local officials and teachers understand the highly qualified teacher requirements of NCLB. In each communication, the Department emphasized that the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) defines a "highly qualified elementary school teacher" who is new to the profession as one who holds at least a bachelor's degree, full State certification or licensure as defined by each State, and has demonstrated subject knowledge and teaching skills by passing a rigorous State test. Veteran teachers, who are the majority of teachers within States, have the option to demonstrate subject matter competency through the high objective uniform State standard of evaluation (HOUSSE). Each State has the responsibility to ensure they have the procedures and systems in place to allow teachers to meet the requirements. States such as Montana have chosen not to offer their veteran teachers a HOUSSE and other States have chosen not to offer teachers tests of subject knowledge and teaching skills. The Department will continue to work with States to ensure this law works and that includes a highly qualified teacher in every classroom.

Question 5. Ms. Spellings, we've often heard complaints about the lack of Special Education funding to the States. I think I've heard that under this Administration there have been record amounts of funding requested, and that in the past 4 years, Utah alone has received 60 percent more funding. Is that right?

While this is commendable, special education funding falls short of the 40 percent Federal commitment and is still less than 20 percent. This issue is extremely important. Parents and teachers talk to me all the time about deficiencies in the level of funding, particularly when the law says full funding. I recognize that there are competing budgetary priorities, but this is important to me and to families. Do you anticipate that the Administration will support efforts to put special education on the pathway to full funding?

Answer 5. Yes, this President has requested four record-level increases of \$1 billion per year since 2001 for the Special Education Grants to States program and Congress has enacted increases that represent 73 percent more funding (or \$41 million more) for Utah since the President entered office. I expect the Administration to continue to support increased funding for special education, while taking into account and appropriately addressing other important education priorities.

Question 6. And on the subject of special education, there have been valid concerns raised that the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) conflicts with No Child Left Behind, in principle and application, and States are unable to comply with both. What are your thoughts on separating IDEA from NCLB?

Answer 6. NCLB and IDEA work hand in hand. The recent reauthorization of IDEA recognized this and took steps to align the two acts. Both are based on four basic principles: stronger accountability for results; increased flexibility and local control; expanded options for parents; and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work. The IDEA focuses on providing the necessary special education services and supports at the individual level, while NCLB holds schools and States accountable for the learning of *all* students at the systemic level.

Rather than separating the IDEA from NCLB, Congress made the wise decision to align State programs for students with disabilities under the IDEA with the accountability requirements of NCLB. Advocates for children with disabilities and their families widely support alignment because, for the first time, schools are now thinking about children with disabilities as part of their overall learning programs, rather than separating disabled children from the regular educational programs. This is a strong step forward to fully integrating all children in their schools and communities.

Both NCLB and the newly reauthorized IDEA emphasize the academic achievement of students with disabilities and ensure that special education teachers are highly qualified so that students with disabilities have the same opportunities to reach their potential as their nondisabled peers. This can only happen if we hold schools and States accountable and provide them with the resources they need.

Question 7. Are you familiar with the Department of Education's eLanguage Learning System or ELLS? While it seems to me that Chinese students learning English is a very worthy goal, it is a market that is already well-served by the private sector, in particular by American companies. Ms. Spellings, what is your view on the Department of Education using taxpayer dollars to compete with our own private sector when Congress has made it fairly clear that it does not support the ELLS program?

Answer 7. The U.S.-China E-Language Learning System Project (ELLS) is designed to determine the effectiveness of an Internet-based program of second-language instruction for middle-school students through the use of animation, gaming techniques and voice recognition.

This project is a research-and-development effort that was never intended to compete with the private sector. Consistent with the sentiment expressed by the Senate, the Department of Education will not expend any fiscal year 2005 funds on this project.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF SENATOR ROBERTS BY MARGARET SPELLINGS

Question 1. We all recognize that ensuring success in college does not begin in college; the earlier support and guidance are provided to students, the more likely students are to successfully complete college. Can you tell me if you view programs, such as TRIO, as important to providing this early academic support and guidance to middle school and high school students, and how these programs can be strengthened to serve more students?

Answer 1. President Bush is very concerned about our Nation's high school students, which is why he proposed a new High School Intervention Initiative that will

prepare our high school students for the future. His education proposals would help ensure that every high school student graduates with the skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education and in a globally competitive workforce. President Bush believes that States should have more flexibility to use funds to best meet the needs of their students, as long as they are also ensuring results.

Question 2. How do you view the Department of Education, including the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), working with the Department of Labor to assure that individuals with disabilities can get the services and supports they need to engage in competitive employment?

Answer 2. The President's New Freedom Initiative sets employment as one of its primary objectives and demands interagency collaboration to achieve those objectives. The employment of capable, qualified people with disabilities is aligned with business interests as well as the President's initiatives that the Department of Labor has responsibility for: High-growth Job Initiative and measures to speed economic recovery. The activities of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) can be better integrated with the Department of Labor's One-stop system at the local level to respond quickly to immediate and future employer needs. I support doing so.

Question 3. What steps or initiatives should the Department of Education support to help employers overcome concerns or misconceptions to promote an increase in employment for persons with disabilities?

Answer 3. We need to actively engage the private sector as critical partners. Under my leadership, the Department's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) will improve its accountability and focus investments in proven models to address employer concerns and misconceptions. I plan to build the capacity of State and Federal vocational rehabilitation programs to network and work directly with employers to assist them in ways that are most helpful as identified through research: making accommodations, applying for tax credits, providing appropriate training and on-the-job support. We must also ensure that State and local training providers are held accountable for effective training of all those looking for employment—including people with disabilities.

Question 4. Would you consider reviewing and revising the Rehabilitation Act to allow businesses, that have as their mission the employment of individuals with disabilities, to be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation referrals if they do not carry a sub-minimum wage certificate, provide health and retirement benefits to their employees, and employ some disabled individuals in supervisory positions?

Answer 4. As a Federal Agency leading employment research, training and job placement of people with disabilities in the country, the Department of Education must maintain the highest expectations for people with disabilities. My goal is to help people with disabilities attain their full employment potential in integrated settings. I am open to consider reviewing and revising policies to promote the full integration and employment of people with disabilities, particularly in small business environments.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF SENATOR KENNEDY BY MARGARET SPELLINGS

K-12 EDUCATION AND NCLB

Question 1. What will you do to ensure the DC voucher program is appropriately and fairly assessed for its effectiveness? Will the Department of Education issue any monitoring report about the effectiveness of the DC voucher program? What information can the committee expect to receive about this pilot program?

Answer 1. Pursuant to Congress's call for an independent evaluation of the program, the Institute for Education Sciences has contracted the evaluation of this program with WestEd and Georgetown University. The evaluators are required, by law, to offer Congress annual reports of the program's progress. The first such report is due in the next few weeks.

The Department is working scrupulously to ensure that the evaluation of the DC School Choice Incentive Program is conducted rigorously and in accord with the highest standards of research design. The independent evaluation will rigorously examine the following issues, as stipulated in the statute:

- The academic achievement of scholarship students (compared to that of students who remain in DC public schools, including those who apply for scholarships but do not receive them);

- The retention, dropout, and college admissions rates of participating students (again in comparison with other DC students);
- The success of the program in expanding educational options for parents;
- The reasons why parents choose to have their children participate in the program;
- The impact of the program on students and public schools in the District; and
- The safety of the schools attended by scholarship students, compared to other schools.

As required by the law creating the DC choice program, I will submit to Congress annual interim reports on the progress and preliminary results of the program's evaluation, as well as a final report on the evaluation's results. Also, I will annually submit to Congress a report detailing the findings of reports submitted to the Department by the program administrator (the Washington Scholarship Fund). In its reports to the Department, the program administrator is required by statute to describe in detail the activities carried out with funds under the program as well as the achievement of the program including the following: the academic achievement of students participating in the program; the graduation and college admission rates of students who participate in the program, where appropriate; and parental satisfaction with the program.

Question 2. It has become recently evident that the unintended implications of No Child Left Behind have included unwanted cutbacks of music, history, the humanities, and other subjects. What are your views on this trend? Do you support the role of arts in education and its utility in helping close the achievement gap? As Secretary of Education, what do you plan to do to correct this problem of narrowing these critical subjects from the school curriculum?

Answer 2. As NCLB is implemented, news reports have offered stories that this reform is eliminating arts, PE, social studies, and other enrichment activities. The Department does not advocate these responses and is providing technical assistance to districts and schools to keep well-rounded curriculum options. The critical mission of schools remains of ensuring that students can read and write and add and subtract, but this can be done in a way that does not eliminate other subjects from the curriculum. Many schools are continuing to integrate all subjects into their school day, and the Department will continue to highlight best practices to ensure that schools do not eliminate subjects.

Question 3. Targeting extra academic help and support to children in low-performing schools is key to closing the achievement gap. No Child Left Behind requires schools that have failed adequate yearly progress for 3 or more years to offer supplemental education services to their students.

The No Child Left Behind Act expressly requires compliance with civil rights laws for all supplemental service providers, thereby prohibiting discrimination in services. However, the Department's guidance of August 2003 on this issue does not require that *all* supplemental service providers serve children with disabilities or limited English proficient students.

Given that students with disabilities and limited English proficient students are often most in need of extra attention and help, how do you reconcile this discrepancy in the implementation of the law? What will you do in your tenure to ensure that such students receive equitable services from supplemental service providers and are not discriminated against?

Answer 3. The current guidance makes clear that all States and districts must ensure that eligible students with disabilities and students covered under section 504 are able to participate in supplemental services, and providers may not discriminate against such students. Additionally, States and districts must ensure that eligible students with limited English proficiency receive supplemental services and language assistance in the provision of such services.

States are working hard to approve a range of high-quality providers who can serve special populations of students; each month, the number of providers approved around the country increases. However, in some communities, there may not be private providers that have the necessary skills and resources to provide a quality program to students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. In these instances, the school district is charged with providing services to these students, and the district must make every effort to ensure that its services are of high quality and meet the provider standards set by the State. This ensures that students are not discriminated against in the provision of supplemental services.

The Department will continue to offer resources and encouragement to States to help them approve providers who can serve all populations of students. Additionally, we will highlight those providers who can serve special populations, as a model of

what providers can do, and provide outreach to organizations that are not currently providers, but would be especially well suited to provide supplemental services to special populations.

Question 4. At the time of No Child Left Behind's passage, there was broad bipartisan consensus to ensure a high level of quality among supplemental service providers, and to align those services to classroom instruction. As you are aware, the law tasks States with applying such criteria to their selection of eligible supplemental service providers.

The Department's regulations, however, prohibit States from allowing a school district to provide supplemental education services, if such district has failed adequate yearly progress for 2 or more consecutive years. As you know, no such policy was established in the No Child Left Behind statute. Just last month, the Department pursued and enforced this policy in the State of Illinois, restricting yet again their authority to develop and establish high quality criteria for allowing school districts to continue to provide supplemental services.

What is the Department's rationale for such a policy? Does the Department deem every school district in need of improvement incapable of providing quality supplemental services, irrespective of the particular subject or focus of improvement in the district? Will you consider future revisions to such a policy?

Answer 4. The Department continues to support the policy that districts that have been identified for improvement or corrective action cannot serve as a supplemental service provider. The Department included this provision in its regulations because districts that have been identified for improvement or corrective action have not reached their State's interim adequate yearly progress goals for at least 2 consecutive years. These districts have to bring about major improvements in their operations and outcomes, and should not be distracted from that objective by simultaneously operating supplemental services.

Some districts, like some schools in need of improvement, may have less work to do than others in meeting their academic performance goals. However, the Department believes that these districts should still focus their attention on educating students to high standards during the school day, rather than divide their attention between providing school-day instruction and supplemental services.

Like I stated at my hearing, I am committed to listening to States, school districts, and schools to make this law workable and sensible.

Question 5. The number of schools that have not made adequate yearly progress under NCLB for more than 4 years is going up. A lot of these schools are wrongly in this category of NCLB accountability; they wouldn't be in this final stage of restructuring if the Department retroactively applied its regulatory changes of a year ago.

Would you be willing to consider making those regulatory changes—on special education, limited English proficiency, and test participation—retroactive? And for those schools that *truly* have not made AYP for 4 years or more, how can the U.S. Department of Education help States and districts turn around these schools?

Answer 5. Federal statutes and regulations are only applied prospectively unless there is clear Congressional intent and language to apply such policies retroactively. Allowing for the retroactive application of the policies related to the assessment of, and accountability for, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and LEP students would result in no practical difference than by not allowing it, but would result in great confusion in the field about what rules applied when and how. It is inappropriate to go back and recalculate each time the Department or a State readjusted its rules or its State accountability plan. We will continue to provide assistance to States so that schools will have research-based curricula and improvement strategies, and I will commit to listening to how this is playing out in States and school districts across the country and ensuring that this policy is workable and sensible.

Question 6. The No Child Left Behind Act requires all teachers to be highly qualified by the end of the 2005–06 school year. The law also clearly provides several options for veteran teachers to meet these requirements through the high, objective, uniform State standard of evaluation (HOUSSE). Some States have still not provided the HOUSSE option to their teachers, and other States have only recently implemented it. That delay obviously impacts the ability of some teachers to meet NCLB's deadline.

Answer 6. Most States are on-track to meet the 2005–06 deadline. Forty States have adopted HOUSSE procedures for their teachers, and 4 States are requiring all teachers to pass rigorous content tests as a condition of certification. Some States have put their teachers at a disadvantage by not acting sooner; however, there is

still time for every teacher to meet the deadline, and the Department of Education is providing resources through the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative to support States' efforts. We will be contacting each State where our monitoring indicates deficiencies and work with those States to address these deficiencies to ensure that every student is taught by a highly qualified teacher.

Question 7. What is the Department doing to address the implementation of the HOUSSSE? Does the Department intend to require those States that have not yet implemented this standard to do so? What consequences do States, districts and teachers face if the highly qualified goal is not met by the 2005–06 school year? As Secretary, what specific actions would you support in concert with States and local school districts to improve teacher quality, especially in school districts serving high concentrations of poor students?

Answer 7. Improving teacher quality for all students is essential to achieving the vision of No Child Left Behind. It is especially important to ensure poor and minority students are taught by effective teachers. I stand with President Bush in supporting the Teacher Incentive Fund, giving States extra resources to provide monetary incentives for high quality teachers to teach in the schools that need them the most and reward schools and teachers that are eliminating the achievement gap.

NCLB gives States the option of allowing their experienced teachers to demonstrate subject matter competency through a high objective uniform State standard of evaluation or HOUSSSE. While the law does not require States to implement HOUSSSE, and the Department favors granting flexibility where available, the Department can not require States to develop HOUSSSE for its teachers, but it will continue to urge them to do so. We applaud States which take the rigorous approach of testing all teachers as they move toward meeting the goal of all teachers meeting the highly qualified teacher requirements by the end of the 2005–2006 school year.

Question 8. Recently, the U.S. Department of Education has commenced reviews of States' compliance with the highly qualified teacher definition under the No Child Left Behind Act. The Department previously told States that it would not formally approve their highly qualified definitions. Now, 3 years after enactment of the law, Department officials are now informing some States that their teacher quality plans and definitions are not in compliance with No Child Left Behind. This has understandably lead to some confusion and frustration in the States such as North Dakota, which have alleged that they were previously told by U.S. Department of Education officials that they were in compliance with the law. Can you please tell us as Secretary what you will do to ensure a better process that does not result in confusion and miscommunication between your Department and State Departments of Education?

Answer 8. The Department is in the process of monitoring State compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act, particularly in regards to the highly qualified teacher provisions and the use of title II funds for improving teacher quality. The Department has always been clear that the law does not require a formal review and approval process for State definitions of "highly qualified," as it does for State accountability systems, yet the minimum requirements of the law must be met. The Department will work diligently to remind States of their obligation to implement all parts of the law regardless of whether they are required to submit plans for review and approval.

Question 9. As Secretary, how do you plan to improve the Administration and implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, to focus less on punitive aspects and more on supporting schools' efforts to increase learning among children? As Secretary, do you anticipate issuing any new or additional guidance and regulations in response to many of the implementation concerns and problems that have been identified across the Nation?

Answer 9. Since the passage of NCLB, the Department has had extensive and unprecedented interactions with the States, districts, schools and teachers, and has discussed with every State its unique education system and needs, and continues to do so. After NCLB was enacted, at the Department's invitation and expense, delegations from 47 States came to the Nation's capital to individually meet with senior Department leadership. Other examples of outreach include the following:

- The Department recruited and trained 50 teachers, principals, district officials, representatives from higher education, and national policy experts to serve as members of the Teacher Assistance Corps (TAC). The TAC has rendered direct support and technical assistance to nearly every State in meeting the challenges of the highly qualified teacher provisions of the law and visited every State.

- The Office of English Language Acquisition has conducted 52 video teleconferences and 35 onsite visits with the States to provide in-depth technical assistance. This effort facilitated the development and implementation of the integrated systems of standards and assessments, required by Title III of NCLB.

- The Department has created a toll-free number for local superintendents to call when they have questions about NCLB implementation in their local educational agency.

- Organizations such as the Council of Chief State School Officers and the Council of the Great City Schools are working with the Department to provide assistance to States and districts.

- Extensive technical assistance has been made available to States, districts and schools as they develop and implement their Reading First programs. The Department has awarded a multimillion dollar contract to establish the National Center for Reading First Technical Assistance.

- Since January 2004, the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative has conducted roundtable discussions with 300 teachers, distributed email updates to 19,000, conducted fall and summer workshops for 1,800, honored 60 American Stars in Teaching, and launched eLearning (online professional development) with 44,000 hits to the Web site.

I will continue such outreach activities and commence additional activities in the coming months. As I stated at my hearing, if through such activities, meetings, and interactions, I learn of areas of concerns for which additional guidance and technical assistance is necessary, new guidance will be created or current guidance updated. I pledge to work with States and school districts to ensure that the law works well on the ground.

Question 10. The Administration's interpretation of the graduation rate accountability provisions under the No Child Left Behind Act raises serious concerns. In the past, the Department has ruled that graduation rates need not be disaggregated by race, income, disability, and limited English proficiency to determine adequate yearly progress. Further, it allows States broad flexibility in defining graduation rates, and to be considered to be making adequate yearly progress, it allows States to make virtually no improvement in graduation rates. At the same time, a dropout crisis faces the youth of our Nation. According to a recent study by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard and the Urban Institute, only 50 percent of Black students and 53 percent of Latino students graduate from high school 4 years after beginning 9th grade. A superficial enforcement of the graduation rate accountability provisions under the No Child Left Behind Act will do nothing to stem this trend. What will you do as Secretary to ensure strengthened accountability for graduation rates?

Answer 10. To ensure that schools do not make AYP simply because students have dropped out of school, States must include the graduation rate in their definitions of AYP for high schools. I agree that States should hold high schools accountable for the number of students who graduate from high school and that States should use graduation rate calculations that are as accurate as possible. In fact, the President has called for ensuring that every student graduates from high school with the skills and knowledge *needed to succeed in college or the workforce*.

Prior to NCLB, many States did not collect and calculate graduation rate data taking into account either regular diplomas or the standard number of years to graduate and/or did not collect graduation rate data for all the subgroups of students required by NCLB. Prior to having their State accountability plans approved by the Department, any State not currently able to calculate a graduation rate that meets all the requirements of NCLB had to demonstrate how it would alter its data collection systems in order to calculate the graduation rate for all subgroups of students in the coming 4 years.

NCLB allows States to choose the graduation rate targets that they use in making AYP determinations. States can either require schools to show growth, or to meet an absolute target. However, in order for the graduation rate to be a meaningful indicator of academic achievement, the measure must be accurate. In December 2003, the Department awarded a contract to the National Institute of Statistical Sciences to convene a group of experts to review the methods for reporting high school dropouts and on-time graduates. The expert review has recently reviewed existing rates and the data that underlie them, examined the concerns that have been raised about existing measures, and has made recommendations for improving data collection and estimation procedures that the Department is now considering.

I pledge to continue working with States to ensure graduation rates are accurate and meaningful.

Question 11. The use of native-language instruction for some limited English proficient students is a tool that is supported by research to be effective in teaching children academic English. Do you believe that schools have the flexibility under No Child Left Behind's English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act, Reading First, and Early Reading First, to use native-language instruction as one instructional approach? Would the Department require schools to use only an English immersion approach under your helm?

Answer 11. States and their districts and schools have great flexibility in using NCLB dollars to support language proficiency programs that best meet the needs of their students. Nevertheless, NCLB does require that language instruction programs supported by Federal funds be based on scientifically based research and have a demonstrated record of effectiveness in increasing English language proficiency and student academic achievement in the core academic subjects. The Department does not and would not require schools to use only an English immersion approach.

Question 12. The No Child Left Behind Act allows States to use native-language assessments to measure the academic progress of limited English proficient students. Few States, however, are using native-language assessments, even though they would provide schools with more accurate information about the progress of limited English proficient students than would English-language assessments. Do you believe that English-language assessments are appropriate tools for measuring those students' reading, math, or science skills? What are your views on the No Child Left Behind Act's requirements to implement proper and workable accommodations for limited English proficient students? Beyond additional research, what would you propose the U.S. Department of Education do to help States develop native-language assessments that are aligned to their academic achievement standards?

Answer 12. NCLB requires that LEP students be provided reasonable accommodations on State assessments, including to the extent practicable, native language assessments. States must take many factors into consideration when considering whether or not native-language assessments will improve the validity and reliability of assessments for LEP students. For example, native-language assessments may not be valid and reliable for LEP students who are not literate in their native language, who speak a dialect different than that in which the assessment is written, or who receive their daily instruction in English. Currently, NCLB supports the development of better accommodations and the development of native-language assessments through section 6111 funds. To date under NCLB, all 50 States have been provided with a total of over \$1.5 billion in Federal funds for the development, improvement, and implementation of State assessments. I will continue to work with States to ensure they have developed appropriate assessments for their students.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Question 1. One thing that our committee agrees on is the importance of having a good teacher in every classroom. In the No Child Left Behind Act, we established criteria for a highly qualified teacher and this Congress will take a fresh look at how the Federal Government can assist in the preparation, recruitment, mentoring and professional development of teachers. We know that we still have real challenges in getting—and keeping—the best teachers in schools that face the most challenges. What are your ideas on how we strengthen Title II in the Higher Education Reauthorization to support the goal of making every teacher a highly qualified teacher?

Answer 1. There are several things we can do. First, we need to make training teachers an institutional priority—we need to involve university presidents in the discussion about improving the collaboration between schools of education and schools of arts and sciences and we need to encourage them to adopt models that work. Second, we need to have our teacher quality partnership programs follow their graduates into the classroom and assess their success based on the academic achievement of their students. Third, we should support faculty exchanges so that college faculty actually spend time in the classroom in the local school in order to understand the challenges facing our new teachers. Finally, we need to ensure that our colleges and universities train prospective teachers in research-based methods.

Question 2. More and more colleges are raising a lot of money for student aid by entering into deals with the banks. The colleges lend bank provided money to their graduate students and then immediately sell their graduate student loans back to the banks at a profit (so called "school-as-lender" deals). Some colleges have put their "school-as-lender" business out to bid, thereby generating even more revenue

from the banks that can then be passed on to students. Do you think this type of competitive practice is something that should be curtailed or expanded?

Answer 2. The school-as-lender issue is something the Department has been reviewing and this issue was recently the subject of a GAO review. From 1970 through 2004, we have had only 65 or so institutions out of more than 6,000 total actually make loans to their students. This program had not been a priority for Department oversight in the past. However, the Department has stepped up its oversight and has not discovered any fraud or mismanagement on the part of the institutions that choose to operate lending programs. The main concern at the Department is ensuring that schools properly manage their programs and invest their earnings in other student assistance in accordance with the requirements of the HEA. At this moment, with only 65 institutions making loans and with no troubling audit findings, I do not know if there is reason to curtail the program but I will certainly look into it, and HEA reauthorization gives us an opportunity to do this.

Question 3. During these tough economic times, many small institutions—particularly minority-serving institutions and community colleges—really struggle to keep costs down and maintain and expand academic programs in math, science and engineering. What efforts can be made to help these schools graduate more students who are prepared to compete in these challenging fields?

Answer 3. This Administration already has started to help address this situation through programs at the Department of Labor. The President's High Growth Job Training Initiative is a strategic effort to prepare workers for new and increasing job opportunities in high growth/high demand and economically vital industries and sectors of the American economy. The initiative provides national leadership for a demand driven workforce system. Funds are provided to strategic partnerships between public workforce systems, business and industry representatives, and education and training providers, such as community colleges. In addition, under Title III of the Higher Education Act, minority serving institutions and community colleges are eligible for grant funds to be used for expanding academic programs.

To ensure that America's graduates have the training they need to compete for the best jobs of the 21st century, President Bush will also propose establishing a new public-private partnership to provide \$100 million in grants to Pell-eligible, low-income students who study math or science in college. Under this plan, approximately 20,000 low-income students would receive up to \$5,000 each to study math or science.

Question 4. According to Secretary Paige's November 18th response to my initial August 2004 inquiry on the 9.5 percent loan issue, the Department of Education has not passed judgment on the propriety of past, *increased* 9.5 percent lender payments, some of which may never have been legally claimed in the first place. There is about \$3 billion at stake. Will you make resolving this legal question one of your first management priorities? Irrespective of the loans already made, can we agree that no lender should be guaranteed a minimum 9.5 percent rate of return on any student loan newly issued from now on, unless of course if interest rates spike to double today's level?

Answer 4. The Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act of 2004, which was supported by Congress and the Administration, addressed the 9.5 percent loan loophole for 1 year. With the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act this year, we now have an opportunity to fully address this issue, and look forward to working with you on it.

I understand that the program review staff at FSA ensures the appropriateness of 799 Interest and Special Allowance Billings (799 Billing) and payments in two ways. First, FSA verifies the billing codes included on the 799 Billing and then FSA calculates the proper special allowance to be paid. If this first review identifies errors on the 799 Billing, the entire form is rejected and a corrected 799 Billing is requested. Second, FSA conducts onsite program reviews of the loan records to verify tax-exempt status to ensure that the Department has been properly billed. Both of these review activities have been performed for this category of loans since 1996. These FSA review activities are performed in addition to the audits conducted by CPA firms, as required under 34 CFR 682.305.

In recent program reviews of tax-exempt lenders, no illegalities have been found by Department staff. However, we will continue to monitor all special allowance billings and ensure that lenders are properly billing the government.

With respect to new loans, there will continue to be new loans that receive the 9.5 percent minimum special allowance for sometime into the future under current law. These loans will be made from preexisting bond obligations that allowed for the 9.5 percent minimum. Over time, these loans will cease to exist as bond obligations are retired and the special tax-exempt billing issue will end.

Question 5. With nearly 30 percent of all college students taking remedial classes, it's clear that we must do more to strengthen the high school pipeline and get kids thinking about college early, and provide them with needed supports once they are in college. Proven programs like Talent Search, Upward Bound, Gear Up, and TRIO have helped thousands of young people prepare for college, understand the application process, choose the right school for them and graduate. What are your plans for these programs?

Answer 5. President Bush is very concerned about our Nation's high school students, which is why he proposed a new High School Intervention Initiative that will prepare our high school students for the future. His education proposals would help ensure that every high school student graduates with the skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education and in a globally competitive workforce. President Bush believes that States should have more flexibility to use funds to best meet the needs of their students, as long as they are also ensuring results.

Question 6. The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act provides a critical opportunity to make this important legislation an engine for workforce training and productivity. In order to do this, emphasis must be placed on helping students shoulder the economic burden of college attendance costs. In addition, the picture of a "typical" college student is in much need of revision. In fact, the "traditional" college student is now in the minority. In the 1999–2000 school year, 73 percent of undergraduates were considered in some way "nontraditional," meaning they were not among those who received a high school diploma and then immediately enrolled in college full time, relied on their parents for financial support, and did not work during the school year.¹ Generally, how do you think HEA reauthorization should be approached to address the unique challenges of increasing access for a nontraditional student population? More specifically, how might you improve Pell Grants to address this issue?

Answer 6. With regard to Pell Grants, the President will propose in his fiscal year 2006 budget request to eliminate the Pell Grant shortfall and increase the maximum award by \$100 each year for the next 5 years. In addition to increasing Pell Grant awards, the most helpful change for nontraditional students will be allowing for year-round awards. These students are more likely to attend on a year-round basis in order to complete their programs as expeditiously as possible so we need to make sure they receive sufficient student aid to cover the summer session.

For many nontraditional students, one problem is actually getting to a college campus. For that reason, we should be doing away with rules that limit student's ability to take courses on-line. The single mother who needs to work during the day and be at home in the evening should be able to take courses after the children are in bed and she can do that if the Federal Government stops restricting her access to these programs.

IDEA

Question 1a. There are many significant changes in the new IDEA legislation that President Bush signed on December 3 that affect parents and teachers. Some of the new requirements—such as the "highly qualified special education teacher" definition—go into effect immediately. How will you communicate these new requirements to parents, teachers and school districts in a timely way that is understandable to them?

Answer 1a. There are several levels of communication currently in place that allow for this knowledge dissemination. The Department works closely with Chief State School Officers, State Directors of Education and State Directors of Special Education in all Department initiatives and when new legislation is passed. The Department has plans for senior officials to present at major conferences of interest to both special education professionals and professionals whose main area of interest is in the general education domain. The Department also invests in Technical Assistance and Dissemination centers whose work scope specifically addresses knowledge dissemination and training on the specific requirements of IDEA. The Department will be providing technical assistance materials on the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) Web site that are targeted to meet the specific needs of all stakeholder groups, such as parents and teachers, and reflect specific changes in the new IDEA legislation, such as the "highly qualified teacher" definition. The Department has long-standing relationships with professional organizations that provide information and continuing education to teachers and related services providers. And finally, IDEA continues to require the funding

¹National Center for Education Statistics, 1999–2000.

of Parent Training and Information Centers across the country, which have been instrumental in providing information on the requirements of IDEA and evidence-based practices to parents of children with disabilities.

Question 1b. Given that most States currently face critical shortages of qualified special education teachers, how will the Department develop partnerships with universities and States to ensure that the “highly qualified” standard does not exacerbate these shortages?

Answer 1b. The Department has strong relationships with States as well as with public and private colleges and universities. The Department is committed to facilitating conversations between colleges and universities and States to develop collaborative partnerships and strategies for recruiting and retaining special education teachers. States need to let their institutions of higher education know what their teaching personnel needs are and the higher education institutions need to be responsive to their needs. The Department will continue to support investments in grants to training programs designed to train special education teachers for both high incidence and low incidence populations that are responsive to the needs of children with disabilities.

Question 1c. Since States now have the option of allowing individuals to become highly qualified special education teachers via an examination, how will the Department work with States to ensure such tests result in “high quality” special education teachers capable of delivering a free appropriate public education to every student with a disability?

Answer 1c. The Department will encourage partnerships in public and private colleges and universities to work with State education officials in determining what special education teachers need to know and be able to do to support students to meet high standards. Most States have adopted content-specific examinations for general education teachers. The Department will continue to provide technical assistance to States in developing alternate routes to certification. The Department has many investments in leadership development for special educators, focusing on developing professionals who can provide evidence-based instruction.

Question 2. Historically, the needs of students with significant intellectual disabilities have not been met by IDEA. In the last few years we have seen that teachers and school systems are not prepared to administer the alternate assessments required by IDEA in 1997 and again by the No Child Left Behind Act.

The new IDEA legislation requires the Secretary to undertake a study to determine how States are implementing the alternate assessment requirements, the status of their validity and reliability and their alignment to alternative achievement standards. How would you envision designing this study and ensuring that the results get in the hands of those who need them?

Answer 2. We are making progress in designing assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, but we still have a long way to go to ensure that these students are assessed in ways that demonstrate what they know and can do. Nothing is more critical to ensuring children with disabilities are not left behind. I support the investment in this study, which will provide valuable information that can be used to develop valid and reliable alternate assessments. I look forward to working with the Department’s experts in the Institute for Education Sciences and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services to design a scientifically-based study. The Department’s outreach and technical assistance centers will play a key role in ensuring that the results of this study are available and accessible to all interested parties.

Question 3. For too many years the Department of Education has not had the tools to enforce IDEA. This reauthorization gave the Department more tools and a mandate to develop benchmarks for compliance with each State. How will the Department work with States to develop indicators by which to particularly measure the delivery of FAPE and the delivery of transition services from school to post-secondary life?

Answer 3. The Department currently monitors States on key performance indicators. This new requirement builds on the monitoring, assessment, and data collection systems that are already in place in States. This requirement is consistent with the Department’s focus on results and not just paperwork compliance. Over the past 4 years, the Department has reduced significantly the focus on process compliance monitoring and now asks States and schools to show results of how well children perform in school. I will work with the Department’s technical assistance network to ensure that quality technical assistance is provided to States to develop valid and

measurable indicators that will help them better serve children with disabilities and their families.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Question. At the recent high school summit sponsored by the Department of Education, many of the speakers talked about the valuable role that career technical education plays in high school reform. In light of these discussions on high school reform, how would you preserve and promote the unique role that career and technical education plays in providing a relevant educational experience that also leads to increased academic achievement and improved employment outcomes for youth and adults?

Answer. On January 12, President Bush announced a new \$1.5 billion High School Intervention and Assessment initiative. Of this amount, \$1.2 billion will be used to help States and districts provide effective interventions for those students who are not learning at grade level. In return for a commitment to improve academic achievement and graduation rates for secondary school students, States will receive the flexibility to choose which programs will be most effective in serving the needs of their high school students. As high schools pursue innovative approaches to helping students achieve high academic standards, many are discovering that well-crafted career and technical education programs can have a positive impact on student achievement.

Nevertheless, we are concerned that funding that is too segmented at the school level leads to free-standing interventions that are not well integrated, do not always address the most pressing needs in the school, and result in opportunities for true innovation being missed. To make the taxpayer dollar work smarter, the President is proposing that programs with a narrow focus and programs that have not proven effective in improving our secondary students' academic achievement be consolidated.

EDUCATION RESEARCH

Question 1. Every bill that we've written in the last 4 years has called for the use of scientifically based research. Application of scientifically based programs is the foundation of the President's education reforms, yet Federal support for education research, development, and dissemination remains inadequate for meeting the requirements for research based programs. What plans do you have to dramatically expand the Federal education research program in keeping with research demands created by NCLB? How can we do a better job of aligning research with practice and disseminating research to superintendents, principals and teachers?

Answer 1. Our plans for expanding the Federal education research program depend on the appropriation of funds by Congress. Each year since enactment of No Child Left Behind, Congress has appropriated from 10 percent to 20 percent less for research than the Administration requested. Nonetheless, the Institute of Education Sciences has expanded both the quantity and quality of research being supported by the Department of Education, paying particular attention to the demands created by No Child Left Behind and the needs of superintendents, principals, and teachers for strategies and solutions to the education problems they face. The Institute has done an excellent job of aligning its research programs with practice. For example, its research programs in reading, math and science, teacher quality, and preschool curriculum, and its evaluation of Reading First, are models of good research. The Institute has also moved aggressively to improve dissemination of research results. The What Works Clearinghouse was established and is providing practitioners, policymakers, and the public with information about the effectiveness of particular education programs and strategies, by focusing on the quality of the scientific evidence supporting those programs. This is the kind of information that will help practitioners and policymakers make the decisions they face on a regular basis. We must continue this work and aggressively pursue research in effective strategies to teach math and science.

Question 2. There has been a discernable delay in release of NCES publications following the reauthorization of the research and statistics programs assigning some review responsibilities to the Director of the Institute of Education Sciences rather than NCES. Many feel that the second level of review in the Director's office is responsible for the delay in release of data. For example, NCES's study of early childhood education (*Children Born in 2001: First Results from the Base Year of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B)*), has been released in only tabular form (2004) while the report itself remains in the Director's office

under review. What plans do you have to address the situation and to get statistical reports to the public in a more timely fashion?

Answer 2. No report on the ECLS-B has been received by the Director's office for review. The average period of time for the review of reports that have been sent to the office of the Director of the Institute of Education Sciences is 12 days from receipt to disposition. This review period has improved since the passage of the Education Sciences Reform Act, as has the technical quality of the reports. Further improvements in the timeliness of releasing reports are desirable and being pursued by reducing inefficiencies and enhancing tracking procedures with respect to that portion of technical review and revision that occurs within NCES.

CIVIL RIGHTS

Question. The Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights receives thousands of discrimination complaints every year, but it's impossible for Members of Congress or the public to readily track the issues raised in those complaints or even the laws on which they're based. In fiscal year 2002, OCR initiated only 11 compliance reviews under any of the statutes it enforces—the lowest number it had undertaken since 1989.

I'm concerned that the law is not being enforced consistently or proactively. **Only** the Federal Government—not private individuals—can enforce title VI regulations prohibiting discrimination based on race or national origin, and it's a serious problem if OCR is not vigorous in its enforcement.

If you're confirmed what will you do to ensure adequate enforcement of the anti-discrimination laws? Will you commit to putting clear information on the Department's enforcement of anti-discrimination laws in the Department's publications and on-line resources so that Congress and the public can keep track of these important matters?

Answer. The Department vigorously enforces civil rights laws and regulations under its jurisdiction, and will continue to do so if I am confirmed. The Department currently makes available to the public information about OCR's enforcement of the laws in its annual reports to Congress.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF SENATOR DODD BY MARGARET SPELLINGS

K-12 EDUCATION

NCLB Funding

Question 1. Based on new State funding data released last month by the Department, $\frac{1}{3}$ of States will receive less funding for NCLB programs this year than last. In light of the fact that the 2005–06 school year includes major deadlines and expansion of requirements—including the deadline for all paraprofessional and teachers to be highly qualified—what are your views on the need to provide States additional resources so that they can successfully meet the many NCLB requirements? Do you believe that the funding levels in NCLB are adequate to achieve full compliance with the law?

Answer 1. President Bush has a proven record of providing significant funding increases for elementary and secondary education. Federal spending on education is at the highest levels in history, and every State has received an increase in title I funding since the enactment of NCLB. Under the recently passed 2005 appropriations legislation, NCLB spending will have increased by 40 percent since the President took office. In addition, unlike previous reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the testing required under the law is fully paid for with Federal funds. A report published in the Spring 2004 edition of the policy journal *Education Next* by two Massachusetts officials (State board of education chairman James Peyser and chief economist Robert Costrell) concluded the increased Federal aid States are receiving as a result of NCLB covers the costs of the additional reforms required. Additional studies from Accountability Works in 2002 and GAO in 2003 make clear that any other additional costs from the act are more than outweighed by increased appropriations since that time. As Secretary, I will continue to fight for more funding for public education and continue President Bush's record in this area.

NCLB Implementation

Question 2. The most recent projections show that almost 20,000 schools have not made "adequate yearly progress" this school year, with 11,000 already designated as in need of improvement. Several States, such as my home State of Connecticut, have done projections that indicate that virtually all schools over time will fail to make AYP. Do you believe there are aspects of NCLB's AYP definition that could

be modified to ensure a more accurate reflection of school success or schools in trouble? Do you believe that test scores alone are a fair measure of a school's success?

Answer 2. Schools and educators across the country are rising to the challenge and ensuring that all students are held to and achieving high standards, and I am confident that they will continue to do so.

Prior to the passage of NCLB, critics predicted that almost immediately vast numbers of schools would not make AYP. This has not been the case. On the contrary, based on achievement data from the 2003–04 school year, 31 of 39 States, for which data are available, showed an increase in the number of schools making AYP over the previous year.

Further, a report released in March 2004 concludes urban schools are making considerable progress in elevating student achievement, and NCLB is helping to drive those scores. The report, released by the Council of Great City Schools shows students in the Nation's major urban schools have posted substantial gains in statewide math and reading assessments since NCLB was enacted. Additionally, an October 2004 report by the Education Trust showed that States are narrowing achievement gaps and raising achievement for all students. Of the 24 States with at least 3 years' worth of comparable State assessment data, math achievement has improved in 23 States since 2002. Of the 23 States that had at least 3 years of reading data, achievement increased in 15. The Education Trust also found the African American-White gap to have narrowed in 16 States in reading and 17 States in math. The Latino-White gap narrowed in 14 States in reading and 16 in math. I expect these efforts to continue and am confident that the hard-working educators around the country will continue to improve student learning.

AYP is not solely a test-score-based measurement system. In addition to achieving the state-determined target for reading arts and math proficiency, to make AY a school must also meet the State's criteria for an additional academic indicator. States have great flexibility in the choosing of these additional academic indicators as evidenced by the variety of the States. Examples of additional academic indicators include attendance rate, enrollment in advanced course-work, and retention rates.

Question 3. Two years ago, a bipartisan commitment to quality afterschool programs was included in the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. If funded at the level promised, 2.8 million children would be served by afterschool. Due to consistent underfunding of the program, we have served, at most, only 1.4 million children each year since the law was passed. Studies tell us that students who regularly attend quality afterschool programs have better grades and conduct in school, better peer relations and emotional adjustment, and lower incidences of drug-use, violence and pregnancy. Clearly, afterschool programs can be a vital link in a child's overall development. How would you characterize your support for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program? Are you committed to fully funding afterschool as authorized under No Child Left Behind?

Answer 3. I am committed to providing high-quality afterschool opportunities to students. However, evaluations of the 21st Century Program by the Institute of Education Sciences have shown that the large Federal investment in after-school programs has had little positive effect on students' academic achievement, feelings of safety, and behavior. Much of the work of the Department of Education in this area has been focused on improving the quality of afterschool programs by developing model after-school programs in reading and math based on scientifically based research and rigorous testing of their effectiveness, improving the availability of research-based practices, and expanding technical assistance at the State and local levels that focuses on improving student academic achievement. I look forward to continuing and expanding this important work.

Question 4. I am concerned that the Administration has paid too little attention to assessment quality. Low quality assessments are less valid and reliable measures of what students know and can do. If accountability is to be accurate and fair, improving the quality of measurement is critical.

Further, low quality assessments make it more likely that teachers will focus on test preparation and coaching rather than on substantive learning, thus undermining the goals of NCLB. Will you make ensuring test quality a high priority in your Administration? How will you assist States in putting quality assessments in place? What specifically will you do to ensure that assessments currently used meet quality guidelines included in the act?

Answer 4. While the Federal Government has provided the funding for new assessments, it is each State's responsibility for the development of their own standards and assessments, and this Administration is strongly committed to maintain-

ing the States' roles in developing and administering their own assessment systems. However, the Department will continue to place an emphasis on assessment quality. In April 2004, the Department released Standards and Assessments Peer Review Guidance: Information and Examples for Meeting Requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. The Department has conducted training for States, assessment developers, and other interested parties on the elements by which State assessment systems under NCLB will be evaluated and judged. Among many of the elements detailed in this guidance, particular attention is given to ensuring that State assessments are aligned to content and achievement standards and to ensuring that the assessments are of high technical quality (validity and reliability). In February 2005, the Department will begin its peer reviews of State assessment systems. The Department has and will continue to encourage States to bring forward their assessment systems for review as early as possible prior to the 2005–06 deadline for NCLB assessments so that States can receive feedback from peers on areas for improvement. Finally, through the NCLB State assessment grants (sections 6111 and 6112), States have to date received over \$1.5 billion for the development, improvement, and Administration of their State assessment systems. I intend to especially focus efforts on helping States improve assessments for students with disabilities. Ensuring these students meet higher standards requires improved measurements in this area.

IDEA

Question 5. What priority do you place on fully funding IDEA? What steps will you take to attain the 40 percent funding goal?

Answer 5. President Bush has proposed record-level increases for special education—a \$1 billion increase each year for 4 years. Funding would have increased \$4.7 billion or 75 percent since 2001 if the President's request for 2005 had been approved. As you know, Congress did not appropriate the amount authorized for the 1st year of the path authorized in the IDEA reauthorization legislation. Under the revised IDEA bill, the President will continue to consider all education needs and priorities in formulating his request for the IDEA Grants to States program. For fiscal year 2006 and beyond, we will continue to work with Congress on this critical funding.

Question 6. As you know, the President signed into law the IDEA reauthorization bill at the end of the last Congress. The regulations and issuance of guidance will be critical to its success. Given this, what will your first areas of communication to States be over the coming months? How will you work to ensure IDEA regulations and guidance are issued in a timely manner? How will you ensure full consideration of submitted comments?

Answer 6. The Department plans to develop limited regulations that help explain the law and that are clear and easy for parents and schools to understand. Under this Administration, regulations will be tools to help children and schools, and will not spur confusion or duplication. Public input will be sought from parents, schools, and advocates across the Nation. The Department plans to hold public meetings in several cities in the coming months. The target to complete the regulations is December 3, 2005, and I pledge that the Department will make every effort to meet this target.

HIGHER EDUCATION

General Questions

Question 7. In the first 4 years of the Bush Administration, the education priorities seemed to be entirely focused on elementary and secondary education. Do you believe that the Bush Administration will devote equal time to higher education policies over the next year in light of the impending reauthorization? What will your higher education priorities be?

Answer 7. It is a high priority for President Bush and this Administration to work with Congress to get the HEA reauthorized in 2005. The fiscal year 2006 budget will likely include proposals made by the Administration last year as well as the other initiatives announced by the President over the last year.

The reauthorization should address key issues, including:

- Improving academic preparation in high school;
- Developing more accurate and complete consumer information for students and families;
- Directing aid to the neediest students;
- Eliminating rules that limit distance learning;

- Increasing loan limits, particularly for 1st-year students who need the additional funds;
- Providing more flexible repayment options for student loan borrowers;
- Increasing accountability on the part of institutions receiving Federal funds;
- Eliminating the Pell Grant shortfall and increasing the maximum award to \$4,550 over 5 years; and
- Modernizing the student loan program.

College Costs and Student Aid

Question 8. College Cost has been a huge issue, not only in the media, but within Congress. Representative Buck McKeon, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness, introduced a bill last Congress on college cost which was perceived as a price control bill. Do you believe it is the role of the Federal Government to control the price of college tuitions? If so, why would you impose price controls on one industry and not others?

Answer 8. I do not believe the Federal Government should control the price of college tuition. I believe consumers need more and better information about the cost and quality of higher education to guide and inform their decision-making, and I am committed to making the data that the Federal Government collects more user-friendly. I might add that Representative McKeon's bill was not a price control bill but rather an effort to reward institutions that keep increases in check. We must do more to encourage colleges and universities to keep their tuition increases more reasonable and understandable and we should be interested in why tuition rises at rates greater than the rate of inflation.

Question 9. In light of the increasing number of nontraditional and parenting students—the majority of whom are women—would you support policies that help these students enter and complete postsecondary education? Policies that include increased funding for campus-based child care, and changes in aid formulas to more accurately reflect a family's true resources and expenditures?

Answer 9. There are several things we can do to help nontraditional students complete a postsecondary education. For many nontraditional students, the biggest problem is actually getting to a college campus. For that reason, we should be doing away with rules that limit a student's ability to take courses on-line. The single mother who needs to work during the day and be at home in the evening should be able to take courses after the children are in bed and she can do that if the Federal Government stops restricting her access to these programs.

In addition to increasing Pell Grant awards, the most helpful change for nontraditional students will be allowing for year-round awards. These students are more likely to attend on a year-round basis in order to complete their programs as expeditiously as possible so we need to make sure they receive sufficient student aid to cover the summer session.

We also need to ensure that student loan programs are available for students needing short-term training that leads to an industry-recognized certificate. Too often today students are paying for this training through credit cards charging high interest. I am committed to increasing access for nontraditional students, and I look forward to working with Congress on this issue.

Question 10. When the Higher Education Act was passed in 1965, the hope was that any student wishing to obtain a college education would have the right to do so, regardless of their socioeconomic status. As you know, Pell grants were intended to serve as the foundation for all student aid, and when they were first instituted they paid for 84 percent of the cost of attendance at a public 4-year college. Today the maximum Pell award only covers about 34 percent of that cost. College tuition rates are soaring, and are expected to keep increasing at rates higher than inflation. By holding the maximum grant award at \$5,800 until 2011, Congress decreases the grants' purchasing power over time and guarantees that incoming classes of students will have to rely more heavily on student loans, placing them even further into debt. Based on all of this, do you support increasing Pell grant funding? If so, how do you plan to increase the Pell grant maximum award, which has been frozen for 3 years?

Answer 10. The President does support increasing funding for Pell Grants and has provided more than \$5 billion to the Pell Grant Program since taking office. In addition, the current Pell Grant award more than covers that cost of attending community college, which provide a strong foundation in job training and work with local employers to train students for high-growth jobs. Increasing the maximum award has been a problem due to the large funding shortfall which we have carried for several years. This year the President is proposing to retire the shortfall and

increase the maximum award by \$100 a year for the next 5 years as part of a comprehensive reform proposal for the student aid programs. We believe this new initiative will get the program on firm financial footing while addressing the needs of our low-income students, and it is a major priority for the President in his 2006 budget.

Question 11. If at any time OMB proposed cutting the Pell grant maximum award in any budget year, would you oppose that cut and actively work with President Bush to assure that student's grant aid would not be cut?

Answer 11. OMB, the President and I will all be working together to strengthen and improve all our student aid programs.

Question 12. Are you committed to keeping the student aid programs, such as Pell grants, Federal Work Study, Perkins Loans, TRIO and GEARUP, healthy and whole? Or do you foresee alterations to any of these programs?

Answer 12. I am committed to ensuring that student aid programs address the needs of students in the 21st century, and look forward to working with Congress on this issue during the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. In addition, President Bush is very concerned about our Nation's high school students which is why he proposed a new High School Intervention Initiative that will prepare our high school students for the future. His education proposals would help ensure that every high school student graduates with the skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education and in a globally competitive workforce.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION OF SENATOR HARKIN BY MARGARET SPELLINGS

Wellness

Question. The problem of childhood obesity has become a public health crisis of the first order. Over the past 3 decades, obesity rates have doubled in preschool aged children and teenagers and tripled in children aged 6 to 11 years old. Numerous experts are saying that if current trends continue, the generation of kids growing up today will live a shorter lifespan than their parents. Promoting healthier lifestyles to children is critical if we hope to make any progress in ending obesity and the dangerous risk factors associated.

In addition to improving students' academic performance, I believe that schools also have a critical role to play in promoting children's health. In the Childhood Nutrition bill last year we took steps to improve the nutritional options at school and required that schools set up wellness policies. Clearly, much more needs to be done. I hear from many constituents that there is not enough time in the school day for health, physical education class and recess. Some schools no longer build playgrounds. I have visited schools where kids don't have enough time to finish their lunch and many more where kids are lucky if they get PE once a week. Kids are not learning lifestyle lessons necessary to grow up and take care of their own health. As secretary, what are your plans to make certain that our children's health is not left behind when we are focusing on their education?

Answer. The President has recognized the rise in childhood obesity as a crisis and has put forward his Healthier U.S. initiative to coordinate the resources of the Federal Government in educating children and families about steps they can take within their own lives to greatly improve their health and fitness. This initiative increases individual awareness of the benefits of increased physical activity, proper nutrition, getting preventive screenings, and avoiding risky behavior. If confirmed, I will continue this initiative within the work of the Department of Education, and I look forward to working with you on this issue.

At the Federal level, The Department of Education will also continue our collaboration with the Departments of Agriculture and HHS through our Memorandum of Understanding, *Healthier Children and Youth*, signed by President Bush in June 2002, which was created to strengthen and promote the education and health of the Nation's youth. The MOU task force has collaborated to promote several government programs, as well as initiate a public/private partnership with Action for Healthy Kids, an alliance of State teams working to improve the health of children in schools.

The Department is also working with USDA and HHS on the implementation of a new requirement for school districts, passed as part of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. This section of the law will require all local educational agencies participating in a program authorized by the National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to establish a local wellness policy by the beginning of 2006-07 school year. These local wellness policies will need to address nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities to promote student wellness.

The Department is also working with the Surgeon General on a comprehensive agenda, "The Year of the Healthy Child," which focuses on helping children become and stay healthy and fit. In addition to working with these agencies, the Department of Education has an agreement with the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), Division of School Health, that allows a person to be detailed from CDC to the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools to help link services provided by CDC with State and local education agencies.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF SENATOR MIKULSKI BY MARGARET SPELLINGS

Community Colleges

Question 1. President Bush's community college initiative is focused on training workers to meet the needs of high-growth industries and, although that is an important goal, I want to make sure that community colleges can accommodate increased enrollment while keeping tuition affordable. In my home State of Maryland, enrollment at our community colleges is expected to grow 30 percent in the next 10 years, while 4-year colleges will grow by 15 percent. The combination of budget cuts and increased enrollments is forcing community colleges to make tough choices between raising tuition and turning students away. What would you do to ensure that community colleges remain accessible and affordable for everyone?

Answer 1. President Bush is a strong supporter of community colleges and will continue to support these important institutions. Last year, the President proposed the Community-Based Job Training Grants program at the Department of Labor, which received \$250 million in funding, and he will again request this funding in the fiscal year 2006 budget. This grant program will help community colleges build capacity and produce graduates with the skills most in demand by local employers. The President has also proposed establishment of a new Community College Access Grants program, funded at \$125 million, to improve the services that community colleges provide. The initiative will focus, in particular, on supporting "dual enrollment" programs through which high school students take college-level courses and receive both high school and postsecondary credit.

In addition, the President will propose increasing the Pell Grant maximum award by \$100 each year for the next 5 years to raise the award to \$4,550 in 2010. This increase will help students afford the cost of tuition of community colleges, as nearly 40 percent of Pell Grant recipients attend community colleges.

Tuition Tax Credit

Question 2. As we are all aware, college tuition is on the rise. Tuition at University of Maryland has increased by 30 percent over the last 2 years; tuition for Baltimore Community College rose by \$300 in 1 year. The average cost of going to a 4-year public college is \$10,635 but financial aid isn't keeping up. Twenty years ago, Pell Grants covered 80 percent of average costs for college; now they cover only 40 percent. To really help middle class families afford the costs of higher education, we need to increase the maximum Pell Grants, but we also need a bigger tuition tax credit. Would you support increasing the tuition tax credit to \$4,000 per year and making it refundable so it helps families who don't owe taxes?

Answer 2. Data from the College Board confirm that colleges and universities are raising advertised tuition prices at rates significantly above the rate of inflation. This alone poses a substantial barrier to postsecondary education for many low-income and potential first-generation postsecondary students who are unaware of the aid that is available.

Instead of focusing resources on tax credits which benefit more middle-income families, the President is making the Pell Grant program a priority, since it provides funding to low-income students who otherwise would not be able to attend college. In addition, as reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) moves forward, we need to address the following issues:

- Make low- and middle-income, first-generation college students aware of the true costs (and benefits) of postsecondary education;
- Ensure Federal student financial aid goes to the neediest students;
- Develop more accurate and complete consumer information for students and families;
- Find ways to encourage colleges and universities to constrain tuition and fee increases so that the Federal aid does not simply chase spiraling prices; and
- Continue to reduce the paperwork burden faced by financial aid applicants.

While the President's focus will remain on increasing Pell Grant funding, I look forward to working with Congress to ensure that higher education is accessible and affordable.

Digital Divide/CTCs

Question 3. In a country where 70 percent of jobs require computer skills, technology is a key part of education and opportunity. All Americans, regardless of race, income, or geographic location should have access to technology, but only 55 percent of Blacks and 49 percent of Hispanics are computer users compared to 70 percent of Whites. Only 30 percent of Blacks and 32 percent of Hispanics have access to the Internet in their homes compared to 55 percent of Whites.

We must close this digital divide and put technology and computers in schools, libraries, and community centers. In No Child Left Behind, I made sure there was funding to create 1,000 new Computer Technology Centers (CTCs) across the country. Every year, President Bush takes money for tech centers out of the Federal budget so I have to fight to put it back in. What do you think is the role of technology in education and would you support increased funding for CTCs and similar projects to close to digital divide?

Answer 3. I agree with you that it is important for all students to have access to 21st century skills and tools, including computers, to bridge the digital divide. The President prioritizes Federal funding in education away from smaller, categorical programs toward large, flexible grant programs like title I that allow States and school districts to target resources to reforms that will lead to increases in student achievement. The Department of Education's National Education Technology Plan, which was recently released, highlights examples of what States, districts, and schools are doing to close the digital divide. The President has also supported policies that expand the availability of broadband, and I look forward to working with you to promote access to computers and broadband technologies to improve student learning.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF SENATOR MURRAY BY MARGARET SPELLINGS

High School Reform

Question 1. I have a bill called the Pathways for All Students to Succeed (PASS Act), which targets funding at specific high school reforms, including literacy skills, academic counseling and making more resources available for necessary reforms to turn around low-performing high schools. The PASS Act creates grants to establish effective, research-based reading and writing programs in our secondary schools, including students with limited English proficiency and those with disabilities, through a coaching model. Literacy coaches would bring professional development into schools, help teachers identify and work with students who need extra help reading and writing and help teachers integrate literacy skills into curricula in all subject areas. The PASS Act also funds grants for comprehensive, high-quality academic and occupational counseling at a ratio of no more than 150 students to 1 academic counselor. Academic counselors would work with parents and teachers to create individualized graduation plans for each student, including what students need to do in high school to be successful in postsecondary education and careers, and promote parental involvement in their child's education and coordinate support services for at-risk students. Finally, the PASS Act would help communities turn around low-performing high schools through grant funding.

The President has expressed interest in high schools, including targeting reading and implementing graduation plans. What do you and the President envision for high school reform and specifically for literacy skills and graduation plans? As you know, little Federal funding reaches our Nation's high schools. However reforming high schools will be expensive for our schools. What funding levels and sources do you anticipate using for this critical undertaking?

Answer 1. As part of his fiscal year 2006 budget request, the President will propose \$1.5 billion to help every high school student graduate with the necessary skills to succeed. Under this plan, high school teachers will analyze 8th grade test data for incoming 9th grade students so that when they see a student at risk of falling behind, the teachers and the parents can get together and design a program to help ensure that the child can catch up.

The President will also propose measuring progress with tests in reading and math in the 9th, 10th and 11th grades. Consolidating high school improvement programs will provide States the flexibility to choose interventions that work best for their students.

To assist with literacy for adolescents who are significantly behind grade level, the President will ask Congress to increase funding for his Striving Readers Initiative to \$200 million, as well as increase Federal support for AP and IB programs. He believes another way to encourage students to take rigorous classes is to enhance Pell Grants for low-income students who have completed the State Scholars program. Under his proposal, high achieving students who take rigorous course

loads in high school will receive up to an additional \$1,000 during each of their first 2 years in college.

I look forward to working with you on these and your proposals to ensure that every high school student graduates with the skills needed to succeed in college and in a globally competitive workforce.

No Child Left Behind

Question 2. What is your position on reviewing the requests from States for flexibility in the requirements—both in the regulations as well as in the changes to the NCLB law itself?

Answer 2. As I stated at my hearing, I am committed to listening to all interested parties at the State and local level to ensure that this law is sensible and workable. The Department will continue to give careful and thoughtful consideration to every State request for implementing the various requirements of NCLB. Those requests for flexibility that are permissible under the statute and regulations will be granted. I pledge to work with States and local school districts to make this law work and will listen to all suggestions.

Higher Education

Question 3. Since the inception of the Direct Student Loan program, students borrowing money to attend college under the Direct Loan program have benefited greatly from the competition that has resulted with the guaranteed loan program. Students in both programs have benefited from better loan servicing, discounted borrowing terms, and improved repayment options. As Secretary, what steps will you take to ensure that the Direct Loan program remains a viable, dependable and cost effective program?

Answer 3. We are committed to the viability of both the Direct Loan and Federal Family Education Loan Programs (FFEL). Since its inception, the Department has invested millions of dollars in new technologies and integrated solutions to better serve students, parents, and the schools who participate in the Direct Loan Program. Currently, to provide improved services to Direct Loan borrowers and to ensure an efficient and effective program, FSA is investing in two major system consolidation and integration initiatives. Additionally, FSA provides Direct Loan training to schools, numerous publications for schools, students and borrowers as well as Web sites for information and training. The Department works with the Direct Loan Coalition, an alliance of Direct Loan schools, to ensure issues are discussed and resolved.

Question 4. The Department of Education has updated the State tax tables that affect the calculations used to determine how much financial aid students will receive (regulations were published in the Federal Register on December 23, 2004). Unfortunately, while an update of the 1988 data is certainly overdue, there is concern that the 2002 tables provided in the 12/23 Federal Register will not paint an accurate picture of what students and their families are able to pay for college. For instance, the State of Washington does not have a State income tax and relies instead on sales and property tax. Therefore the tables may not accurately reflect a student's tax burden. As Secretary would you review the structure of the tax tables for fairness and equity to students; would you make an effort to ensure that the tables are updated in a more timely manner; and finally will you ensure that the details of how these tables were calculated, including the relevant statistics from the IRS, are made available to the public so that the changes are better understood and the process is more transparent?

Answer 4. The Higher Education Act requires the Secretary of Education to publish updated State tax tables each year based on information received from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The Department is following the law by updating State tax tables for purposes of the need analysis calculation. The Department was unable to update the State tax tables for many years because information was not available from the IRS. When the necessary information became available, the Department took the appropriate steps to update the tables. Congress chose to stop the update by adopting a provision that prohibited the Department from updating the State tax tables for the 2004–05 award year, but did not adopt the amendment prohibiting the update for the 2005–06 award year, so the Department moved forward in accordance with the law.

While I am not familiar with the particular situation in Washington, I commit to looking into this issue as the Department moves forward. We must ensure we use accurate and up-to-date information, so I pledge to update tables annually, as required by law, and work to ensure the formula is fair and equitable.

Question 5. Traditionally, the Federal Government has worked in partnership with colleges and universities to provide a college education for all who seek it. The Federal Government provides funding to students to attend any college or university that is accredited by a federally recognized accreditation agency. Recent legislative proposals have gone beyond the shared goal of ensuring access to higher education and seek to influence the academic affairs of colleges and universities, such as curriculum and the transfer of academic credit. Please provide your view of the Federal Government's role in higher education and tell the committee whether you believe the Federal Government should expand its role in higher education and delve into the academics of higher education.

Answer 5. The Federal Government needs to do more to assist students who are going from high school to postsecondary education and from one postsecondary institution to another. Encouraging States and institutions to have reasonable and fair policies related to transfer of credits is in the best interest of students and taxpayers. Neither students nor the government are served well when they have to pay for the same credits again and again—this leads to increased costs for many students who are already facing rising tuition costs across the country. In addition, we need to do a better job of providing accurate and useful information to parents and families on the cost and policies of institutions so that they can make informed decisions.

Perkins

Question 6. According to Section 113(b)(3)(A)(i) of Perkins, the State eligible agency, with input from eligible recipients, shall establish the level of performance for each of the core indicators, and the State eligible agency may express the level in “a percentage or numerical form, so as to be objective, quantifiable, and measurable.”

The Washington State eligible agency, with the support of the State community and technical college system, has expressed the State's targets for the core indicators for postsecondary student attainment and completion as *numerical targets* (e.g., the number of students completing postsecondary career and technical education). The State has chosen to express the targets numerically because the State's goal is to increase the number of trained workers in order to meet employer demand. The Office of Vocational and Adult Education has rejected the choice of the State, and refused to accept any target not expressed as a percentage.

Why has the Department of Education ignored the discretion that Congress clearly granted State eligible agencies when Washington State is fully and demonstrably committed to improving the performance of its vocational and technical education programs and to meeting the skill needs of State employers?

Answer 6. I appreciate your bringing this matter to my attention. While I am not familiar with the details, I pledge to look into the feasibility of your request and I look forward to working with you to resolve it in a timely manner.

Training Grants

Question 7. Washington State has seen many brave men and women deployed to serve in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq over the last 3 years.

Unfortunately too many have returned as amputees, necessitating a difficult and uncertain recovery process.

I was very disheartened to learn that the Department of Education, through the Regional Services Administration (RSA), has decided not to support training grants for students in prosthetics or orthotics.

There are a very limited number of prothetists and orthotists across the country who can build the artificial limbs and braces that our returning war veterans will need to return to a productive lifestyle.

Less government support to these students will mean fewer practitioners and more difficulty for our newly injured veterans to secure the quality devices they so desperately need and deserve.

Given the significant and growing needs of our returning veterans for these prosthetic or orthotic devices, why did the RSA discontinue these critically needed training grants?

Will the Department of Education reinstitute these training grants to support those students studying to be the next generation of providers of artificial limbs and braces?

Answer 7. I am not familiar with these particular grants at this time, but I commit to looking into this issue, as I share your concern for ensuring that our returning war veterans receive the best possible care. I will work closely with the Assistant Secretary for OSERS to review our work in this important area. In addition, it is my understanding that the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Serv-

ices (OSERS) has a long history of funding research and training in prosthetics and orthotics that meets a variety of needs and applications. For example, OSERS is currently funding research on prosthetics and orthotics and is developing technology access for land mine survivors.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF SENATOR REED BY MARGARET SPELLINGS

Question 1. What are your ideas for ensuring that LEAP continues to encourage State investment in need-based grant aid for low-income students?

Answer 1. As you know, in the past the President's budget has not requested new funds for this program because the program has served the purpose of encouraging States to create their own grant programs. Rather than funding programs that have already accomplished their goal, we are targeting our scarce resources to our number one priority for higher education, the Pell Grant Program. This means retiring the \$4.3 billion shortfall and providing sufficient funds to ensure an increase to the maximum award of \$100 each year for the next 5 years. We believe putting the Pell Grant Program on firm financial footing must be the highest priority.

Question 2. Studies show that early intervention activities and early information about likely financial aid awards are the key components of successful college access programs. How will the Department of Education, under your leadership, work to encourage such programs?

Answer 2. We will continue informational outreach efforts already undertaken by the Department. Currently, the Department makes brochures and documents available to high schools around the country and to guaranty agencies and other parties that conduct financial aid nights for students and parents. In addition, the Department promotes its Web site that has been redesigned to help students in their college search, in finding and applying for student aid; and in repaying that aid. I will also commit to looking at additional ways to increase outreach on this important issue.

Question 3. How will you work to reverse the grant-loan imbalance so that college is attainable for low-income students?

Answer 3. On January 14th, the President announced his plan for retiring the Pell Grant shortfall and increasing the maximum award to assist low-income students in paying for postsecondary education. This bold, new plan will directly help low-income students by investing \$15 billion over the next 10 years into the Pell Grant program. I look forward to working with Congress on this plan and the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

Question 4. Have you seen the interim recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance's Simplification Study released last July? What are your thoughts on these recommendations, such as the creation of an E-Z FAFSA for low-income students?

Answer 4. I have not read the interim recommendations but I absolutely believe we should consider all ideas for simplifying the student aid process. If confirmed, I will look into ways to address this issue.

Question 5. What changes will you seek in the Higher Education Act to make completing the FAFSA easier and more understandable for parents and students, particularly low-income students?

Answer 5. I can't identify specific changes today, but as I have said in the past, I will consider all ideas for simplifying the student aid process and that includes simplifying the actual form.

Question 6. How will you work to make web access to the FAFSA easier and more widely available to low income students, including providing increased funds to schools for additional computer technology?

Answer 6. Based on the Department's statistics, you can be assured that web access is readily available. Today, we have more than 80 percent of our students filing electronically and we continue to encourage more to do so. In addition, we constantly upgrade our on-line application program so that students and families find it user friendly. However, some students and parents simply do not want to file electronically so we provide a supply of the paper forms for those instances.

Question 7. How will you make clear to parents, students, and schools that the FAFSA may be completed for free by paper or online and steer these interested parties away from companies promising to get students better aid by paying a fee to a third party to fill out the FAFSA?

Answer 7. The Department prominently displays the word “Free” on all its material related to the FAFSA and guidance counselors and financial aid directors constantly remind students that the Department provides free help if one has questions. With respect to third party companies, to date, the Department has not found any party to be acting illegally but the Department does monitor this issue and has referred cases to the FTC with respect to the information being advertised on completing the FAFSA.

Question 8. As you know, in Title II of HEA, there is funding for awarding partnership grants to eligible college teacher preparation programs to help prepare and develop teachers in high need school districts. Will you support the addition of a requirement that participating partnerships institute a residency program aimed at providing ongoing support to new teachers during their first 3 years of teaching, modeled after successful medical residency programs, in order to improve the quality of learning in our Nation’s classrooms?

Answer 8. The Department’s grant competition related to title II puts a priority focus on mentoring type programs to help new teachers adjust to the classroom environment and we will be glad to consider changes that will improve the program in providing needed assistance to our newest teachers.

Question 9. How will you and the Department disseminate resources and information to teachers on best teaching practices and ensure that teachers receive training on cutting edge techniques and methods?

Answer 9. The Department launched the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative last January. Roundtable discussions were held with hundreds of teachers around the country. Teachers gave the same message at each event: they wanted clear information about NCLB, high-quality professional development, access to the latest research, and recognition for the work they are doing with students. Regular e-mail updates are sent to thousands of teachers who’ve signed up on the Department’s Web site. Eleven workshops have been held around the country with almost 2,000 attendees. Our eLearning Web site features 23 sessions from these workshops, and over 50,000 teachers have come to the site. Many States are accepting teacher participation in workshops and eLearning for recertification and to meet the highly qualified requirements. If confirmed, I will work with teachers on the ground to ensure that they are receiving the tools they need to teach effectively in the classroom.

Question 10. Can you provide specific details on the President’s proposed new high school reform initiative aimed at encouraging schools to develop IEP-like performance plans for incoming high school students?

Answer 10. Out of a hundred 9th graders in our public schools, only 68 will complete high school on time. In today’s globally competitive economy, the United States cannot afford to have a 68 percent on-time graduation rate for 9th graders, nor can the individual youth afford to leave school without a high level of skills and preparation. For this reason, the President is proposing an early intervention initiative that will enable and help school districts and schools intervene early, assess and design programs that meet the needs of each youth so they can successfully complete high school and advance to further learning and employment.

The President’s new High School Initiative will provide \$1.5 billion in the fiscal year (fiscal year) 2006 budget, of which \$1.2 billion will be used to provide effective interventions for those students who are not learning at grade level. Under this plan, high school teachers will analyze 8th grade test data for incoming 9th grade students so that when they see a student at risk of falling behind, the teachers and the parents can work together to design an intervention program. This program will help the student quickly gain the core reading and math skills he or she will need to participate in a rigorous high school curriculum.

The program will allow maximum flexibility so the district and school can create interventions that are uniquely tailored to each student’s needs.

Question 11. In Rhode Island, school districts are required to create strategic plans for providing more personalized learning environments for high school students, including individualized learning plans. How will you align the President’s IEP-like performance plan initiative with existing State performance plan requirements, such as Rhode Island’s?

Answer 11. The intent of the President’s proposal for early intervention plans appears to be well-aligned with the purpose of the Rhode Island initiative for creating personalized learning environments. The intervention plan concept would build on that notion of a personalized learning environment by creating customized interventions when students are falling behind in academic skills. The President has indicated that, under the plan, high school teachers will analyze 8th grade test data

for incoming 9th grade students so that when they see a student at risk of falling behind, the teachers and the parents can work together and design a program to help make sure that child can catch up. The proposal would provide a great deal of flexibility so interventions can be uniquely tailored to each student's needs. This program will enable and help school districts and schools intervene early, assess and design programs that meet the needs of that particular student.

Question 12. Research studies in over 14 States have demonstrated conclusively that school library media specialists, when working collaboratively with teachers in a school with a well-staffed, well-stocked library, have a direct and significant impact on student achievement in the classroom. In light of the proven role played by school libraries and school library media specialists in education, what will you do personally, and within the operations of the Department of Education, to improve the collaboration between school library media specialists and teachers in implementing NCLB and the Improving Literacy Through School Library program?

Answer 12. The Department will continue to proactively improve the collaboration between school library media specialists and teachers in implementing NCLB and the Improving Literacy Through School Library program.

The Department will publish a notice announcing the fiscal year 2005 competition and will emphasize that to all potential applicants that the purpose of the Literacy Through School Libraries program is to improve student reading skills and achievement by providing students with increased access to up-to-date school library materials and well-trained professionally certified school library media specialists. In addition, I will encourage applications from those who focus their efforts on elementary schools to maximize the impact of the project on improving reading achievement.

Question 13. Given the clear link between high quality school libraries and increased academic achievement, as Secretary of Education, what will you do to support increased funding for the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program?

Answer 13. The Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program is supported by the Administration as one of the tools to improve the literacy skills of students through increased access to up-to-date school library materials and professionally certified school library media specialists. As you know, Mrs. Bush is a strong supporter of libraries, and I look forward to working with her office and with you to improve our Nation's school libraries.

Question 14. The enactment of NCLB and the Education Sciences Reform Act brought scientifically-based research, development, dissemination, and technical assistance to the forefront of K-12 education. Yet, for the past 2 years, the President has sought to eliminate the regional education laboratories and reduce funding for technical assistance providers in his budget request. Will you seek to reverse the Administration's recent budget stance on this issue and provide adequate funding for these important research institutions so that schools have the necessary tools to improve student achievement?

Answer 14. The Administration has supported level funding the new Comprehensive Centers system as authorized by Congress, and the Department has worked this past year to bring this new system into existence. The Administration has not supported funding for the regional education laboratories because the recent reauthorization did not make needed improvements in the structure and function of the labs, which have not consistently provided high quality research and development products or evidence-based training and technical assistance. Instead, the Administration has supported the improvements to the quality of education research with existing funds through the Institute of Education Sciences, and has supported increases in funding for programs like title I and Reading First that provide resources to teachers and administrators that can be used to access—and thus support the creation of—research-based programming. I will continue to work to increase technical assistance to States, schools, and teachers, so that they have the tools to increase student achievement.

Question 15. I am concerned that the Department has chosen to focus its efforts disproportionately on aspects of public school choice and supplemental services in the implementation and enforcement of the parental involvement provisions under NCLB. I authored the parental involvement provisions in NCLB and in doing so, intended that there be targeted efforts to implement all of these provisions, not just a select few. In your testimony before the committee, you stated that parents must be active participants in a child's education. What will you do to improve implemen-

tation of NCLB, including ensuring that its parental involvement goals are being achieved?

Answer 15. I cannot agree with you more that parents need to be actively involved and must have an integral role in their children's education to help them succeed. To better inform and involve parents, the Department redesigned its webpage to include information specifically for parents. It includes information about homework, after-school programs, reading, NCLB, and college preparation, among other topics. Much of this information is provided in both Spanish and English. Additionally, since the enactment of NCLB, the Department has provided guidance on parental involvement in a variety of forms, including Parental Involvement guidance (now being developed in Spanish), as well as parental notification requirements in the LEA and School Improvement Guidance, Public School Choice Guidance, Supplemental Education Services Guidance, Report Card Guidance, and Teacher Quality Guidance.

When the Department conducts title I monitoring, staff looks for evidence that the State is implementing the parental involvement provisions in the statute; and if that evidence is lacking, then the State is required to take corrective action. Among the evidence staff looks for is that:

- States review the effectiveness of LEA parental involvement activities;
- LEAs have written parental involvement policies at the LEA and school levels, including outreach to parents of limited English proficient students.
- LEAs sent letters notifying parents that they have the right to know the qualifications of their children's teachers and letters notifying parents if their child is assigned to or being taught by a teacher who is not highly qualified. LEAs reserved at least 1 percent of title I funds for parental involvement activities, and involved parents in deciding how to expend the funds; and
- Schools hold annual meetings to inform participating parents about title I programs.

I look forward to working with you to ensure that all participants in a child's education, especially parents, have the information they need to be actively involved.

Question 16. The recently enacted IDEA Improvement Act includes provisions I authored on personnel preparation and professional development programs for special education teachers and general educators who work with children with disabilities, with an emphasis on retaining special education teachers new to the profession. What is your plan for educating, advising, and ensuring technical assistance to States, parents, teachers, students, schools, and colleges about Part D's new and enhanced personnel preparation and development program requirements and the resources available to these interested parties to meet the requirements?

Answer 16. The Department has a number of technical assistance investments that provide technical assistance and information to the States, teachers, school administrators, parents, and advocacy groups. For example, the Department invests in regional Technical Assistance Centers that work directly with States. Parent Training and Information Centers work directly with parents. These investments will continue to support our efforts in educating our stakeholders about Part D's new and enhanced personnel preparation and development program requirements. I understand that specific plans are underway to develop training modules for stakeholders on all aspects of the IDEA, which will be used at Department meetings with States and other stakeholders specifically convened for this purpose. I intend to support this effort.

Question 17. How will you ensure that these new and critical Part D programs are funded in fiscal year 2006?

Answer 17. Part D programs are crucial to the successful implementation of IDEA. We need a highly qualified workforce who have the skills and knowledge they need to promote grade level achievement for students with disabilities. I believe that the Department should have a strong leadership role in personnel preparation, which translates into adequate investments to support this leadership role. While I cannot commit to a particular funding level, I look forward to working with you on this issue.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF SENATOR CLINTON BY MARGARET SPELLINGS

Question 1. Will you keep the long-standing title IX athletics policies in place, including all three methods of compliance, and do nothing to undermine their use or application to enhance women's opportunities to participate in sports?

Answer 1. Yes. Based on recommendations by the Secretary's Commission on Opportunities in Athletics, the Department of Education in July of 2003 reaffirmed its commitment to the long-standing 3-part test. I share that commitment.

Question 2. Do you foresee any changes in the Department's enforce of title IX athletics policies?

Answer 2. The Department will continue to vigorously enforce the existing title IX policies. I plan to expand the Department's efforts in providing technical assistance and information to schools to help them apply the 3-part test and other title IX requirements.

Question 3. Will you urge the Department of Justice to mount a vigorous defense against any lawsuit that challenges the legality of the title IX athletics policies or that otherwise attempts to limit the government's ability to enforce those policies?

Answer 3. Yes. The Executive Branch has mounted a vigorous and, to date, successful litigation defense of its title IX policies and its ability to enforce them, and it will continue to do so.

Question 4. Does the Department intend to supplement its current guidance on public school choice with any concrete examples of how overcrowded districts can meet the new transfer requirement—short of adding classroom space not in their budgets or hiring additional teachers they cannot afford?

Answer 4. The Department has provided extensive guidance on Public School Choice, both through its official program guidance documents and through two publications, *Innovations in Education: Public School Choice* and *Innovations in Education: Successful Magnet Schools*. Both publications provide examples of real-live districts that are successfully implementing choice programs. The Department is planning to build on this guidance to provide additional ideas and assistance through a toolkit on public school choice and a technical assistance strategy to help districts learn from these documents and better implement the choice provisions. The issue of expanding capacity will be central to these efforts.

Question 5. Would the department under your leadership reconsider providing some meaningful level of Federal school construction assistance to transform this hollow promise into a reality?

Answer 5. School construction has traditionally remained a State and local matter, and this Administration has not supported using Federal resources for that purpose. Federal intervention in this area would penalize those districts that have concentrated their previous efforts on building maintenance, and create a future disincentive to continue those efforts. The Administration position on this matter is unlikely to change. The traditional role of the Federal Government in education, dating back decades, has been to focus resources on at-risk, disadvantaged, and disabled students, through large, flexible programs like title I and IDEA. I will continue to support that role.

Question 6. The information we have makes it clear that children benefit—for years to come—when they go to school in healthy school buildings. Yet the Department has never funded the Healthy, High-Performance Schools program authorized in No Child Left Behind? This program would provide technical assistance and resources to school districts seeking to modernize their school buildings. How can we work with you to enable this worthwhile program to come to life?

Answer 6. The Administration believes that limited Federal elementary and secondary education resources should be concentrated on those programs that have the greatest impact in improving the education of children with the greatest needs. That means focusing our resources on large flexible programs like title I and IDEA Part B, and using remaining resources on programs that directly support those efforts to improve the education of economically disadvantaged and limited English proficient students, students with disabilities, and other students who are not making adequate yearly progress toward state-established standards. However, I look forward to reading the recently-released report you requested on the health and learning impacts of poor environmental conditions in schools and working with you on this issue.

Question 7. The IDEA reauthorization included much-needed resources for helping children with behavioral and emotional problems. Are we in agreement that this is an important investment for the long-term future of our children and can we count on your support for funding for this program?

Answer 7. I agree that it is very important for the Department to make investments in the long-term future of children with behavioral and emotional problems, which is why President Bush has requested annual 1 billion dollar increases in funding for IDEA State Grants in his first four budget proposals and why special education funding has increased 67 percent since the President has been in office. The Department is investing in several projects related to improving services to

these children, and I intend to continue the work of the Department to effectively serve children who have difficulty with behavior and emotional adjustment.

Question 8. Do you believe Perkins is an appropriate vehicle to help girls learn about the potential value of nontraditional occupations? Do you support efforts to expand innovative programs and policies in this area?

Answer 8. In today's globally competitive economy, it is critical that young women and men be given the opportunity to fully explore career options absent of gender stereotypes. This is particularly important as the United States seeks to ensure that all students are proficient in mathematics and science, and that a larger pool of American students pursue careers in science, technology and engineering, the drivers of our "innovation economy." We are committed to working with Congress to ensure that all Federal programs support young women and men in reaching high levels of achievement so they can pursue highly skilled, economically viable careers and are not bound by gender pre-conceptions.

[Whereupon, at 11:58 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

