



United States  
General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

---

Health, Education and Human Services Division

B-257090

April 26, 1994

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy  
Chairman, Committee on Labor and Human Resources  
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy L. Kassebaum  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Labor and Human Resources  
United States Senate

The Honorable William D. Ford  
Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor  
House of Representatives

The Honorable William F. Goodling  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Education and Labor  
House of Representatives

The Congress is considering a variety of complex education issues in its deliberations on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. In response to a recent request, this letter provides a summary of GAO products completed since the last reauthorization as they relate to the various sections of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (see enclosure). We have included recommendations and matters for congressional consideration for each of the products summarized, where applicable.

The summaries are organized by title of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, under current law, with those reports which are more recent presented first. This information may be useful in preparing for the House and Senate conference on this act. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this material further, please call me at (202) 512-7014.

Linda G. Morra  
Director, Education  
and Employment Issues

Enclosure

GAO PRODUCTS RELATED TO THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965

Title I--Basic Programs

Elementary School Children: Many Change Schools Frequently,  
Harming Their Education (GAO/HEHS-94-45)

Results in Brief

One in six of the nation's children who are third-graders--over a half million--have changed schools frequently, attending at least three different schools since the beginning of first grade. Unless policymakers focus greater attention on the needs of children who have changed schools frequently--often low-income, inner city, migrant, and limited English proficient (LEP)--these children may continue to be low achieving in math and reading, as well as to repeat a grade. Local school districts generally provide little additional help to assist such children.

Children who have changed schools frequently are not as likely to receive services provided by the federal Migrant Education and Chapter 1 programs as children who have never changed schools. The Department of Education can play a role in helping these children to receive appropriate educational services in a timely manner. Specifically, the Department can develop strategies so that all eligible children, including those who have changed schools frequently, have access to federally funded Migrant Education and Chapter 1 services.

Timely and comparable record systems could be one way to help mobile children receive services. A child's records often take 2 to 6 weeks to arrive in a new school, according to data collected by the California State Department of Education and others. Moreover, student records often are not comparable across states and districts. The federal Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS), established to transfer information from a migrant child's former school district to a new school district, also does not provide timely and complete information. However, other systems, such as one currently being piloted in a few states--an electronic student record system known as EXPRESS, may in the future provide comparable and more timely transfer of student records for all children, including migrants.

Matters for Congressional  
Consideration

Given the great educational needs of migrant children who have changed school districts recently, the Congress may wish to consider focusing migrant education funding to give higher priority

to such children. This could be accomplished, for example, by limiting eligibility for federal Migrant Education Program services only to migrant children who have changed school districts within the last 2 years, rather than continuing program eligibility to formerly migrant children who have not changed school districts for as many as 6 years.

#### Recommendations to the Department of Education

We recommend that the Department of Education (1) determine the reason(s) for the low Chapter 1 participation rates of low-achieving children who have changed schools frequently and (2) develop strategies so that all eligible children who have changed schools frequently, including migrant children, have access to Chapter 1 services.

We also recommend that the Department of Education determine the feasibility of using electronic student record systems, such as those currently being adopted by some states and school districts for all students, instead of the MSRTS.

(Note: Title III of H.R. 6, Expanding Opportunities for Learning, contains an amendment related to this report. It provides that the Secretary is authorized to support, among other nationally significant programs and projects, programs designed to reduce excessive student mobility. The Fund for the Improvement of Education is intended to provide this support.)

#### School-Linked Human Services: A Comprehensive Strategy for Aiding Students at Risk of School Failure (GAO/HRD-94-21)

#### Results in Brief

Many different models exist for coordinating human services in schools, and no two are exactly alike. Each is shaped by (1) the unique needs of students likely to use the program and (2) community preferences and attitudes about the services to be offered. Yet, despite the variety of program models these factors can produce, we found that strong leadership was a common characteristic of the comprehensive school-linked programs we reviewed. These programs were also similar in the following ways: program staff valued the views of school staff and used school staff as resources for identifying troubled youth; programs used interdisciplinary teams or persons other than school staff to connect students with a range of services that addressed their multiple needs; and program staff followed up with children, their families, and service providers to ensure that services were obtained and helpful.

Evaluations indicated that some comprehensive school-linked programs increase the likelihood that at-risk students will stay in school: of the six programs we identified with impact evaluations; five reported positive effects on student dropout rates, absenteeism, and academic achievement. Among the research issues yet to be addressed are the short- and long-term costs and benefits of various types of school-linked programs and the relative cost effectiveness of these programs compared with other dropout prevention strategies. Because of the scarcity of impact evaluations for school-linked programs, we could not determine the circumstances in which certain types of school-linked programs would be most appropriate.

Few federally sponsored programs providing comprehensive human services in or near schools exist for academically at-risk children. The most widely recognized federal effort is Head Start --a preschool program. At-risk school-aged children, however, are served by numerous legislative initiatives and funding sources with a variety of objectives as evidenced by the 170 federal categorical programs that provide education and other services to elementary and secondary school children. Those federal programs that do coordinate the delivery of a comprehensive set of services for school-age children are often short-term (2- or 3-year) demonstration projects. Yet, many educators and policymakers believe that comprehensive services are necessary for at-risk children in grades kindergarten through 12 to address problems that impede learning.

The services integration literature includes a rich assortment of publications that explain the rationale for school-linked programs and describes the fundamentals of developing comprehensive school-linked programs. The literature also cites several potential problems with this service delivery approach. Some programs that we reviewed have avoided or overcome many of the potential problems and barriers associated with in-school service delivery.

Given the decreasing resources available for human service delivery, providing support for and guidance with developing impact and cost effectiveness evaluations of comprehensive school-linked programs could be an important role for the federal government to play in promoting effective comprehensive programs for school-age children. Officials representing 10 of 16 organizations we contacted stated that collecting and disseminating information on effective school-linked approaches would be an appropriate federal activity. These officials along with planners and directors of school-linked programs also suggested that the federal government provide (1) funding for planning and/or long-term program support and (2) technical assistance with developing and evaluating programs.

Recommendation to the Secretaries  
of Health and Human Services and  
Education

To provide states and localities with better information about the extent to which school-linked programs can be used as a strategy for increasing high school completion rates and the life outcomes of children, we recommend that the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education develop an approach for evaluating the short- and long-term impacts of several school-linked programs.

**Chapter 1 Accountability: Greater Focus on Program Goals Needed**  
**(GAO/HRD-93-69)**

Results in Brief

The process used to identify schools for program improvement is flawed because schools often are evaluated only on whether their Chapter 1 students show annual increases in achievement test scores. Our analysis shows that when schools are evaluated only on achievement test scores, many schools are likely to be judged as effective or ineffective on the basis of changes in test scores that reflect random fluctuations, rather than actual changes in student performance. Achievement test scores alone cannot provide a complete picture of program effectiveness. However, the statute, regulations, and Chapter 1 Policy Manual do not adequately explain how evidence from multiple indicators of student performance may be considered when identifying schools for program improvement.

In addition, identifying schools on annual changes in achievement test scores may neglect the improvement needs of schools with students that make annual gains on test scores but remain far below grade level. Thus, the current identification process may not hold schools accountable for the Chapter 1 goal of helping students attain grade-level proficiency. Finally, when increasing achievement test scores is seen as the most important objective for Chapter 1, schools may try to raise students' test scores without improving instructional practices, using less desirable strategies that narrow the scope of instruction to focus on material covered by the tests. These efforts may be inconsistent with the Chapter 1 goal of helping children succeed in the regular program of the district.

Holding schools accountable for achieving multiple desired outcomes and assessing program effectiveness with multiple indicators of student performance would improve the identification process. This would also help reduce the emphasis schools place on achievement test scores in providing instruction to their Chapter 1 students.

School staffs were considered more influential than district and state staffs in developing improvement plans in both the local and joint phases of program improvement. In both phases, state assistance was typically more general than specific--focusing more on explaining the requirements of program improvement than on helping individual schools develop improvement plans--although specific state assistance did increase in the joint phase. The amount of specific assistance schools received was related to the number of state staff available to work with them.

Schools continued to use most of the same improvement strategies in the joint phase of program improvement that they used in the local phase. The most widely used strategies in both phases were (1) improving coordination between Chapter 1 and the regular instructional program and (2) increasing parental involvement. In addition, large-city schools were more likely than schools in other locations to adopt the strategies of adding a summer program or adding an extended day program for Chapter 1.

#### Recommendations to the Congress

To improve the process used to identify schools for program improvement and to help reduce the emphasis placed on standardized achievement test results, we recommend that the Congress amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to require (1) states to establish, for schools' Chapter 1 programs, multiple desired outcomes related to the statutory goals of Chapter 1 and (2) districts to assess program effectiveness by considering whether evidence from multiple indicators of student performance shows substantial progress in achieving these outcomes.

The Congress should require state education agencies to specify, in their state Chapter 1 program improvement plans, (1) the desired outcomes for Chapter 1 schools, (2) the indicators that will be used to measure student progress toward those desired outcomes, (3) minimum standards for student performance on each indicator, and (4) a definition of substantial progress toward meeting the desired outcomes as a group (that is, how districts will weigh evidence from multiple indicators in judging whether their Chapter 1 schools are effective). Districts should also be allowed to set higher standards than required by their state education agency and to use, with the approval of their state agency, additional or alternative desired outcomes and indicators.

We also recommend clarifications to statutory language on the process used to identify schools for program improvement.

Matters for Congressional  
Consideration

To help ensure that states establish adequate standards for identifying Chapter 1 schools in need of improvement, the Congress should consider amending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to require that the Secretary of Education review and approve the desired outcomes and indicators specified by states in their state program improvement plans. This review could focus on determining whether states have specified (1) desired outcomes and indicators that reflect high educational standards and pertain to the statutory goals of Chapter 1 and (2) a reasonable definition of substantial progress toward meeting multiple desired outcomes.

Compensatory Education: Additional Funds Help More Private School  
Students Receive Chapter 1 Services (GAO/HRD-93-65)Results in Brief

Nationwide, the number of private school students in Chapter 1 programs has increased to 168,000 or 91 percent of pre Felton levels, that is from school year 1984-85--prior to the 1985 Supreme Court decision in Aguilar v. Felton--until school year 1991-92. In addition, the proportion of eligible Chapter 1 students being served also appears to be increasing; however, the proportion served is still less than before the decision. The availability of additional federal funds to offset expenses associated with the Felton decision was cited as a factor that contributed to local districts serving more private school students. The major reasons for not serving even more eligible students were (1) some private schools chose not to participate and (2) some parents would not permit their child to participate because they did not want the students leaving the private school building.

The location and type of instruction used to provide Chapter 1 services to private school students has not changed since additional funds became available. Mobile vans were the most common location used to provide instruction, and teacher instruction was the most common form of instruction. About half the additional funds were used for costs associated with mobile vans. The remaining funds were used almost equally for other alternative locations. While teacher instruction was most common in 40 states, other states used computer-assisted instruction or a combination of teachers and computers. All states reported that the additional funds have enabled local districts to increase the number of hours of Chapter 1 instruction.

States were mixed in whether they spent the additional funds to reimburse school districts for expenditures incurred in past years or for current expenditures. Nine states used almost all of their

funds to pay for past Chapter 1 related expenses, while 16 states were caught up with paying for expenses incurred since 1985. The remaining states used funds both ways--to reimburse expenses incurred in prior years and for current year expenditures. All but three states indicated a continual need for funds in the future. About half the states said that they would not receive enough funds to cover expenses in school year 1992-93. However, several states plan to return some unused funds, and other states plan to carry over excess funds for future needs.

**Compensatory Education: Difficulties in Measuring Comparability of Resources Within School Districts (GAO/HRD-93-37)**

**Results in Brief**

Changes to Chapter 1 within-district comparability requirements need to be considered in the context of the overall debate on national education standards. Current regulatory requirements are not as comprehensive as called for in the legislative language. However, experts and education officials disagree about how best to measure comparability and what added burden broadened criteria would place on school districts. Further, although our data show that some Chapter 1 schools rank below non-Chapter 1 schools on some resource measures, there is no clear agreement on what such differences mean. Finally, the ongoing national debate about national standards includes a discussion of school capacity, or resource standards, which could have a profound impact on resource distribution policies and practices.

Districts we visited were in compliance with the Department of Education's regulatory requirements for comparability. Each district used the same single measure--ratio of students to instructional staff--to demonstrate compliance. Other district data were generally not available, however, for a more comprehensive assessment. When data were available, they indicated in many cases that Chapter 1 schools had lower ratios of students to staff than non-Chapter 1 schools, but often were worse off in other measures, such as teachers' salaries and experience. For selected types of school supplies and equipment, such as library books and computers, the results varied among the school districts.

The Chapter 1 comparability provision appears to have been a positive force, helping to advance the equitable distribution of state and local resources among schools within districts and, thus, ensure the supplemental nature of Chapter 1 expenditures. The importance of this objective argues for continued attention to this provision. The officials and experts we talked to supported retaining some type of Chapter 1 comparability requirement; they disagreed, however, about the usefulness of assessing comparability on a more comprehensive basis.



Most of the officials and experts agreed that all of the resources included in our review could be considered in a comprehensive assessment of comparability. But they debated the significance of the individual measures and of the differences that might be found among schools. Requiring comparability for additional resources, some believed, would be an unwarranted burden on districts because of (1) questions about the significance of differences in individual resources between schools and (2) the lack of strong evidence of inequitable resource distribution within districts. Others believe ensuring comparability and, therefore, equitable resource distribution, are essential and worth the added burden.

Discussions about changing the Chapter 1 comparability requirements, however, need to be conducted in the context of the greater national debate now under way on the need for national education standards and the relationship of such standards to school resources. Changes to Chapter 1 within-district comparability requirements should reflect clarified national intentions about measuring school capacity.

#### **Exiting Program Improvement (GAO/HRD-93-2R)**

##### **Results in Brief**

Under the Chapter 1 program improvement provisions, schools are held accountable for their students' average gains on standardized achievement tests. When a school's students fail to make sufficient gains on these tests, the school is identified for program improvement; if the students make sufficient gains 1 year later, the school is said to "test out" of program improvement. However, the imprecision associated with achievement test scores can lead to inaccurate judgments about Chapter 1 program effectiveness. Using data from one large state, we estimated the percentage of schools that would have tested out after 1 year. But we also assessed the extent to which these schools might be inaccurately judged as effective or ineffective because of imprecision in achievement test scores.

We found that depending on the minimum standard used for test score gains, one-half to three-quarters of the schools that would have been identified in 1 year would also have tested out the following year. However, when we accounted for the imprecision associated with achievement test scores, we found that a majority of these schools would have been initially identified on the basis of test scores that do not show conclusively that their students fell short of the standard for average achievement gains. In addition, a majority of these schools would have tested out with test scores that do show conclusively that their students exceeded the standard for achievement gains. Thus, for many schools in our analysis that would have tested out, we cannot be highly confident that they

Enclosure

Enclosure

should have been identified in the first place, but we can be highly confident that they exceeded the standard for achievement gains 1 year later.

(This 14-page correspondence is a follow-up to the report, Chapter 1 Accountability: Greater Focus on Program Goals Needed [GAO/HRD-93-69, Mar. 29, 1993].)

**Compensatory Education: Most Chapter 1 Funds in Eight Districts Used for Classroom Services (GAO/HRD-92-136FS)**

**Results in Brief**

In the eight school districts we visited, an average of nearly three out of four Chapter 1 dollars went to classroom services during the 1990-91 school year. Most of these funds were for salaries and expenses for supplemental teachers and teacher aides.

The percentages for classroom services ranged from 65 to 90 percent. The two districts in urban centers had the lowest percentages of expenditures for classroom services. The primary difference between the two urban centers and the other six districts was in the percentage of funds spent for support services, such as counselors or programs to involve parents in their child's education. For example, one urban center spent 65 percent of its Chapter 1 funds for classroom services, the lowest of the eight districts, and 22 percent for support services, the highest of the eight districts. Remaining expenditures in this district were for administration.

The two urban center districts also differed from each other. One spent a smaller percentage of its Chapter 1 funds on classroom services than the other--65 percent compared with 80 percent.

Neither the law nor Chapter 1 regulations specify the percentage of funds districts should spend for classroom services. Districts used a larger percentage of their Chapter 1 funds for classroom services than the percentage of other district funds used for these services. The eight districts spent, on average, 62 percent of their total district funds, excluding Chapter 1 funds, for direct classroom services, compared with 73 percent, on average, of their Chapter 1 funds.

**Remedial Education: Modifying Chapter 1 Formula Would Target More Funds to Those Most in Need (GAO/HRD-92-16)**

**Results in Brief**

Changing the Chapter 1 formula could increase program funds to counties with greater needs. Three circumstances impair the

formula's ability to target program funds to such counties. The legislatively mandated formula does not

- accurately reflect the distribution of poverty-related low achievers,
- provide extra assistance to areas with relatively less ability to fund remedial education services, and
- adequately reflect differences in local costs of providing education services.

A revised funding formula would improve the targeting of Chapter 1 funds if it (1) relied on a more precise method of estimating the number of poverty-related low achievers, (2) used an income adjustment factor to grant additional assistance to areas least capable of financing remedial instruction, and (3) employed a uniform measure of education services costs that recognized differences within and between states.

#### Recommendations to the Congress

We recommend that the Congress revise the Chapter 1 formula to reflect the greater need of counties with high numbers of poor children and grant additional assistance to those counties with relatively less ability to fund remedial education. We further recommend that the Congress, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, develop a cost factor that better reflects educational cost differences among states and school districts.

Title II--Critical Skills ImprovementDepartment of Education: The Eisenhower Math and Science State Grant Program (GAO/HRD-93-25)Results in Brief

The predominately short-term math and science teacher training by the Eisenhower state grant program at the district level may not contribute significantly to achieving the national education goal of making U.S. students first in the world in math and science achievement by the year 2000. Experts believe major changes in curriculums, instructional methods, and teacher expertise in math and science are necessary to achieve that goal. Education program officials and experts believe that the Eisenhower program, which funds a significant amount of short-term training, cannot be expected to produce major changes.

Nonetheless, many of the educators and experts we spoke with see the program, as currently implemented, as very useful for several reasons. For many school districts, the Eisenhower program is the only source of funds for math and science training. Although short-term training may not cause significant changes in teaching, a study published in 1991 by SRI International (formerly Stanford Research Institute) noted that short-term training can play an important role in enhancing teachers' awareness of new knowledge and teaching methods. Also, the program provides the flexibility for districts to provide various training programs to accommodate different teacher training needs. Because of these benefits, the education experts we met with and respondents to Education's request for comments did not believe changes recommended in recent studies--such as requiring that all training be of minimum duration and making program funding totally competitive--were necessary.

About 17 percent of the school districts did not apply for funds for the 1989-90 school year even though they were eligible. Many of these districts would have received very small funding amounts, which they did not believe would be worth the time and resources needed to apply for and report on the grants.

Current data are not available to allow policymakers to assess the impact of the Eisenhower program. The Congress mandated that Education summarize and report descriptive information obtained from the states. Education has been slow to collect and analyze the state reports to be used to fulfill this requirement. In addition, we found that the state reports have many errors, format inconsistencies, and variations in the amount and quality of information reported.

Enclosure

Enclosure

The National Science Foundation, the other major federal funding source for precollege math and science education programs, has agreed formally with Education to improve coordination in training elementary and secondary teachers.

Title IV--Special ProgramsImmigrant Education: Information on the Emergency Immigrant Education Act Program (GAO/HRD-91-50)Results in Brief

Most Emergency Immigrant Education Act (EIEA) funds are used to support academic instructional programs. In school year 1989-90, about 80 percent of the funds were used for this purpose. The remaining 20 percent were used for such purposes as student testing and counseling, parental involvement activities, and administrative services.

We estimate that during school year 1989-90, 700,000 immigrant students met EIEA program eligibility criteria. About 564,000 (85 percent) of these students are in the 529 school districts that receive EIEA funds. The remaining 136,000 immigrant children were dispersed among an estimated 4,000 school districts that did not receive EIEA funding because they had too few eligible immigrant students to qualify for funding or did not apply for funding. About 75 percent of the EIEA students in school districts receiving program funds received at least one EIEA-funded service.

We estimate that, with the exception of the Chapter 1 Program for Educationally Disadvantaged Children, less than one-third of the EIEA students participated in the other federally funded education programs we reviewed. As many as 370,000 EIEA students may have participated in this Chapter 1 program. In the other federally funded programs, our estimate of the number of participating EIEA students ranged from 53,000 in the State Legalization Impact Assistance Grants Program to 185,000 in the Transition Program for Refugee Children.

**Title V--Drug Education (Drug-Free Schools  
and Communities Act of 1986)**

**Drug Education: Rural Programs Have Many Components and Most Rely  
Heavily on Federal Funds (GAO/HRD-92-34)**

**Results in Brief**

Student drug use is a problem in rural areas. Students in rural America use alcohol and other dangerous drugs at rates similar to students in urban and suburban areas, according to information from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Institute survey data show, for example, that the percentage of rural students reporting recent use of alcohol or other dangerous drugs was comparable to the percentage of urban and suburban students. Officials in the districts we visited confirmed these findings.

Most rural school districts are implementing multifaceted programs to combat the student drug problem. We estimate that 99 percent of all rural districts have at least three types of drug education components for students. Many also provide training for teachers and programs to educate and involve parents and others in the community. But most districts see a need to increase their efforts, especially student intervention services and programs to educate and involve parents or others in the community.

Drug-Free Schools grants are the primary source of drug education and prevention funding in over half of all rural school districts. Overall, 86 percent of rural districts received Drug-Free Schools funds for school year 1990-91, and about 66 percent of these paid for over half of their drug education programs with these funds. Nearly all districts use funds from other sources to help meet their drug education and prevention needs.

**Drug Education: School-Based Programs Seen as Useful but Impact  
Unknown (GAO/HRD-91-27)**

**Results in Brief**

School districts are using a wide range of approaches in their Drug-Free Schools programs. But little is known at the local, state, or national level about what approach works best or how effectively the various programs and curricula reduce or prevent drug and alcohol abuse among students.

Overall, the six districts we visited used more than 50 percent of the funds for student assistance (primarily counseling) programs geared to high-risk students in junior and senior high school. They used the remaining funds primarily for training teams of school officials to develop drug prevention programs or on

classroom curricula and materials. Each district covered alcohol abuse in its drug education programs. Districts often were unable to provide the Drug-Free Schools programs to all schools or all students within a school. The reason, they said, was that not enough teachers had yet been trained to teach drug education courses or new programs had not yet been fully implemented.

Evaluations of drug education programs generally have lacked needed scientific rigor and as a result, offer little information on what works. But judging from our discussions with students and principals in 18 schools, the message of drug and alcohol dangers is reaching the children. In the opinion of both students and principals, drug and alcohol abuse among school-age children would be worse without the federally funded Drug-Free Schools programs. Overall, state and local program officials were satisfied with the Department of Education's program direction.

**Drug Abuse Prevention: Federal Efforts to Identify Exemplary Programs Need Stronger Design (GAO/PEMD-91-15)**

**Results in Brief**

The Departments of Education and Health and Human Services (HHS) unnecessarily limited the search for successful drug abuse prevention programs by considering only those with a no-use approach. We believe that until it has been established that a particular approach works best in preventing drug use, it is unreasonable for federal recognition efforts to preclude the examination of many promising strategies.

We found four procedural weaknesses in both recognition efforts: (1) nomination procedures were not sufficiently comprehensive or systematic to allow inclusion of all eligible programs; (2) application criteria were not clearly defined; (3) evidence of effectiveness was not required; and (4) reviewer panels did not include individuals with the methodological skills to pursue or critique effectiveness evidence. Further, the HHS Exemplary Program Study did not conduct site visits to validate and supplement the evidence provided in written applications and did not provide sufficient time to read applications. Finally, with regard to the Drug-Free School Recognition Program, we found that the recommendations of its review teams were subject to further review by a less well-informed steering committee.

We concluded that the search for effective drug abuse prevention programs would be most effective, and public confidence in the results of these federal recognition efforts would be greatest, if their policies were broadened to permit review of any type of promising program and their procedures revised to increase the emphasis on evidence of effectiveness.



Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of HHS remove limitations that prevent consideration and evaluation of a wider variety of prevention strategies, conduct a more systematic and comprehensive search for programs that could merit recognition, clarify application criteria, require data demonstrating programs' effectiveness, and supplement existing review panels and teams with individuals with backgrounds that allow skillful critique of effectiveness evidence. We also recommend that the Secretary of Education eliminate the steering committee's veto power over recommendations and that the Secretary of HHS add site visits to the data collection procedures and expand the work schedule to allow all reviewers sufficient time to assess applications.

Teenage Drug Use: Uncertain Linkages With Either Pregnancy or School Dropout (GAO/PEMD-91-3)Results in Brief

We gathered data on trends in teen drug use since 1979, teen pregnancy since 1972, and dropping out of high school from 1978 and earlier. Teens self-reported slightly less drug use in 1988 than in 1979, but technical problems with the two national surveys make interpretation difficult. It could be that the willingness to report using drugs has declined rather than the actual use of drugs. However, it seems unlikely that this would account for all of the decrease. We found that teen pregnancy, birth, and abortion rates remain relatively stable. The high school dropout rate has steadily decreased during this period.

We found two studies of adequate size conducted since the last report of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control that incorporated both teen drug use and either pregnancy or school leaving. Despite their recent publication, neither used data reflecting teen behavior after 1981. These studies were not only dated, but problems in the studies' methods also limited the usefulness of conclusions about links among teen behaviors. Thus, we were unable to present current findings from sound research on teen drug use and pregnancy or dropping out of school.

**Title VII--Bilingual Education Programs  
(Bilingual Education Act)**

**Limited English Proficiency: A Growing and Costly Educational Challenge Facing Many School Districts (GAO/HEHS-94-38)**

**Results in Brief**

The nation's ability to achieve the national education goals is increasingly dependent on its ability to educate LEP students. Yet many districts--especially those with high numbers of LEP students who are linguistically and culturally diverse--are struggling to educate these students.

Although LEP students are heavily concentrated in a handful of states, almost every state in the nation has counties that have substantial numbers of LEP students. Districts with LEP students face a multitude of challenges beyond the obvious one of the language barrier. Almost half of all LEP students are also immigrants, representing many cultures and speaking a variety of languages, and in many cases come to this country with little or no education. LEP students are often poor and have significant social, health, and emotional needs.

Many LEP students in the five districts that we visited received limited support in understanding academic subjects, such as math and social studies. Districts could not provide bilingual--native language--instruction to all LEP students. Districts reported significant difficulties in obtaining sufficient numbers of bilingual teachers and materials in most languages. This situation was particularly true when student populations were diverse in terms of language and age; one district, for example, had students from almost 90 different language backgrounds. In many cases, students spent much of their time in subject area classes with teachers who did not understand their native language and who had little or no training in how to communicate with them.

Educators and researchers have developed approaches to provide academic subject instruction to LEP students when native language instruction is not possible, although the effectiveness of these promising nonbilingual approaches has not been definitively established. Useful approaches, for example, adapt curricula by making it more visually comprehensible; rely less on the traditional, language-dependent, lecture format; and provide subject area teachers with cultural diversity and language acquisition training to help them relate to LEP students. Implementing these approaches, however, can be difficult because they require substantial time, resources, and expertise.

Enclosure

Enclosure

Federal programs targeted to LEP students provide important types of services for improving the education of these students but limited financial support. These programs provide technical assistance and funds in support of district, state, and national efforts directed to critical areas such as teacher training and student assessment. But federal funding has not kept pace with the increase in the LEP population; in the last decade, funding for the key federal program directed to these students decreased, when inflation is considered, by 40 percent, while the number of LEP students increased by more than 25 percent.

Other**Rural Children: Increasing Poverty Rates Pose Educational Challenges (GAO/HEHS-94-75BR)**Results in Brief

During the 1980s, the total number of rural children declined, and the number of poor children in rural areas increased. From 1980 to 1990, the total number of rural children decreased 6.7 percent, from 11.5 million to 11 million, compared with an increase among poor rural children of 2.5 percent, from 2.14 million to 2.19 million. These patterns mirrored the national decline in the total number of children and growth in the number of poor children during the 1980s. In addition, other risk factors were prevalent among poor rural children, including a growth of 26 percent in the number of single-female-parent families and a continued high percentage of parents with low education levels.

Rural poverty was concentrated by region and by race and ethnicity. For example, poverty rates among rural children were highest in the Southern and Southwestern portions of the United States. Also, in many of these states, the majority of the poor rural children were racial or ethnic minorities.

Rural counties make up over 80 percent of the counties that, under the administration's proposed county eligibility changes, would no longer be eligible for basic or concentration grants. Less than 1 percent of poor rural children live in counties that would be affected by the proposed changes to county eligibility for basic grants. About 12 percent of poor rural children live in counties that would be affected by the changes to county eligibility for concentration grants. The effects of these changes would be spread throughout most of the nation.

**Regulatory Flexibility Programs (GAO/HRD-94-51R)**Results in Brief

All three states we studied provided flexibility to schools, but in different ways: the first state gave all schools greater flexibility to make many decisions formerly made by school districts and the state, the second gave flexibility to selected schools that chose to participate in certain education reform programs, and the third gave flexibility as a reward to schools with high-performing students.

The flexibility granted by the three states enabled many schools to attempt improvement in how classes were organized or how subjects were taught. For example, some schools needed flexibility in

applying state regulations on the age requirements for each grade level as well as class size restrictions to combine students into multigrade groups. Additional state efforts, such as encouraging planning or offering technical assistance, appeared to help schools take advantage of flexibility by giving teachers and principals opportunities to decide what they wanted to do or information about promising educational practices.

Other schools did not attempt improvement and, therefore, did not take advantage of the flexibility provided for a variety of reasons. Some teachers and principals were reluctant to attempt improvement because (1) they did not see a need to improve because their students were performing well and (2) the flexibility provided by the state was only temporary.

Furthermore, the states we visited could not yet determine whether children benefited from school improvement attempts and the flexibility that made some of them possible. This is because many of the states' flexibility efforts were relatively new and the states had not yet fully implemented systems of accountability that could be used to determine the performance of children in relation to high standards. In addition, the effect of allowing greater flexibility in programs for children with special needs could not be determined because the three states were still struggling with how to assess and report on the performance of many of these children, particularly children with limited proficiency in English and some children with disabilities.

(A related report, Regulatory Flexibility in Schools: What Happens When Schools Are Allowed to Change the Rules? is to be released in late April 1994.)

### **Hispanic Dropouts and Federal Programs (GAO/PEMD-94-18R)**

#### **Results in Brief**

Many federal programs are in place to address the high school dropout problem. We examined four key programs for high school and college students and found that whether they served a proportionate share of the Hispanic population could not be precisely determined. The fact that data on participants' ethnicity were unavailable (for the School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program [SDDAP]) or of unknown reliability (for TRIO) contributed to the difficulty of making this determination. Two other factors, each of them related to the design of these programs, are also noteworthy.

First, the design of these programs made it difficult to say what level of service to Hispanics would have been adequate or constituted a proportionate share. The purpose of SDDAP is to help local education agencies demonstrate effective dropout prevention

and reentry programs. Each SDDAP project defined its own target population, which might reflect a special-needs group (such as black teenage mothers) rather than the general at-risk student population in its service area. It is reasonable to assume that every major at-risk group was targeted by at least several projects, but there is no reason to assume that aggregate participation across all projects mirrored the ethnic composition of the at-risk population in the nation as a whole. The conditions of eligibility for the TRIO programs--which generally provide services to help disadvantaged youth enter and complete college--made it very difficult to estimate the size of the eligible population and thus to determine whether Hispanics were served in proportion to their presence in that population. (Hispanics who are not legal residents or citizens are not part of the eligible population in any case.)

Second, the programs are designed to support worthy projects wherever they may be. This funding strategy is not well suited to providing representative coverage of ethnic groups, either nationally or within a state. Even if each project serves a representative cross section of eligible students in its service population, the aggregate results may not be representative if areas in which a particular minority is concentrated remain unserved or underserved. The Department of Education recognizes this limitation and has especially encouraged applications from underserved areas. However, our data suggest that, at least in Florida, some areas with large Hispanic populations remain underserved.

**Poor Preschool-Aged Children: Numbers Increase but Most Not in Preschool** (GAO/HRD-93-111BR)

**Results in Brief**

The increase in the number, diversity, and needs of disadvantaged preschool-aged children poses potential obstacles to achieving the first National Education Goal that all children be ready for school by the year 2000. During the 1980s, the number of children who were most likely to face difficulties upon entering school and who would have benefitted the most from preschool programs--poor, near-poor, and at-risk children--increased substantially. For example, from 1980 to 1990, the number of poor preschool-aged children increased 28 percent--from 1.1 to 1.4 million--compared with an increase among all preschool-aged children of only 16 percent. Further, the poverty rates for preschool-aged children have increased since the decennial census.

Head Start and other preschool programs are now faced with a target population consisting of more poor, near-poor, and at-risk children. Further, poor and near-poor preschool-aged children are

more likely than nonpoor children to be in at-risk categories. To be successful in school, these children may require services that may not currently be provided, such as language or family support services. In 1990, about one-third of poor preschool-aged children participated in preschool. About 35 percent of all poor 3- and 4-year olds participated in preschool compared with over 60 percent of the highest income 3- and 4-year olds. Preschool participation rates for poor 3- and 4-year olds were consistently low; no state had preschool participation rates of above 45 percent. Further, poor preschool-aged children in rural areas participated at even lower rates--about 30 percent.

**School Age Demographics: Recent Trends Pose New Educational Challenges (GAO/HRD-93-105BR)**

**Results in Brief**

Our analysis of decennial census data identified demographic changes that may have important implications for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act's Chapter 1 and other education programs targeted toward populations with special needs. For example, the school age population--children aged 5 to 17 in families--declined by 2.3 million during the 1980s. But during this period, the number of poor school age children increased, and--like the total school age population--became more racially and ethnically diverse. The poor school age population increased by about 6 percent to 7.6 million, with the number of poor Hispanic and Asian children growing at the greatest rates.

Between 1980 and 1990, the poor school age population grew and became more concentrated in the West and Southwest. During this period, the South and East accounted for proportionately fewer of the nation's poor children. However, significant concentrations of school age poor remain in these regions, especially in the South. In 1990, of the 10 states with the highest poverty rate--the percentage of all children who are poor--8 were Southern states.

The poor school age population also increased and became more concentrated in our nation's largest cities. Large cities in the West and Southwest gained poor children while many Eastern and some Southern cities lost them. However, many Southern and Eastern cities maintained very high numbers of poor school age children and substantial school age poverty rates.

With no changes in the Chapter 1 allocation formula, these patterns will substantially affect the distribution of the program's funds to states and counties. Many Western and Southwestern states will gain funds while some states and counties, including those with very high poverty concentrations, are likely to lose funds with the shift to 1990 census data in the Chapter 1 allocation formula.

Other trends we identified have consequences for federal education programs, like the Bilingual Education Act, which support services to other specially targeted child populations. For example, the population of children from immigrant or linguistically isolated households or LEP children became more heavily concentrated in a few states and grew substantially during the 1980s.

**Systemwide Education Reform: Federal Leadership Could Facilitate District-Level Efforts (GAO/HRD-93-97)**

**Results in Brief**

The districts we visited had developed standards for all students at each grade level that included a clear vision of the types of knowledge, skills, and abilities students needed when they graduated. This provided a focus for decisions about all other elements of the system: curriculum and instruction, professional development, and assessment. We saw in these districts a clear focus on learning and a willingness to make changes, either in individual teacher approaches or in district policies, to help students achieve.

Several common factors seemed important in successfully implementing reform in the districts we visited: (1) longevity of the superintendents' tenure and continuity in leadership; (2) ability and funding to obtain outside expertise from private consultants, universities, or state or federal assistance centers; (3) commitment to stay with the reform as it evolved slowly; and (4) capacity to involve teachers in developing and preparing to teach to the new standards. These conditions may be difficult to meet in many districts, particularly in large districts, where superintendents' average tenure is 2 years, and in those that are resource strapped.

Existing federal programs played little part in these districts' reforms, although the districts received funding from a variety of federal categorical programs. District officials said that these programs--targeted on specific groups of at-risk students--were not supportive of reforms directed to improving achievements of all students. On the other hand, federal programs did not seem to hinder significantly reform activities.

Although our work suggests that districts may face difficulties in implementing reform, federal and state leadership could facilitate district efforts in undertaking systemwide reform driven by high standards. Voluntary national standards, if developed, could set a direction for state and local reform efforts. However, voluntary standards alone are not likely to result in widespread reform. Districts implementing systemwide reform may need substantial support.



The federal government could help ensure that districts have available the technical assistance and professional development they need to develop high standards that have local support and to make the curricular, instructional, and assessment changes necessary to meet the standards they set. Federal strategy should balance the need for local ownership of standards and assessments against the potential inefficiencies of over 15,000 districts trying to develop standards and assessments independently. It should also recognize that it may take years to attain consensus on high national standards and related assessments, and, in the meantime, many states and districts are moving ahead with reform. Finally, the federal strategy should recognize that the traditional federal focus on parts of the education system--services for specific groups of students or subject areas--may not strengthen the education system as a whole.

#### Matters for Congressional Consideration

If the Congress wishes to encourage district-level systemwide reform, it could enact legislation to do the following:

- Support efforts to develop voluntary high national and state content standards and support development of exemplary assessment methods appropriate to those standards. Standards developed in a process that includes representatives of districts and schools, as well as state and national educators, may hold the most promise for being useful at the local level.
- Ensure availability of technical assistance and professional development to districts implementing or seeking to implement statewide reform. Professional development here has a broad meaning, including training about reform, participation in developing the reform, and training in instructional techniques and use of new assessments.
- Make existing federal categorical programs more conducive to systemwide reform. Many options exist for changing programs. The Congress could, for example, allow waivers of program requirements or give priority for grants to applicants serving targeted groups in the context of systemwide reform. In making these or other changes, such as those recommended by recent studies of Chapter 1, provision should be made to ensure that the needs of at-risk students are met.

The Congress could also direct the Secretary of Education to do the following:

- Take steps to disseminate information about successful reform efforts. The Secretary could, for example
  - disseminate information about promising district-level models of statewide reform (standards, assessments, curricula) for other districts to use as a starting point, modifying them as necessary for local needs, or
  - support development of networks among districts implementing or seeking to implement systemwide reform.
- Review the scope and functions of the federal research centers, laboratories, and technical assistance centers to determine the extent to which they could assist in systemwide reform efforts, particularly in setting standards, developing curriculum and assessment methods based on the new standards, and designing professional development.

**Department of Education: Long-Standing Management Problems Hamper Reforms (GAO/HRD-93-47)**

**Results in Brief**

The Department of Education lacks a clear management vision of how to best marshal its resources to effectively achieve its mission. Past Education Secretaries have not built an organization that could implement major policy initiatives. Moreover, the Department's history is replete with long-standing management problems that periodically erupt, become the focus of congressional and media attention, and subsequently divert attention from the policy agendas. One example of this is the financial management of the Federal Family Education Loan Program (formerly the Guaranteed Student Loan Program).

To reverse this trend and effect long-term change in the way the Department is managed, the Secretary must give priority attention to changing both the Department's culture and its management systems. Past Department leaders have focused on short-term solutions and made limited use of career employees in management problem-solving. Thus, the Department's current organizational culture leaves it poorly positioned to make long-range changes. Secretary Alexander recognized the need to improve the way the Department is managed and took initial steps to enhance

departmental leadership, transform agency culture, and improve operations. However, we are concerned that this momentum, already dissipating, not be lost.

The National Education Goals constitute a long-term approach to closing the nation's skills and knowledge gaps. But they have not provided a vision of what the Department needs to do to achieve its mission. With the exception of the objectives set forth to remedy problems in student financial assistance, the previous Secretary did not establish a management framework with goals and objectives to be accomplished if the Department were to support its agenda. Moreover, this general lack of management direction was exacerbated by the Department's long-standing practice of filling key technical and policy-making positions with managers who, lacking requisite technical qualifications, were ill equipped to carry out their managerial responsibilities.

Further, the Department's management structure and systems have inadequately supported its major initiatives, such as student aid or special education programs. The Department has no systematic processes for planning, organizing, or monitoring for results and quality improvement. Lacking both clear management goals and a Secretarial focus on management, the Department cannot effectively align its activities to support major initiatives, carry out its programs, or correct identified problems. In our November 1988 transition report, we recommended that the Secretary establish a secretarial-level strategic management process to address these deficiencies. This has not been done.

The Department's major management systems need attention. To give the Secretary the tools for managing the Department, information and financial management systems must be repaired. Managers lack the information and resources to oversee operations; give technical assistance; and ensure financial interests against fraud, waste, and mismanagement. To lead and sustain these efforts, the Department also needs a skilled work force. But the Department does not adequately recruit, train, or manage its human resources to ensure that workers can accomplish its mission and implement secretarial initiatives.

#### Recommendations to the Department of Education

Building on the initial steps taken by the Department over the last 2 years to improve operations, we recommend that the Secretary of Education do the following:

- Articulate a strategic management vision for the Department that demonstrates how its management infrastructure will be developed to support its

mission and such Secretarial policy priorities as the National Education Goals.

- Adopt a strategic management process in the Office of the Secretary for setting clear goals and priorities, measuring progress towards those goals, and ensuring accountability for attaining them. Once implemented in the Office of the Secretary, take the necessary actions to implement this process throughout the Department. Such a process should also provide a vehicle for ensuring both secretarial-level and employee involvement for solving major management problems and for planning and managing long-term change.
- Enhance management leadership throughout the Department and strengthen agency culture by (1) implementing a Department-wide strategic management process, (2) identifying good management practices within the Department and supporting their adoption where appropriate in other parts of the Department, (3) rewarding managers for good management and leadership, and (4) filling technical and policy-making leadership positions with people with appropriate skills.
- Create, for information, financial, and human resources management, strategic visions and strategic plans that are integrated with the Department's overall strategic management process.

#### Planning for Education Standards (GAO/PEMD-93-21R)

##### Results in Brief

We identified four major functions that will need to be performed in sequence to achieve a system of assessments that measures students' attainment of national standards: (1) review and certification of the content standards; (2) design of the assessment system, with special attention to the role of national testing; (3) review of particular assessments within the system; and (4) evaluation of the new system's effects. The proposed legislation covers primarily the first of these functions--that is, content standards review. It gives some attention to preparing for assessment review (the third function). However, our analysis suggests that more should be done at this first stage to anticipate issues of measurement and of system design that will arise as standards are translated into assessments, to examine possible mechanisms for reviewing assessments, and to lay the foundation for evaluation.

The Goals Panel envisioned in the Senate bill S.2 is a high-level policy body that is appropriately constituted to certify standards and assessments, but it will rely on the National Education Standards and Assessments Council (NESAC) to ensure that all relevant concerns about proposed content standards have been identified. With only one or two measurement experts among its members, NESAC is not appropriately constituted to identify measurement concerns. Review of assessments also requires specialized knowledge; no specific mechanism for performing this function has yet been proposed.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provides the only nationally representative measure of student achievement, and policy decisions on NAEP will be critical to the design of the assessment system. The major governance issue is whether these decisions should be made at the level of the Goals Panel, rather than by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). Additional issues will arise with respect to NAGB's responsibilities to determine test content, identify achievement goals, and set policy for linkages between NAEP and other tests. Taken together, these issues suggest a need to redesign governance arrangements for NAEP.

**Educational Achievement Standards: NAGB's Approach Yields Misleading Interpretations (GAO/PEMD-93-12)**

**Results in Brief**

We found that the National Assessment Governing Board's (NAGB) 1990 standard-setting approach was procedurally flawed and that the interpretations that NAGB gave to the resulting National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores were of doubtful validity. While the scores selected represent moderate, strong, and outstanding performance on the test as a whole, we concluded that they do not necessarily imply that students have achieved the item mastery or readiness for future life, work, and study specified in NAGB's definitions and descriptions. The difficulties evident in NAGB's 1990 achievement levels resulted in part from procedural problems but also from the effort to set standards of overall performance (how good is good enough) that would also represent standards of mastery (what students at each level should know and be able to do). NAGB improved its standard-setting procedures substantially in 1992, but the critical issue of validity of interpretation--an issue in NAGB's approach--remains unresolved. We therefore concluded that NAGB's approach is unsuited for NAEP.

We identified several alternative approaches that could be used to establish standards for overall performance on an NAEP test. However, any approach that sets standards purporting to measure mastery of particular subject content will be difficult to use with NAEP as it is currently designed.

We found that, in the case of the achievement levels, NAGB designed and implemented its approach without adequate technical information. In two other cases, however, NAGB made better use of such information. We concluded that NAGB's composition, procedures, and relationships with the Department of Education are inadequate to ensure that policy guidance to NAEP is technically sound.

### Recommendations

Since the current NAGB approach to setting standards has yielded unsupported interpretations of NAEP scores, we recommend (1) that NAGB withdraw its instructions to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to publish 1992 NAEP results primarily in terms of levels of achievement, (2) that NAGB and NCES review the achievement levels approach, and (3) that they examine alternative approaches.

To strengthen NAGB's capacity to give sound policy direction, we recommend that NAGB (1) obtain NCES review of proposed policies; (2) conform to its own policy of prescribing policy ends, not technical details; and (3) nominate for the testing and measurement positions on NAGB people who are trained in the design and analysis of large-scale educational tests. We also recommend that the Congress clarify what it intends NAGB to do with respect to achievement goals and review the division of responsibilities between NAGB and NCES, with a view toward concentrating NAGB's efforts on the representational functions for which it is well designed.

### Educational Testing: The Canadian Experience With Standards, Examinations, and Assessments (GAO/PEMD-93-11)

#### Results in Brief

In Canada, standards are set at the provincial rather than at the national level. Tests are typically tied to each provincial curriculum and measure the degree to which students have achieved specified provincial standards set by teachers, subject-area experts, and provincial education officials. Unlike current practice in the United States, standards and assessments are not established by groups of experts who have no direct responsibility for implementing curriculum and instruction.

Provinces use two different types of tests for two different purposes: assessments cover broad subject areas and monitor the overall education system, and examinations certify individuals' mastery of specific high school courses. Each has characteristics suited to its specific purpose. The Canadian provinces have not found it necessary to attach high stakes to all tests. In the case

of high school examinations, scores are used only when combined with teacher-assigned grades to determine final grades and, thus, help determine student placement, grade promotion, and postsecondary opportunities. The provincewide assessments have no consequences for individual students and are used to monitor the system.

Safeguards have been developed for each type of test to protect individuals from unfair testing practices and misuse of test scores. Provincial funding formulas, although independent of the testing programs, tend to level resources among schools within a province. Thus, in contrast to the United States, Canadian practices prevent the gross disparities in resources among districts that raise concerns regarding the equity of students' opportunities to learn the materials tested. Although most Canadian educators and the public support testing programs, they have no hard evidence nor independent yardstick demonstrating that the tests themselves have directly improved instruction or learning.

**Student Testing: Current Extent and Expenditures, With Cost Estimates for a National Examination (GAO/PEMD-93-8)**

**Results in Brief**

In 1990-91, U.S. students did not seem to have been overtested. Systemwide testing took about 7 hours per year for an average student (half in direct testing and half in related activity) and cost about \$15 per student, including the cost of the test and staff time. The typical test was the familiar, commercially developed four- or five-subject multiple-choice exam. The less common performance-based tests--in which students write out some answers--cost more (an average of about \$20 per student), but were considered by some testing officials to be an improvement and a preferable direction for further development. We estimated the overall cost of systemwide testing in 1990-91 at \$516 million.

Three models are commonly discussed for future national testing, including (1) a single national multiple-choice test, (2) a single national performance-based test, and (3) a decentralized system of clusters of states, each cluster using different performance-based tests. We estimated that none of these would cost as much as the multi-billion-dollar estimates that some have put forth. The first option would be least expensive (\$160 million per year). The third (clusters), the one advocated by the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST), would likely cost about \$330 million per year after about \$100 million in start-up development costs, and the costs could be expected to decline over time. Any choice among the three options would involve trade-offs. For example, the least expensive multiple-choice test would be familiar and provide

the most comparable data, but would be the most duplicative and might not be as valued by many state and local testing officials. Clusters of performance tests would cost more and would not necessarily be comparable, but may be better linked to local teaching and would be viewed more favorably by many testing officials.

Those officials responding to our survey did not oppose more tests but expressed concerns over the purpose, quality, and locus of control over the content and administration of further tests. They preferred tests of high technical quality that would be useful for diagnosing problems at the state or local level. However, many respondents expressed opposition to the general idea of a national test.

#### Matters for Congressional Consideration

We believe that if a decision is made to implement a national examination system, the Congress may wish to ensure the involvement of local teachers and administrators in test development and scoring and of state testing officials in planning and implementation. This should build support and improve the likelihood of success because state and local educators will probably play a considerable role in administering any national test.

If the Congress wishes to encourage the development of a well-accepted and widely used national examination system, it should also consider means for ensuring the technical quality of the tests. Test quality will require an enduring commitment and sufficient resources.

(104786)