THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

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HEARING ON THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

Thursday, February 28, 2002

U.S. House of Representatives,

Subcommittee on Education Reform,

Committee on Education and the Workforce,

Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m. in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Michael Castle [chairman of the subcommittee], presiding.

Present: Representatives Castle, Biggert, Keller, Osborne, Kildee, Scott, Woolsey, Solis, Davis, Owens, Payne, Kind, and Kucinich.

Staff Present: Blake Hegeman, Legislative Assistant; Patrick Lyden, Professional Staff Member; Doug Mesecar, Professional Staff Member; Deborah Samantar, Committee Clerk/Intern Coordinator; Bob Sweet, Professional Staff Member; Heather Valentine, Press Secretary; Denise Forte, Minority Legislative Associate/Education; Maggie McDow, Minority Legislative Associate/Education; and Alex Nock, Minority Legislative Assistant/Education.

Chairman Castle. I call the Education Reform Subcommittee to order.

I will give a brief opening statement, and call on Mr. Kildee for an opening statement. Secretary Whitehurst will then testify. We will have questions from the members of the panel who are available, and then we will go to the second panel with the same format. Each of them will testify. We have some introductions from members and then we will have questions.

There may be votes, we understand, at 11:30. Hopefully, we won't have to break. We can keep it going by rolling people and maybe we'll have to break. Then we'll try to go from there to some sort of a finish. So we'll see.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

I would, obviously, like to welcome everybody here today in preparation for the reauthorization of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, known as OERI.

Two years ago, I introduced H.R. 4875, the Scientifically Based Education Research, Statistics, Evaluation and Information Act, to reform OERI and to institutionalize new standards of quality to ensure that our Federal investments produce results where they matter most - in the classroom.

Then and now, I am seeking to insulate our Federal research, evaluation, and statistics activities from partisan or undue political influences, put the needs of our teachers and students first, insist on the use of rigorous scientific standards to identify and disseminate effective strategies and methods, and ensure that program evaluations are impartial.

Today's hearing will focus on the reauthorization of OERI and our discussion will be based, in large part, on H.R. 4875, which was unanimously approved by the subcommittee last Congress.

It is my hope that we will also discuss my new legislation, H.R. 3801, the Education Sciences Reform Act, which I believe incorporates the best ideas of H.R. 4875 and other reauthorization proposals.

During the 106th Congress, we all agreed that the reform and restructuring of OERI were needed and we agreed that improving student achievement, not protecting the current structure, was our main objective.

H.R. 4875, as reported by the subcommittee, established a bipartisan benchmark in the reauthorization process. It created a more independent Federal education research, statistics, and evaluation entity.

It simplified the Federal education research process and it provided independent objective evaluations of Federal education programs, among other things.

Much like H.R. 4875, the new bill would replace OERI with a new Academy of Education Sciences that would provide the infrastructure for the undertaking of coordinated and high quality education research, statistics gathering, program evaluation, and dissemination.

The Academy would be located within the Department of Education, but it would function as a separate office under the direction of a National Board for Education Sciences.

I believe this change will help ensure that the Academy's activities are carried out with the greatest levels of independence and integrity.

We all know that tried and true information is critical to the development of sound education policy. For this reason, our bill adopts clear standards and definitions to define the degree of precision that must be used when individuals and organizations conduct education research with Federal funds.

As many of us will recall, these definitions were threaded throughout the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act. Then, through a new Knowledge Utilization Office, information on the findings of the scientifically valid research would be disseminated in an understandable format, ensuring that teachers and school administrators receive the latest information on proven learning programs and strategies.

Finally, the new legislation attempts to fill the need for high quality technical assistance by giving the Secretary of Education new authority to oversee a regionally based, consumer-driven grant program.

As envisioned in my bill, the grant program would combine and direct existing funds to address issues and questions regarding core academic areas, such as reading, math, science, and technology.

The regional structure would also be used to assess local needs and provide Federal education program support to local schools and school districts, including the administration and implementation of Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs.

This change, I believe, is significant. As I am sure we will hear today, school administrators, educators, and parents are already examining various strategies and methods to help their students meet and exceed new and more challenging standards of achievement and accountability. And I want quality education research, not fads or anecdotes, to inform their decisions on the best way to improve student learning and narrow achievement gaps.

By holding education research, evaluations, and statistics to new standards of quality, improving the focus of these activities so they address the needs of educators and policymakers, and laying the framework for the dissemination of high quality, scientifically valid information, I believe we can build the foundation to improve the education of our children and all of our nation's students. I believe our bill, H.R. 3801, is a good start.

I wish to thank everyone here for taking the time to be with us. As I said, in just a few moments, we will proceed with the introduction of OERI Assistant Secretary Whitehurst.

I will yield to Ranking Member Kildee at this time for any statements he may wish to make.

WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C. – SEE APPENDIX A

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MINORITY MEMBER DALE E. KILDEE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. Kildee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to be here with you as we continue our efforts this Congress at reauthorizing the Office of Education Research and Improvement and other related programs.

I want to especially welcome Dr. Whitehurst to what I believe is his first appearance before this committee as the Assistant Secretary for OERI.

The research, technical assistance, dissemination, and evaluation activities of the Department are critical if we are to improve the educational achievement of our nation's students.

The 1994 reauthorization of OERI, spearheaded by one of our experts in this area, Major Owens, increased the emphasis and the quality of these activities within the Department.

It is my hope and expectation that we will be able to reach a bipartisan consensus and reauthorization of OERI and enable a bill to be signed into law this year, Mr. Chairman.

Our work last Congress resolved a major difference between myself and Governor Castle over the establishment of an independent Federal agency outside the Department of Education to administer OERI's function.

While additional differences remain, I am confident and look forward to working together to resolve those outstanding issues.

A vital focus on our deliberations should be a stronger methodology for dissemination of research based best practices in a fashion that can be understood by local and state level consumers.

I do not believe that research is disseminated in a user-friendly fashion presently and I am hopeful that we can improve upon existing efforts and that effective dissemination becomes a priority for this administration.

It is also critical to invest additional resources if we are to ensure that we produce quality research that can reach and inform the local level in an understandable and useful format.

For too long, the appropriation for OERI has been pitifully small compared to other Federal research efforts.

Unfortunately, this administration's budget largely maintains its status quo on funding since it eliminates a number of technical assistance initiatives.

Lastly, I want to briefly express a concern over the impact of scientifically based research in reading, specifically the Department's implementation of the Reading First program.

Reading First's use of scientifically based research should not be used by the Department of Education to force states and localities to use a one-size-fits-all curriculum.

Rather, as is clearly articulated in the legislation and the accompanying report language, states and localities should be free to choose from a wide variety of reading programs and approaches, so long as they meet the requirements of the statute.

In closing, Governor, I want to thank you for holding this hearing and I look forward to working with you on this issue.

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Mr. Kildee. We've worked through some differences here - it is not quite as independent as it was before.

If we work through enough, maybe we could just skip this hearing and proceed to the markup, but I guess that's not a proper thing to ask for at this point. And, there are still some things we have to work out.

But let me just say not only to Mr. Kildee and to all the members here, but also to those in the audience who are interested in this bill that we really have been on the same wavelength from the beginning about making this work better. Assistant Secretary Whitehurst has as well, and it's a question of working out details. We do want to move this pretty quickly.

So if you do have input, you really need to get it back to us. We are looking for a resolution that we can all say, ‘hey, this is a better way of doing it.’

And I haven't talked to a lot of people, quite frankly, who defend the old structure out there. Even the insiders, to be candid, when you really have a chance to talk to them, say, ‘hey, this just isn't working as well as it could.’

So it's a chance to make progress. This is not the kind of bill people are going to run for political office on.

Hopefully we can do something in the best interests of education and of our kids.

But, let's go to the Assistant Secretary. Russ Whitehurst is the Assistant Secretary for OERI. He was the lead professor and chair in the Department of Psychology at the State University of New York at Stoneybrook, where he taught since 1970.

During this time, he has held several academic and leadership posts within the university, including Director of Applied Child and Family Studies, Chairman of the University Committee on

Child and Family Studies, and Professor of Clinical Psychology and Pediatrics.

Today, his tenure at OERI marks the first time in the research office's 22-year existence that it has been headed up by an education researcher. That may tell you something right there.

For that reason, I have especially appreciated his strong personal interest in revamping OERI to generate scientifically valid research that will empower our states, school districts, and educators with proven programs and methods to help educate our children - particularly those who are disadvantaged or limited English proficient.

I look forward to working with him to pass an OERI reform bill this year.

Mr. Secretary, we are pleased to have you here and the time is yours.

About the clock, so all the witnesses understand, and I think most of you have been here before, but you get a green light at four minutes - they're right there in the little boxes. You get a yellow light at one minute, and then you get the red light. And, obviously, when you see the red light, you should start thinking about trying to sum up and finish up at that point.

Secretary Whitehurst.

STATEMENT OF GROVER "RUSS" WHITEHURST, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. Whitehurst. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Kildee. You may not remember that the previous occasion in which I was scheduled to testify was September 13th. I did not have that opportunity. A lot has happened to us all since then.

I am extremely pleased to be able to be here today and to offer my testimony.

Last year's bipartisan reauthorization bill was a very important step toward improving the vigor and the relevance of education research.

The Administration and I support the fundamental principles underlying that bill. We applaud you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Kildee, and the members of the committee, for your efforts.

The shared understanding of the Congress and the administration about the role of research in educational reform was evidenced vividly in the recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

In that bill, the phrase ``scientifically based research'' appears 110 times.

If scientifically based research is going to be the key to reforming our most important Federal education programs, then we better make sure that the Federal office with the principal responsibility for generating that research has the tools it needs to get the job done.

Let me give you my reflections on how new legislation could help us move forward towards our overriding goal of making education an evidenced-based field.

There are problems with our current administrative structure. For instance, we have five internal National Research Institutes with overlapping responsibilities.

Should our new research initiative in reading comprehension be the responsibility of the At-Risk Institute or the Achievement Institute? And, isn't it also relevant to the Early Childhood Institute and the Post-Secondary Institute?

It would be much, much better if we had the ability to organize and reorganize ourselves as needed to pursue the particular research topics at hand.

We believe, consistent with your bill last year, and the bill introduced this morning, that new legislation should provide for a simple and uncluttered organizational framework.

A director would head an Academy of Education Sciences that would include three centers responsible for research, statistics, and evaluation, each with its own commissioner.

The recent National Research Council report on scientific research and education concluded that building a scientific culture within the Department's research agency is a prerequisite for all else.

We agree. In order to do this, we need to hire scientists for accepted service positions outside the regular civil service. OERI currently has this authority. We want to see it continue.

Building a scientific culture at the Department's research agency also requires stability and leadership.

OERI has had more assistant secretaries and acting assistant secretaries than it has had years of existence. We need legislation that enhances the likelihood that the Director and the commissions of the principal centers will serve for a substantial period of time.

At the NIH and other Federal agencies, the initiation of grant competitions requires only internal review. In the Department of Education, in contrast to all other Federal agencies, we are required by law to regulate separately for each competition and each review.

Establishing standing peer review panels also requires regulation. New legislation that would release us from the heavy burden of regulation is very important.

The research activities within the Department have sometimes been seen by the outside community and Congress as more subject to political involvement than would be the case for

research conducted at the NIH or NSF.

The centers for research, statistics, and evaluation need to conduct work that is based on sound science and that is independent of politics or partisanship.

We look forward to working with the committee toward legislation that supports that goal.

We believe it is critically important to separate the research agency from the responsibility for delivering educational programs and technical assistance.

Over the years, an increasing number of such activities have been assigned to OERI, to the point that over two-thirds of the budget is devoted to non-research programs.

The agency responsible for evaluating program effectiveness cannot fulfill its role if it is delivering the very educational programs and technical assistance that it is supposed to evaluate.

We need a solid intellectual connection between scientific research and technical assistance, but we believe it is very important to keep these two types of activity operationally distinct.

The research agency needs adequate resources in order to support a sustained and cumulative research effort in the areas of its responsibility.

The entire research and statistics budget of OERI for Fiscal Year 2002 is less than one half of one percent of the Department's discretionary budget, and the core research and dissemination budget is only $122 million.

I am extremely pleased that the President is committed to increasing funding for education research. Accordingly, he has proposed an unprecedented 44 percent increase for Fiscal Year 2003 in the core research budget.

We need the support of Congress in making an appropriation consistent with the President's request, so that we can move forward on the very important work that needs to be done.

This is a unique and, I think, an unparalleled opportunity to begin a process that will make American education an evidence-based field.

If we succeed in that task, historians may look back at our actions as building the foundation for a new era of learning and teaching, an era that propelled the United States into another century of preeminence.

Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GROVER "RUSS" WHITEHURST, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, WASHINGTON, D.C. – SEE APPENDIX B

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. We appreciate your testimony and your interest, as well as the cooperation of your staff for working on it.

To begin, I would like to ask a couple of questions, and let me start with this.

This is something that has bothered me. I'm not an expert on this - you are much more knowledgeable than I, and others who here as well.

So when I start talking about scientifically based research, et cetera, it's a little vague to me.

I don't understand why the most basic research practices that take place in other fields, quality research designs, carefully constructed hypotheses, peer reviewed grants, replication, don't take place in education.

It seems to me, in education, we come up with an idea, then try it in the classrooms, and someone says, "Gee, it really works." Then there's a little pilot thing of it, there's a little comparison that is made, and that kind of thing.

Are we addressing this problem in this bill or should we address this problem, or is it such a soft science, if you will, as a social science, that you can't do this?

My view is you can and I want to make sure that we are moving at least in that direction.

Mr. Whitehurst. I don't think there is any doubt that we can. If you look within the existing research literature, you will find many instances in which it has been done and it has been done well.

But it is, I think, a fact, and the National Research Council has endorsed the view that education has, up until recently, not adopted the procedures of other fields, like medicine or agriculture or even, relevant to your comment, social and behavioral fields, like criminal justice and social welfare, in employing the methods of science as a basis for education decision-making.

I think that we are close to a point where the right investments, the right structure, and a scientific culture in place to move that forward could get us to a tipping point where education moves towards being an evidence-based field.

I think we are very close to being there. Frankly, I was attracted to this position because I think there is an opportunity to move things in that direction and to the point where it would be difficult to move back.

If you look at medicine, for example, it's really only been within the last 75 years that medicine has become an evidence-based field.

My grandmother's brother was a country doctor and he got in his buggy with his horse and he drove around and he delivered babies. He probably did a little bit for fevers. I don't think he did a lot of harm, but he did not have much in his medicine kit that was really helpful.

It was really the development of biochemistry, the science of physiology which allowed medicine to get to the point where it had a basic understanding of disease. Then it was the bringing on board of clinical trials, experiments in the field in 1948, which have skyrocketed now to the point that there are 10,000 of them. That allowed medicine to take basic science and determine how it actually worked.

We can do that in education. We need to do it. This administration, the Secretary and I are committed to seeing that all of our funding, all of our dissemination efforts are based on strong science and are moving toward the goal of having educational decisions based on evidence and science.

Chairman Castle. Let me come back to that, but let me ask another question first, and that is a direct question of what, if any, changes would you like to see in the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 that was just introduced.

We have worked with your office, to a degree, on it, but we need to know that.

Mr. Kildee will probably ask these questions because I don't know the numbers that well at this point, but we need to know them very well before we pass this legislation. There is little bit of a difference in terms of that in the explanations, because you say that the core budget has been increased.

Mr. Kildee said something about technical budgets or something. It sounds to me like there is more than one budgeting item here and we need to get the numbers resolved.

But I need to get some sense, and I don't mind looking at additional spending if we have to do it. I'm not wild about more spending, but I will look at that. I want to make sure that it's something you can do, that we're not just throwing money at something for the sake of doing it. That it's something you can manage.

So in answering any questions about any other changes, I am concerned about the authorization of dollars, as well, because I want the research to work. That is what I'm after.

If it's less money, fine. If it's more money, fine. I just want it to work.

But are there any general suggestions, things we should still be looking at in this legislation?

Mr. Whitehurst. As you know, Mr. Castle, the legislation was just introduced this morning. I took a look at it-.

Chairman Castle. You had an hour. I don't understand what the problem is.

Mr. Whitehurst. I've looked at it and have some thoughts that I would be glad to share with you and your staffers.

The Administration has not had a chance to go through it yet, so I'd rather not speak on this occasion.

Chairman Castle. I don't have a problem with that, but we do need to hear from you rapidly, and include those numbers when you do.

Mr. Whitehurst. I think with regard to the budget issues, the President did propose what was rounded to a 44 percent increase in the core research and dissemination budget.

I think it was an 11 or 12 percent increase in the statistics budget.

I believe that is an amount of money that we can digest and use productively in 2003. I hope, in doing that, we can demonstrate to the Administration, to this committee, and to the Appropriations Committee that when we are given additional money, we can spend it well and produce results that are useful to the American people. And, with that as a foundation, we would be in a position to ask for additional increases in the out years.

Chairman Castle. I'm not going to ask you to answer this, because I'm running out of time, but I'm just going to mention it and it goes back to the first point.

In the No Child Left Behind legislation, the expression scientifically based research is mentioned a 100 times with a lot of little definitions - or whatever they may be.

I think it's very important that we have a consensus on what scientifically based research is before it's all said and done in this legislation. And it's something I think we need, just as we do on the dollars, we need to keep an eye out for that, as well.

I hope it has been achieved, but it's an area, I think, of particular concern, because I think that's a fundamental shift we need as far as education research is concerned.

You don't need to comment now, but I just wanted to leave you with that suggestion.

Mr. Kildee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, Dr. Whitehurst, you bring great credentials to your job. I really look forward to working with you and I think you can be very, very helpful both to the people out there being served by education and to this committee as we make our policy.

One of the most critical tools that the Department can use to judge the quality of research is peer review. How would you envision you would utilize peer review?

Mr. Whitehurst. That is an excellent point, Mr. Kildee. In my submitted testimony, I made several remarks about the need to establish a culture of science within the research agency and the Department of Education.

Peer review is the fundamental mechanism used in science for determining what's good and what is not so good, what should be funded, what shouldn't be funded, what should be published, what shouldn't be published, what should be disseminated, and what should not.

Peer review, however, is only as good as the peer reviewers who are selected to conduct that review.

I have noted in my testimony, worked on by the current board, that an examination of the process of peer review in 1999 found three committees reviewing research that had on them no one with any competence in the areas of the topics that were being reviewed. There were no real credentials.

My efforts to date have been focused extensively on the issue of peer review. We have a number of new initiatives we are putting in place this year.

My senior research advisor and I go over in detail everyone who is a potential reviewer, examine their credentials, look at their vitae, make sure that they have competence, both methodological competence and substantive competence in the areas that are important.

The legislation that we would like to see passed would allow us to set up standing committees. We cannot do that now very easily.

By a standing committee, I mean this. If we have, as we are initiating, a research program in reading comprehension that seeks to better understand what the principles, processes, and approaches are that can help children understand well what they read once they have learned how to read - it would be very useful to have a standing committee of experts, peers, if you will, who would not only be experts in the area and serve to advise me and other people in OERI, but who also can serve as a core of peer reviewers for research as it goes forward.

So I think the key is to select good peer reviewers. We can do a better job with new legislation than we're currently able to do in defining the rules, regulations and procedures that those peer reviewers should use. We have drafts of those documents ready to go, but fundamentally it is a people business and if you get the right scientists with the right credentials and the right understanding of how the game works on these peer review committees, I think you get a very different outcome than if you don't.

So it is a very critical part of the process.

Mr. Kildee. All of us could pick people who review something, who we would expect to have one point of view. So we have to avoid that subjectivity, and I think you are on that path of trying to achieve that yourself.

Let me ask you this, too. The Department has put out an RFP to set up a new dissemination system under the OERI, despite the fact that Congress is now only in the very beginning stage of OERI reauthorization, why has the Department moved ahead on this given that the authority for this new dissemination system may not exist as outlined in the RFP?

Mr. Whitehurst. Are you referring to the What Works Clearinghouse, Mr. Kildee?

Mr. Kildee. Yes.

Mr. Whitehurst. Well, we believe that the authority is very clearly stated in the current statute and exists in the spirit of every reauthorization proposal or draft or conversation that we have seen.

It is reflected in the comments that you made to us this morning that, to date, a fundamental gap exists in terms of serving the American people, for making available high quality evidence in a form that is useable, understandable, and easily digestible. We thought it was very important to move forward with that plan.

We have sought the advice of legal counsel in the Department as to whether there was, in fact, authority to do this. And, the sense was that it is clearly there in the statute.

We believe it is important to provide, in the context of ESEA, as quickly as we can, information that will allow people to make decisions based on the best available evidence that is out there.

So we have moved ahead rapidly with that.

Mr. Kildee. I would suggest, inasmuch as the Governor here wants to move this bill a little more rapidly than I want, that since we may move this bill ahead rapidly, you might want to slow down the RFP so we can make sure the authority exists for that RFP.

Mr. Whitehurst. I appreciate your comments and we are certainly interested in that and would be pleased to talk with you about it.

Mr. Kildee. Thank you.

Mr. Whitehurst. Thank you.

Chairman Castle. I think Mr. Kildee was going to say ``we'' want to move it as fast as possible, but we'll get to that in a moment.

Mrs. Biggert?

Mrs. Biggert. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, I think that we are all concerned about the regional laboratory program and the real value that they bring to education.

I have a lab, the North Central Regional Laboratory, in Oak Brook, Illinois - in my congressional district. I certainly support the effort to restructure OERI, and I'm a co-sponsor of Chairman Castle's bill.

But the responsibility for transitioning these labs to the new regime will reside with your office. And, as I have said, I think that these laboratories have certainly provided value.

So how will you help them through the transition and ensure that they are left strong enough to compete?

Mr. Whitehurst. Let me say that I have met, in the last several months, several times with the CEOs of the organizations that run the regional labs, including the regional lab in your district. I have found them to be a very impressive group of people. I found that their organizations and labs, in many instances, provide very valuable services to the states and the local educational agencies in their regions.

There is a great deal of variability in the lab product. There are regions like yours where the chief state school officers tell me that their lab is great, “They help me all the time, and we need that sort of assistance.”

There are other areas in which the chief state school officers say to me, “We have a regional lab? I did not know that.”

I think the intent of the bill that was introduced this morning, as well as the thinking within the Department, is that we need to come up with structures and mechanisms so that every lab can be driven by the needs of its region and also conserve those needs as well.

Again, I think this is a very valuable resource. I have been working a lot with Secretary Neuman to try to bring together the labs and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education in an effort to help with the implementation issues in ESEA.

There is a growing sense, I think, throughout the Department that the labs are a valuable resource. We need to be very careful in whatever transition we do to preserve those resources and make them available.

Mrs. Biggert. Thank you. Maybe this is a little bit off the topic, but the NAEP tests have certainly been an area generating a lot of discussion, as far as how this is going to work and looking at the performance of students.

Have you had a lot of comments on that test? Are there going to be revisions or, if you know, how this is going to work in the future?

Mr. Whitehurst. I have been involved in many discussions on this issue, both within the Administration, with staffers and members of Congress, with the National Center for Education Statistics, with the Education Testing Service, which is a principal contractor, and certainly with NAGB.

It is important for all of us to understand that under the statute, this is a NAGB responsibility. My role is to sort of be a gadfly around the edges.

I serve as ex-officio on the NAGB board. I know that the NAGB and the NCS have a process in place, I was briefed on it last week, to thoroughly review all of the existing questions, including those that have already been released out on the web, to take special care that they be non-political, non-partisan, and to include all the other characteristics indicated in the statute, and to put in place a new process to review these questions going forward. To make sure that they are the sort of questions that not only focus on the content of interest in a valid way, but that they are also questions that will not be offensive to people who take the test, or the parents of people who take the test.

Mrs. Biggert. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Whitehurst. Thank you.

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Mrs. Biggert. Mr. Scott.

Mr. Scott. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Whitehurst, you're going to get a lot of questions on process and organization.

I would like to kind of cut through that and figure out what you are doing in terms of providing information on subjects such as dropout prevention, challenges to educating at-risk youth, and urban children, and diverse cultures, the effect of resource allocation on educational results, methods on reducing the achievement gaps, and what kind of education would most likely increase the likelihood of employment and self-sufficiency and less likely to end up on drugs.

After whatever structure you've got, what are we getting in terms of subjects like that?

Mr. Whitehurst. The issue that you address, I think, is an issue of focus and an issue of relevance. As I examined the portfolio of activities currently funded by OERI, I noted that there are some that fit into each of the topics you have mentioned.

We do not have the resources to cover all of those topics and to cover all of those topics well. And a result of the dispersion of our resources over a large number of topics with little pockets of money in each of those is that we have not been able, I think, to address any of them with the force and with the sort of cumulative effort that is necessary to produce real solutions to these problems.

We need to establish some very clear priorities and pursue them. Many of the topics that you mentioned will be among our priorities.

Let me, if you don't mind, mention some things that we have initiated this year.

As I alluded to previously in my comments to Mr. Kildee, we have initiated a new initiative in reading comprehension. We think there is now a lot of research to guide the process of and teaching with regard to early reading and reading in the elementary grades. There is much less to tell us what happens when you have a child in junior high school who isn't reading well and how do you remedy that and how do you catch that child.

We need to understand the reading comprehension process, we need to understand how to measure it and we need to understand how to deliver educational interventions that help these kids.

It is very well and good to focus on prevention efforts, and that is the intent of ESEA and Reading First and Early Reading First. We have a generation of kids who are out of elementary school or shortly going to be out of elementary school.

So I think it's very important. Another area in which we have launched an initiative that we hope to be able to continue in future years is to understand what sorts of preschool programs, in fact, enable children to enter school ready to learn.

We find that states are moving increasingly towards state sponsored pre-K. The State of Georgia, for example, has a universal pre-K program.

You go to their web page, you find that it lists seven preschool curricula that are approved, and very little research on any of those curricula that would tell us what is good and what isn't.

Mr. Scott. You mentioned a lot of different things. OERI has been around for a long time.

Have we gotten this information in results of the research in such a format that we can actually use it? We would need it, as legislators, to make sure it got into the legislation and teachers would need it in the format not of an abstract of research, but in lesson plans.

Has it been converted into something, translated into something useful?

Mr. Whitehurst. In some cases, certainly it has. Success for All, which is the largest single comprehensive school reform model used in the United States, was developed and funded through OERI.

Efforts at CREST, our research center at UCLA on assessment, have provided significant guidance on how assessment systems can be structured so that they provide the most useful information to teachers and parents.

In other cases, as I have indicated, we simply have substantial gaps in the knowledge base. We not only have gaps in achievement that you are very appropriately concerned with, but we have

significant gaps in the knowledge that would help us address those achievement gaps.

Mr. Scott. I'm going to try to get in another quick question. My time is just about up.

Do you incorporate, in terms of your research, research that you did not fund, but somebody else did, and try to get that into your knowledge base and are you coordinating your research with NIJ and others to figure out what kind of holistic research, anti-drug programs and things like that?

Mr. Whitehurst. Yes. The research that we will review and disseminate, both currently within the Education Resources Information Clearinghouse, and going forward with the What Works Clearinghouse. It will be information from all sources. It doesn't make any difference who funded it.

And we have a number of cooperative programs going with the NIH, with the NSF, and with Justice to focus on the issues that you talked about.

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Mr. Scott. Mr. Keller.

Mr. Keller. Good morning, Dr. Whitehurst. Good to see you.

I personally believe that the very best thing your office can do is to be a user-friendly clearinghouse of high quality information for local school superintendents and school boards.

I'm going to ask you some questions about how we disseminate that information to them.

But let me begin by giving you a real world example. Let's say that I'm a local school superintendent in central Florida and I am cash strapped, like a lot of school superintendents are, and only have so many dollars to put into various programs, and I hear that class size is a good thing.

One of the benefits of having high quality research is that it would teach me that, well - class size does make a difference. If I've read the articles on K through 3, and if I'm concerned about reading scores, in particular, it is really important to have those small classes for kindergarten and first grade, 20 or less.

I can then target my resources there. Let's just assume what I said is true, just for the sake of argument.

As to the procedure, how are we going to make that information very user-friendly so the superintendent can get it? And how are you going to let him know that there is a web site out there or that there is information that discusses both sides?

Mr. Whitehurst. Again, that is exactly our intent with the What Works Clearinghouse effort.

Currently, at least for some topics, and school size, the one you mentioned, is one of those topics with a fairly large amount of literature.

If you go to our current dissemination effort, which is the Education Research and Information Clearinghouse, ERIC, and click on class size, the problem is that you will generate hundreds of hits.

Some of those lead to articles or scientific papers or summaries that accurately and informatively describe the research in that area. Many others do not.

The descriptions, when they are of high quality, in many cases, are not framed in a way that would be particularly useful to the school superintendent, and it is just very difficult.

If you look at the local family physician or pediatrician, for example, we really don't expect those professionals to go do a thorough review of hundreds of papers themselves to decide which drug to dispense in the office.

The Federal Government has a role in vetting that information and providing it to them. We think it is very important that the U.S. Department of Education provide that information to practitioners and school superintendents and educators in the form that you are mentioning, and so that it is user-friendly, pre-adjusted, understandable, and useful in decision-making.

Mr. Keller. Say, there are 5,000 articles on that subject. You can take that and create a little order out of chaos and say here are the leading articles that say class size is a big deal, here are some articles that say, well, it's not that big a deal and it's the high quality teacher. Then they can make their own decision.

Mr. Whitehurst. What we would like to do is perhaps provide at the first level just some graphic information; how much research there is on this topic.

You can imagine a bar graph, there's a lot, there's a little, there's none. What quality is it? Would the definitions of quality be transparent to develop publicly and open for anybody to look at? What is the quality? What does it suggest in terms of action? That is, does it suggest class size reduction is good, for what area, and what circumstance?

And then people could drill down, if they want, and look at the particular studies that support that conclusion and the rules that we are applying.

Mr. Keller. Let's assume that you have achieved that. You have a user-friendly clearinghouse that Republicans and Democrats and liberals, and that everybody agrees is objective. You have laid out both sides and it is user-friendly.

Now I want to go to the marketing side. How does the local guy in Orlando, Florida know about it? Are you going to advertise in trade journals that there is a web site or are you going to send blast faxes to these people?

How are they going to know that this is a good source of info to go to?

And that's my last question, and I will yield back.

Mr. Whitehurst. Well, we will certainly use a variety of mechanisms to let people know. I think a principal one, however, will be the chief state school officers - with whom I and the other assistant secretaries, secretaries, and other members of the Department have met at an historic occasion at Mt. Vernon a few weeks ago to perform a partnership to implement ESEA in the way intended by Congress.

The chiefs are hungry for information of the sort that we've talked about. They indicate that their school superintendents are hungry for information.

I think once it is there and people have confidence in it and find it easy to use, that the chiefs will do a wonderful job in letting the superintendents and LEAs in their states know that it's there.

Mr. Keller. Thank you, Dr. Whitehurst. I will yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Whitehurst. Thank you, Mr. Keller.

Chairman Castle. We are trying to straighten out the votes before we proceed. Sorry for the delay.

Apparently, there was one vote. If it's possible, somebody could go vote now and come back, we could continue the hearing.

I don't know if we can get that done, but that would be helpful.

In the meantime, we will continue for another ten minutes or so, at least. Hopefully, we can keep it rolling.

I will call on Ms. Woolsey now for her questioning, and maybe we'll get one more round in before we have to close down.

Ms. Woolsey. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, I am going to ask you a few questions on the National Research Center, so you can put that hat on now.

In California, we have two national research centers, one in Santa Cruz and one at UCLA - not in my district, but very important to our state.

These centers are focusing on improving education for students at risk, at risk because of language and cultural diversity.

So what we would like to know is, from your perspective, how important is the long-term research that goes along with these centers and the authorization of the National Research Centers to your program?

Mr. Whitehurst. With respect to the university-based research centers, our current legislation requires us to conduct our activities using two and only two funding mechanisms.

Field-initiated research, on which we have to invest 25 percent of our funding, and where we are unable, by statute, to specify how that research should be focused, and research centers, which take up 75 percent of our budget.

Some of those research centers are doing very important work. We would intend to continue the funding for those centers, doing important work. Others have done some work, that's good, but, on balance, seem to me not to justify the very high overhead associated with the centers.

We think that we need the flexibility to use the funding mechanisms that are most appropriate for the particular task at hand.

A physically located center seems, to me, a desirable mechanism for funding when the center is at a location where there is a sufficient number of scientists, experts, and technicians who are focused on that area. They can be brought together in the same physical location and interact with each other and serve as colleagues.

The center is also very desirable when the center has a clear problem that it is addressing and when it is moving and appears to be moving towards providing a solution to that problem.

Ms. Woolsey. Well, a problem maybe that you could address that these centers are working towards a solution. I would like to know what your opinion is on how well they are doing on the question of assuring that all kids are fairly tested.

Mr. Whitehurst. CREST, the center at UCLA, is a stellar center, in my view, and is doing very important work on testing and assessment.

It has the characteristics that I just mentioned. It has their leading experts in this area, and they are pursuing not only scientific problems, but problems that lead to solutions.

For example, they have developed a piece of software there that provides assessment results back to school districts and teachers in a way that allows those districts and teachers to tailor their instructions to the particular needs of the child.

So I think that the center mechanism is working very well there.

We have other centers where there is a physical location, but most of the scientists are not at that location. They are scattered around at various locations.

When you look at the pattern of funding, and most of it is funding for small projects, you've got the pot of money - you give a little bit here, a little bit there, and it is not clear what problem is being addressed or what solution is being provided.

We would like the ability to fund focused areas of research that serve some of the functions of the traditional centers, but allow us to draw on the best possible talent around the nation to provide solutions, rather than insisting that that talent be at one university.

Ms. Woolsey. So would that lead us to conclude that long-term funding is valuable instead of-.

Mr. Whitehurst. Long-term funding is extremely valuable. Our fundamental problems, the areas in which we have substantial gaps in knowledge, are, by and large, not areas that we can address successfully with a year or two of funding. Continuous funding is extremely important.

Again, a center mechanism is one way to do that. NIH uses a mechanism called a program project grant. It doesn't have quite the overhead associated with it as a physical center, but it provides funding for collections of investigations.

The funding is typically renewed and there are organizations, groups of people who have had program project grants for 20 or 25 years.

So I am absolutely committed to continued funding and to the necessity for many problems to have large science, to have teams of people working in a coordinated fashion on a problem, and to have some assurance that, if they are doing it well, they will continue to get funding for it.

Ms. Woolsey. Thank you. My time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Whitehurst. Thank you, Ms. Woolsey.

Chairman Castle. We're going to go to Mr. Kind, who may have to shorten his questions slightly. After that, we'll see if we can continue to go through this or not.

Mr. Kind. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome the Secretary today, as well.

Mr. Chairman, first of all, I want to commend you, as well as the ranking member, for the leadership you have shown in trying to move this reauthorization bill through and your willingness to work in a bipartisan fashion with some of us and our staff in trying to craft a good bill on this.

Mr. Secretary, you are probably familiar that we moved some legislation back in 2000 setting up the National Academy of Education Research, and that with some goals, some common objectives that we share greater independence, greater consolidation of some of the regional entities that now exist, a formal evaluation and standards process within the Academy that would be established that would be different from what currently exists under law.

The question I have, and I'm interested in eliciting your opinion, is in the best vehicle as far as the dissemination of information, after we are able to establish what research-based work is and dealing with the standards and that, because the district I represent in western Wisconsin, we have a lot of rural school districts and that.

We also have an outstanding comprehensive center at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, outside my district, but they do serve a six-state region in the upper Midwest.

Some of the concerns I am getting from some of my school officials back home is given the technical assistance and dissemination of information that the CCN Madison is able to do, what the new legislation would be calling for and how that might impact their ability in order to get the information they need to implement the reforms now at the ESEA and get the help they need.

Mr. Whitehurst. We understand, in the Department, that the reauthorized ESEA places significant challenges on states and local school districts.

The Department has little ability to meet the needs of the states and the localities to implement ESEA, except through the regional labs.

Comprehensive assistance centers are, as you know, typically run by the same organizations that run the lab. They are typically the same organization.

That is our resource in the field. And as I was suggesting earlier, we need to make sure that the resource is as good as it can be and can serve those needs.

I know that my colleague, Assistant Secretary Neuman, is acutely interested in utilizing that resource to serve her needs to implement ESEA in an effective fashion.

Nothing that I have heard discussed in the Department or with regard to last year's legislation or this year's legislation ignores, in any respect, the very important need that you have addressed. And I think all of us will need to work together to make sure that we have a framework in which the needs of the district in your districts and your locality can be well served in terms of technical assistance, the development of products, and other things to help educate children.

Mr. Kind. I appreciate that. Obviously, one of the concerns is that they're small. They are in remote areas. They don't have a lot of resources that they can leverage and what little assistance they do get goes a long ways in those school districts.

I think as we move forward on this, recognizing efficiencies with greater consolidation, there will be a continued role for a lot of these regional centers.

But now that you have been on the job for a while, do you encounter much debate or feedback in regards to the integrity of the research that is being done right now at OERI in regards to any type of undue influence that may be placed on some of the information?

Mr. Whitehurst. I must say that in the time that I have been at OERI, there has been no instance in which anyone has tried to interfere politically with any of the work going on there.

It is the case that this administration has a great deal of respect for data and evidence and science. So not only has there not been the sort of influence that we both would be concerned about, but there has been the opposite of that. And that is an ongoing effort within the Department

to try and make each of the program offices driven by data and evidence to the greatest extent possible.

It is actually a little burdensome the degree to which the other assistant secretaries will send me an e-mail or call me on the phone and say what is the evidence with regard to this. And sometimes I feel like I'm their research assistant, but that is a function I am pleased to serve because it suggests that using scientifically based research and evidence in the delivery of Federal education programs is an ethos that is permeating the Department.

Mr. Kind. Thank you, and I thank you for the work you're doing at the Department.

I think as we do move forward with ESEA and implementing the reforms, and if we're going to empower the school districts to make the changes that they do need, this is going to be an integral component of that. It's going to be an important piece of legislation.

Again, I look forward to working with the chairman and other members of the committee as we move forward on this process.

Thank you, again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Mr. Kind. We expect other members to come back and to resume. We're going to go into a very temporary recess, so somebody will probably replace me up here.

I don't know if this is the final vote of the day or what's happening here, but we'll try to straighten that out, too. And then we'll go to the second panel immediately.

But if you can stay, Secretary Whitehurst, for a little while, to see if other members come back who may want to ask a few questions we would appreciate it.

So we will recess until the call of the chair.

[Recess.]

Mr. Whitehurst. To hold each school district accountable for the success of their children in learning to read, I think there are sufficient resources available in ESEA and sufficiently powerful technology and teaching approaches behind those resources that I believe that we can make substantial progress in the next four to five years in achieving the goal of teaching every child to read.

It can be done. We know how to do it. Now the question is doing it.

Mr. Osborne. [Presiding] It seems like much of the theme of what you've said is a matter of translating research into practice.

Mr. Whitehurst. Yes.

Mr. Osborne. And that needs to be aided and abetted in various ways.

One other question. What changes, if any, would you like to see to the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, the bill that is before us? If you could mention anything that you would like to advise us about making it better.

Mr. Whitehurst. Again, I haven't had a chance to go through it thoroughly. I read it just before I fell asleep last night and took another look at it this morning.

I think one area I hope we could work on a little bit is the language, with respect to the accepted service authority. That is the authority for the research agency to hire scientists quickly outside the regular civil service system.

The draft of the bill that I saw last night limited our ability to do that to 20 percent of the overall employees for three-year periods, and then only 20 percent of those could be appointed for another three-year period.

We think it would be better if we had a fixed number to work with rather than 20 percent. What if we are at 20 percent and our staff is reduced a little bit? We have to let people go.

And it would be good if we could assure people who come on for three years that if they are doing a great job, they could have another three-year term.

If we limit the proportion of the people on these accepted service positions who can get a second three-year term to 20 percent of those on board, there is no assurance that somebody who is doing a great job can stay for a longer period.

The intent here is to bring scientists in from the outside and then send them back. Three years is kind of an awkward period.

People can leave their university for two years and go back and get back in the saddle again. They can come someplace for six years, with the idea that it is a career move, but three years is difficult.

So we would hope to be able to work with you to refine that language a little bit. That is the one area that I notice that I would really appreciate some work on the language.

Mr. Osborne. So you're saying you would like a little more flexibility and we'll try to see to it that the chairman is apprised of that, and I am sure he will be back shortly.

So at this time, we will convene this panel. We thank you for being willing to testify here.

At this time, we will call up the second panel, and we appreciate their being here.

The chairman of the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness, Mr. McKeon, has written questions that he would like to submit to the Assistant Secretary.

Without objection, I would ask that the responses to those questions be submitted in the official hearing record.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY WHITEHURST BY THE HONORABLE HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C. – SEE APPENDIX C

RESPONSE SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WHITEHURST TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE HONORABLE HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C. – SEE APPENDIX D

Mr. Osborne. With that, I ask unanimous consent that the hearing record be held open for 14 days to allow members' statements and other extraneous material referenced during the hearing to be submitted in the official hearing record.

Without objection, so ordered.

We will go ahead and introduce the witnesses at this time.

It is my pleasure to introduce Dr. Doug Christensen, who has served as Commissioner of the Nebraska Department of Education since 1994.

In his position, he currently supervises 600 school districts, which is quite a few, obviously. He is a former teacher and superintendent, and certainly has become recognized as a leader in his profession.

He has been a valuable resource to me in terms of issues of research assessment and funding, and we have appreciated all of his input.

Under his leadership, Nebraska schools continue to be among the highest achieving schools in the nation. We are very proud of that.

We are pleased that he could be here today to discuss the impact that quality education research has played in the success of the Nebraska educational model.

Dr. Christensen, we appreciate your being here.

I believe Mr. Keller has an introduction of one of our panelists.

Mr. Keller. Thank you, Coach. I have the pleasure of introducing Jim Horne, the Secretary of Education for the State of Florida.

Mr. Horne grew up in Jacksonville, Florida. He received his bachelor's degree from Florida State University. Coach, I think you are familiar with that school.

Mr. Osborne. Never heard of it.

Mr. Keller. Home to Bobby Bowden, one of the top two coaches in the history of college sports. Of course, the top one is sitting in the chairman's chair right now.

Secretary Horne was elected to the Florida State Senate in 1994, where he quickly rose to become one of the leaders in the legislature on education issues.

As a state senator, Mr. Horne was a co-sponsor of Governor Jeb Bush's A-Plus Plan for Education, which later served as a model for the historic No Child Left Behind Act, which President Bush signed into law just this past month.

On July 1, 2001, Governor Jeb Bush selected Mr. Horne as the first appointed Secretary of Education for Florida. And, in this role, Secretary Horne oversees the entire education system in Florida, from K through 20, which is the only seamless education system in the country.

The reforms that Secretary Horne implemented as part of Governor Bush's plan have proven to be extremely successful. For example, in the course of the three years, Florida has gone from having 78 F-rated schools to zero - and Secretary Horne truly is a reformer with results.

So it is with great pleasure that we welcome Secretary Horne's appearance before our subcommittee today.

Mr. Osborne. Thank you, Mr. Keller. I would also like to introduce the two other panelists.

Lisa Towne is Senior Program Officer and Study Director for the National Research Council's Center for Education.

Prior to arriving at the National Research Council, she worked as both an analyst and later as Assistant Director for Social and Behavioral Sciences at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Ms. Towne is an adjunct professor of quantitative research methods at the Georgetown University Policy Institute. She holds a master's in public policy from Georgetown University.

In addition, we have Dr. Anne Bryant. Dr. Bryant is Executive Director of the National School Boards Association.

Before accepting her current position description, she was Executive Director of the American Association of University Women.

In addition, Dr. Bryant was Vice President of the Professional Education Division for P.M. Haggar & Associates, Incorporated. She holds an educational doctorate from the University of Massachusetts.

We welcome the panel. I believe you understand the procedure on the testimony, and we'll have the light running for five minutes.

Mr. Horne, we would appreciate it if you would proceed at this time.

STATEMENT OF JIM HORNE, SECRETARY, FLORIDA BOARD OF EDUCATION, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, AND ON BEHALF OF THE EDUCATION LEADERS COUNCIL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. Horne. Good morning. Members of the committee, it is indeed a pleasure and honor to be here before you to testify on issues involving the reauthorization of the Office of Education Research and Improvement.

As you have heard, I am the first ever appointed Secretary of Education for the State of Florida, but today I am here testifying on behalf of Education Leaders Council, ELC.

ELC is a non-profit, non-partisan reform organization that includes the leadership, includes ten state chiefs, myself included, representing over 30 percent of the entire K-12 student population.

It also includes governors and state boards and other reformers from various systems of education throughout state.

First, on behalf of ELC, let me commend this committee for the fine work it has done in the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. I believe this will become a landmark piece of education legislation and will have a profound impact for decades to come, ensuring that all children receive a high quality education.

H.R. 1 included many very important provisions, but I think one that is truly relevant as a part of today's hearing is the part that focuses on scientifically based research.

As you have heard, that term exists over a 110 times during the bill and it is used throughout the new law in many different ways - everything from technical assistance for low performing schools to reading, and would require that all of them would be based upon scientific, sound scientific evidence to prove that the programs and the strategies are effective.

In effect, what I think Congress has made very clear to all of us is that Federal funds will no longer be available to support programs that we cannot prove work.

To those not familiar with the world of education, that may seem like common sense. However, I can attest, from many years involved in education policy from the ground level to the highest level of policy, what works has often been defined by a variety of mechanisms, including good intentions, expensive marketing, and a whole lot of politics. All at the expense of a very serious and hard look at the real evidence and ultimately, I think, at the expense of our nation's students.

I think it is important that as we look to the reauthorization, that we must focus and recognize that this No Child Left Behind law will force school districts and even the states to focus more on real evidence and to demonstrate that the funds are used for programs that scientific inquiry can prove have a positive effect.

And that is why today is so very important. We discuss Federal education research to ensure that the promises of No Child Left Behind become a reality.

I believe there is a broad consensus today at the state and local levels that much of the research that has been funded and disseminated by the Federal Government has not, to date, met the same very rigorous and stringent criteria that is now defined clearly in the No Child Left Behind law.

For this to occur, OERI must significantly be reformed as part of the current reauthorization.

ELC believes that at a minimum, this reform includes three pillars: Integrity, quality, and utility of educational research.

I am pleased to say that this subcommittee's work, beginning last year that was embodied in Chairman Castle's bill that was introduced in the last Congress, leads me to believe you are on the right path.

And while I have not had a chance to read the new bill, it sounds as if it is following that same pat. We are very excited about that.

Let me begin with integrity. I am certainly not talking about the personal honesty of the hardworking professionals in the Department. What I am talking about is the soundness of the system - the infrastructure, the organizational structure.

I understand that over the course of the last couple of years, you have had countless people testify before this subcommittee, talking about the credibility of the research.

As an education reformer from the state level, I don't know why that is, but I can tell you that it is a fact that in the field, there is a sense that the credibility of this research is driven more by

politics than by sound science.

I think it needs to be admitted that the canons of science haven't always worked, even when it has been applied to education research. That is why we have so many peer reviewed reports and studies that turn out to be nothing more than ideological soap boxes.

Validation and independent verification are the cornerstones of a good system. And to the extent that evaluations are conducted by the same people who are in charge of programs, you will have the proverbial fox guarding the chicken pen.

ELC believes that the issue of integrity must be addressed. I believe a great deal can be done by simply creating an infrastructure that is conducive to building integrity and by staving off political interference.

At a minimum, we should provide as much independence for research and evaluation as possible, while also ensuring proper checks and balances.

There are many examples in Federal Government, on which education research can be modeled, including the National Institutes of Health, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Census Bureau.

We know that OERI has taken some steps to increase the rate of its scientific research, and we applaud the appointment of Dr. Russ Whitehurst as the new head of OERI.

His reputation for rigorous scientific inquiry on educational topics will help with the process of cultural change.

We also know that some changes have been made to NAEP as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act. We recognize that additional issues have to be addressed, including the independence of NAEP and its interaction with the National Assessment Governing Board.

We believe it is important to create additional independence and autonomy for NAGB and its administration of NAEP.

The second pillar is quality. By now many of us know about the National Reading Panel's review of research on reading and the fact that a large amount of some of the previous research was simply not based on sound science.

I would not be at all surprised to know that a great deal of that research was funded by the Federal Government. Imagine what it would be like if every Federal dollar over the last 20 years met the same rigorous criteria that is now established by No Child Left Behind.

We would clearly have a better understanding of knowledge, learning, and all the topics ranging from reading to math, and education technology.

It is imperative for Congress to take this opportunity to ensure that education research is, in fact, held to the same level of scrutiny that exists in other fields.

We have heard, for too long, excuses for why this cannot be. The truth is that there has been a failure to hold this education research to these higher standards. This has left a tremendous vacuum of knowledge that has instead been filled with hunches and good intentions.

That last pillar is utility or value. I had to ask myself a key question as I prepared my testimony today. What role has Federal education research played during all the years I dealt with education reform as an education reformer?

The truth is not much, not much at all. I believe for too long, a large portion of our Federal research resources continued to support projects and organizations that were not useful for the production of high quality research, development statistics assessments, and even program evaluation.

This has been an accumulation of unfocused priorities and mandates derived from overly prescriptive statutory requirements, separate Federal priority boards, and the pressure to adhere to political fads and education fads.

Congress must not micro manage the priorities of the research agency, but instead establish a legitimate and workable process by which ongoing input from the stakeholders, the parents, the teachers, the researchers, the policy makers and others form the basis for specific priorities.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we understood the development of math ability, much like we now know about reading ability? All states are interested in closing the achievement gap. We would welcome careful design studies in this area and would be most willing to consider the results as we formulate our education policies.

As you consider and evaluate specific proposals for reforming and refocusing OERI, we suggest you address these two following questions.

Does the structure adequately insulate the key decision-makers from the other special interest groups? And, two, does the statistics and assessment operation enjoy the political autonomy and the professional integrity needed for its data to be trustworthy, while also making the operation accountable for speed, accuracy, and utility?

We are now at a critical juncture in education in this country. Many reforms are taking place, being aided by No Child Left Behind, are also largely predicated on the belief that we know what works.

Unfortunately, let me tell you today, we don't really know what works. However, you have an opportunity today to help us move forward through the reauthorization of OERI and encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity and greatly increase the integrity, the quality, and the utility of education research in this nation.

ELC stands ready and willing to help in any way that we can.

Thank you.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JIM HORNE, SECRETARY, FLORIDA BOARD OF EDUCATION, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, AND ON BEHALF OF THE EDUCATION LEADERS COUNCIL, WASHINGTON, D.C. – SEE APPENDIX E

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Secretary Horne. Dr. Christensen.

STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS CHRISTENSEN, COMMISSIONER, NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, AND ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. Christensen. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, and Congressman Osborne, thank you for the introduction. It is a pleasure for me to be here and provide written comments to you and some verbal testimony on the reauthorization of OERI.

I represent the State of Nebraska and the membership of the Council of Chief State School Officers, which represents over 70 percent of the kids in this nation.

Between Secretary Horne and myself, representing over 30 percent, we represent over 70 percent, together we represent a 110 percent of the kids in this nation.

Mr. Osborne. There is a problem with math in our country. That's what we're trying to get at with this education research. That's our next challenge.

Mr. Christensen. That's a weak attempt at humor, but I thought I'd give it a try.

What I would like to do, since you have my remarks, is to not read them now. I think the remarks are going to be repeated by other individuals, so I would like to focus on a few things.

Again, I assume that you will read them or have your staffs read them. And in the spirit of NCLB, there will be a test. It is our intention to leave no Congressman behind in this process. You're going to hear this rhetoric, I'm sure, over and over again and be tired of it.

What I would like to do is respond to some remarks that I have heard, some things that I am not sure about, but want to make sure that I make those comments, and then have the opportunity later on to respond to your questions.

The first thing I would like to simply say is that coming from a small state, a rural state in the heartland, we couldn't feel anymore disconnected from the national research issues and research agenda than if we were located on a manned space station. We just don't feel connected to it.

We feel suspicious. Like Secretary Horne, we sometimes see little utility in the results, and then when politics being to swirl around that agenda, we really get disenfranchised by it.

We have state-specific research needs. Many of those are complimentary to national needs and needs that you must address. It seems to me that a state-Federal partnership in the reauthorization that needs to be strongly placed into the reauthorization of OERI is absolutely critical if we're going to bridge that gap between what happens in research and what the practitioner needs to do.

Let me make some generalized comments. In my opinion, the purpose of research is to inform policy development and practice implementation.

Educators, at least the ones that I am familiar with, are professional people who are capable of very thoughtful development and design of instructional strategies, and implementation of curriculum and instructional practices.

We need research to inform us, not to decide for us, not to determine for us, and not to dictate to us.

Research is not about developing prescriptions that cause education to look more like remote control from a distant place.

We cannot control the complex act and dynamic act of teaching and the complex, and organic act of learning through the research agenda. I don't think that's what it's all about. And you've heard others talk about making sure that it's not a one-size-fits-all result.

Current research has had little impact, for a number of reasons. It is my belief that it has been under-funded to the point that it cannot be sustained over a long period of time.

I don't happen to believe that the current research and education is soft. I think social science research, by its very nature, could benefit from more scientific rigor. However, I would not couch it as being soft.

I simply think it lacks the long-term emphasis that it needs. You can measure clinical trials in months and get conclusions in a short period of time.

In the case of education research, as dynamic as the educational practices in classrooms are, it takes multiple replications over multiple periods of years. And that is the commitment we need to make if there is going to be utility in that research.

I think it is important to understand, also, that what I think the development side of R&D is has to do with translating that research for the practitioner.

And remember that the practitioner is a pragmatic person. They must deal with the realities of what is going on in the classroom. And unless you can conceptually connect that research to where they are, and unless you, in their language, connect that research to where they are, then

nothing is going to happen.

I would contend that the real gap lies in the fact that researchers and practitioners don't talk to each other in the same language. There is very little effort on the part of either one of them to talk to each other because it is easier to dismiss each other if we don't talk.

I have some concerns about some language that I hear, and let me just illustrate that or mention that. I'm not being critical of OERI and I'm not being critical of the attempt to bring sound quality research to the forefront.

But when I hear terms like scientifically based research, it is my background in curriculum instruction assessment, research and so on, that there is no other kind - or its not research.

If it's not scientifically based, it's not research. Just because you can find something in print doesn't make it research.

Just because it is based upon a medical model of clinical trials, blind studies and all that doesn't necessarily make it evidence-based or appropriate to education.

I get very concerned that those terms mean something far beyond what is intended. Yet, I would like to take the language on its face value.

Certainly we need focused research. We need research that focuses on the complexity of schools and classrooms, the teaching-learning process, and one that maintains focus over a long period of time.

Let me just make a couple of comments about times and today, as well, I heard about the medical model.

As a practicing professional, I find the language of the medical model absolutely abhorrent. My experience, the knowledge that I have gained as a result of that experience, and my background allows me to make decisions on a moment-to-moment basis and be informed by sound research.

The medical model - by beginning to try to conceptualize education and the teaching-learning process in terms like clinical trials, double blind studies, treatments, and prescriptions - makes me ill.

It makes me think that I am not capable, as an educator, of making decisions on a moment-to-moment basis, without someone from a distant place and from a distant source of experience telling me exactly what to do.

Our children are not sick. They're not diseased. Education and instruction are not treatments.

While some of that model may be appropriate in some cases, it certainly isn't appropriate, in my opinion, as a singular approach.

I hope we remember that in the research design process, and the conducting of research, that anything that aims at the beginning to come out with a single approach, a single methodology, a singular policy, guarantees that there will be a pathology that will come right along with it.

I think that we have folks out in the fields - at least we do in Nebraska, and I'm sure that's true in other states - who are capable of making informed decisions.

Finally, let me address a question relative to the regional labs, and I see that the red light is on.

Eight years ago, when I was appointed commissioner, I would have hoped for the regional labs to ride into the westward sunset, never to be seen again, because they simply were not doing anything that was very helpful to us.

In fact, many times they were doing things that sabotaged our efforts to provide leadership in our state.

However, over the past six years, we have done a number of things, and I just want to quickly capsulize them.

A restructuring agenda in the state education agency that not only restructured how we're organized, but restructured our mission as well, that said we think we can accomplish being a regulatory agency, but being customer service.

We have no middle management in the Department of Education. We have gone from 700 employees to 500. There are 14 team leaders who report directly to the commissioner's office.

And in the process, we have tried to be a learning organization. The Mid-Continent Regional Laboratory in Denver has provided us a facilitator in the name of Myron Kellner Rogers, who is nationally recognized as an organizational development expert and who has helped us to learn what we have learned in the process of trying to make this transition.

Secondly, they have provided the research. A person meets with us all the time, comes to our meetings all the time, documents what we're doing and our progress, which is fed back to us in our learning dialogue that has been going on.

Secondly, as Congressman Osborne indicated, we have a very unique assessment system in the state that comes from the schools up, not from the state down. The regional laboratories have been absolutely critical to the research agenda.

Chairman Castle. Dr. Christensen, we're going to have to ask you to summarize. You're quite a bit over your time.

Mr. Christensen. I was coming to the conclusion.

Chairman Castle. Unfortunately, we're going to start to lose members. If you could, please.

Mr. Christensen. I am coming to the conclusion right now. Through the research agenda and by helping us to do training, we simply couldn't live without them.

We would prefer to have that regional service from the labs and not from either the comprehensive assistance centers or from the USOE regional offices.

Thank you. I apologize for going over.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS CHRISTENSEN, COMMISSIONER, NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, AND ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS, WASHINGTON, D.C. – SEE APPENDIX F

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Dr. Christensen. Ms. Towne.

STATEMENT OF LISA TOWNE, SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER AND STUDY DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR EDUCATION, NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Ms. Towne. Good morning, Chairman Castle and other members of the subcommittee, and thanks for the introduction.

I am indeed a Senior Program Officer at the National Research Council. As you may know, the NRC is not the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. It is the National Research Council, which is the operating arm of the National Academy of Sciences, an independent agency chartered by Congress in 1863 to provide scientific advice to government.

I am accompanied today by the NRC's Director of the Center for Education, Mike Foyer, who is over to my left. Wave, Michael. Thank you.

My remarks this morning are based on a report that was recently released by the NRC called ``Scientific Research and Education." With your permission, I would like to submit a copy for the record.

Like all NRC reports, it was authored by an interdisciplinary committee of prominent experts, and in this case, includes expertise in education research and practice, statistics, economics, history, philosophy, anthropology, psychology, sociology, even cell biology and chemistry.

This diverse group was asked to consider the nature of scientific research in education, generally, and its implications for the future of a Federal education research agency, specifically.

I will begin with a very brief overview of the committee's characterization of scientific education research, and then use the remainder of my time to focus specifically on its recommendations regarding the future of the agency.

As it began its work, the committee asked itself a fundamental question - is scientific research in education fundamentally different from other fields and disciplines?

After much deliberation, it concluded that the answer was no. At a very basic level, there is much that unites the science; for example, the linking of data to theoretical models, using methods that best address the particular question at hand, employing a rigorous and transparent process of reasoning, and striving towards generalization.

Another key principle of science in education or in any other field is the critical role of the community of researchers engaging in public critique of each other's work, and integrating new findings into the existing body of knowledge.

Of course, there are differences among fields, as well. Researchers in the field develop a specialization that takes into account the specific features of what is being studied.

In education, researchers fit the guiding principles of science that unite all scientific endeavors to the systematic study of teaching, learning, and schooling.

The role of the community of researchers is emphasized in the committee's findings about the future of a Federal education research agency, as well, which I will turn to now.

In short, and these remarks will echo some of the testimony you heard earlier from Assistant Secretary Whitehurst, the committee concluded that a key to the success of the agency is the development of a scientific culture within it. A culture of science or a culture of inquiry that infuses everything the agency does and is supported by its processes and by its structures.

To elaborate on this idea, what the committee did was develop six design principles and describe specific ways that these principles could be supported in practice.

First, staff. Experienced researchers, like Secretary Whitehurst, must lead and staff the agency if the culture of science is to be cultivated.

Without a high quality staff, little else matters.

An agency should have the flexibility to hire permanent, as well as short-term staff through the accepted authority that Assistant Secretary Whitehurst described.

Second, structures. Here I will just highlight the committee's findings regarding peer review. Although imperfect, peer review is a critical mechanism for promoting a scientific culture,

and, again, the key to a successful peer review is not necessarily the structure of that system, but the choice of peers, with excellent scientific credentials and an ability to think across the many disciplines and fields that interact in studying education.

Third, politics. The committee believes, first of all, that an agency cannot and should not be separated completely from the political process. This is, after all, a democracy.

It should, however, have buffers, like independent authority for publishing, hiring, and disbursal of funds to enhance its independence and the integrity of its work.

Fourth, its portfolio. The agency's research portfolio should include a mix of both short and long term studies, as well as a mix of new investigations and syntheses of bodies of work.

All of these studies should be organized into coherent programs of research that focus the field and promote the accumulation of research-based knowledge over time.

Fifth, funding. The committee is certainly not the first to conclude that, historically, Federal funding of education research has been inadequate, but I won't belabor the point.

I will simply say that the National Institute of Education, OERI's predecessor agency, began with a budget of roughly $400 million. Today, with roughly the same agenda, OERI has, as the Assistant Secretary reported earlier, about $122 million for research.

If the scope of the research agenda is to remain basically constant in this new reauthorization, this committee would recommend that more resources will be necessary to support that mission.

Finally, infrastructure. The committee believes that an agency ought to consistently vest parts of its annual appropriation not just in new studies, but also in the professional development of investigators in the field, in facilitating ethical access to data and research participants, and in promoting partnerships with practitioners.

Mr. Chairman, there is obviously a lot more in this report, but I will stop there and will be happy to answer any questions you or other members may have.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify on these matters and for your leadership in promoting high quality education research.

REPORT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY LISA TOWNE ON FILE WITH THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF LISA TOWNE, SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER AND STUDY DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR EDUCATION, NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, WASHINGTON, D.C. – SEE APPENDIX G

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Ms. Towne. We are interested in the report and obviously that is important, so we appreciate that, as well as your testimony here today.

Dr. Bryant?

STATEMENT OF ANNE BRYANT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Ms. Bryant. Thank you very much, Chairman Castle, Congressman Kildee, and other members of the committee. It is my honor to be here.

Coming last means that you get the benefits and the liabilities of repeats. If I repeat points that you have already heard, it means I'm brilliant. If I have new ideas, it means I'll get your attention.

I will start by saying that I am really pleased with the new legislation. I think it gives us a real opportunity to take advantage of the reauthorization of OERI and look at what a new Federal research agency can do to be more responsive to local district staff, teachers, and school board members.

I am going to make four main points today. First, because of our desire to raise all children's achievement, research on how to achieve this goal is critical.

As you have heard, the newly reauthorized ESEA further drives this agenda and underscores the need for quality data, not only around reading, math and science, but also on effective instructional techniques and programs to reach all demographic sub-groups and help close the achievement gap between the highest and lowest performing students.

Second, research must be disseminated in a way that is useful to district staff, teachers, school board members, and others who need this research.

Third, Federal research should provide a grant process to fund local initiatives regarding data driven decision-making and train district staff to be their own research teams.

We have got to drive data decision-making in local districts.

Finally, providing the necessary Federal funding for these priorities is obviously critical.

It has never been more important for local school districts to have access to high quality research linked to raising student achievement.

The recently reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act raised the stakes on student achievement. Consequently, there needs to be articulation between the Federal research agenda and the requirements of ESEA.

OERI needs to think differently about the purpose if its research. It is not primarily to drive an academic agenda for the research community. It is to provide data, analysis, and we would argue, strategies and tools for the practitioner, for teachers and school leaders to make good decisions locally about curriculum, teaching and learning strategies, technology integration, and student development.

High quality education research can play a critical role in raising student achievement if it is properly disseminated to those who are directly linked to our nation's schools.

Once the research is available, dissemination is key. Sitting on one regional lab's web site, buried in a long title, with 50 footnotes, is not easy access.

For instance, one school board member from Forestville Union School District, in Forestville, California, said, “My board receives very little, if any results of quality research.”

Another school board member, as a member of the Brandywine Board of Education in Delaware, notes that OERI's research on teacher effectiveness has been critical in developing “a consensus and commitment with our community around aggressive investments in early recruitment, quality induction for beginning teachers, and ongoing professional development.”

In light of the two totally different responses from school board members, we would simply argue that the dissemination, the way it is disseminated, is absolutely critical if all children are going to achieve.

Data should be disseminated in a format that is easily understandable. Most school board members have full-time jobs outside of their school responsibilities. Their time is valuable.

What we need to do is make an effort to make sure that school districts are regularly made aware of where to go. And I was pleased with the Assistant Secretary's comments about one centralized place to get this data.

Teachers, administrators, and school board members have different roles within the district, but they all need reliable, high quality information in a format that works for them.

The third objective pushes the agenda of OERI out to local school districts and, in some ways, is a radical departure from the old OERI.

Federal legislation should enable local school districts to apply for grants to do the research itself.

Local school districts need to be data driven and need to make decisions, based on research, on everything from curriculum and pedagogy and textbooks, to online learning.

In essence, a program's effectiveness and the decisions about teacher and staff placement must be made on their own student achievement data, as compared to, and in the context of,

national research.

We are pleased that this new legislation includes the provision on school based customer driven technical assistance, and we urge that you keep that in the bill.

Under this provision, local school districts, LEAs, would be given the opportunity to choose technical assistance from high quality providers, such as universities or the labs.

We are concerned, however, that the funding in the 106th Congress was only $11.8 million to local education agencies, which has to cover the 15,000 school districts.

We do hope that in the next authorization this funding increases.

Training for district staff should be part of the OERI agenda in an effort to build the capacity of school districts to track data.

A grant program to enable district staff to conduct their own research on their practices for the purposes of continually raising students' learning is needed.

ESEA contains more than a 100 references, as has been stated, to scientifically based research. Mr. Chairman, you referenced this in your opening comments, as did Secretary Whitehurst.

The question is how do you define scientifically based research. It is very important that this definition be clear, understandable, and a definition that all agree to.

Our fourth point is a simple one; the funding of this program is critical. Without adequate funding, we're not going to be able to do any of the things that each of us recommended.

On a final note, a child gets only one chance to be a third grader or a fifth grader, at least that's what their parents hope.

We need to make sure that the Federal research agenda supports the best curriculum, the best pedagogy, on environmental and climate supports, on curriculum and technology, to ensure that every child can meet academic success in his or her life.

Thank you.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANNE BRYANT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA – SEE APPENDIX H

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Dr. Bryant. Let me thank all of the witnesses. It seems to me I heard some strong positives and some questions about what we are doing. We need to try to straighten out as much as we can with some questioning.

I am going to take my turn last so we can go through members here. I am going to go to Mrs. Biggert first for questioning.

Mrs. Biggert. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question for Secretary Horne.

You stated in your testimony that scientifically based research may, in fact, be among the provisions in the new law that has the most lasting and positive impact towards education reform in this nation.

I think that I have heard some expressed that defining research in the law would amount to a Federal mandate, and I having been a local school board member and president, I have emblazoned across my forehead 'local control.'

I would be interested in how you would respond to that view.

Mr. Horne. Referring to the No Child Left Behind Act, it is very clear. In fact, in Florida, we have already begun the process of pulling all the different pieces together to discuss, in particular, reading, because everybody begins to see things that aren't there. They begin to sense that this is code for one-shoe-fits-all.

I think the law is very clear about scientific research. It's not suggesting that there is one curriculum or one program or one way to do it, only that we should base this upon sound science.

I think for too long, in education research in particular, we have thought up some good ideas and we've kind of gone in and observed in the classroom and then determined the success from that single observation.

I think it is clear that over the years, and I think it is clear by now, that there seems to be an emerging consensus that we can use scientific research in the education field to establish what works and what doesn't work.

I know that may create some discomfort from some who feel that a medical environment won't necessarily produce the results in the education field.

Clearly, I would point to, for example, the whole language debacle in California. That if we had used clinical trials and if we had used control groups, we may have avoided what I think was probably a very significant and very costly mistake.

Mrs. Biggert. Thank you. And maybe all of us who think that we're such experts in education - I think every parent, every person thinks that they are the expert - at least now will have scientific basis to back up our conclusions there.

Dr. Bryant, you talked about the labs and the centers and how people access them or that they don't have the information or that it is buried deep in their web site.

Has the National School Boards Association ever done a survey of your members to see if they have access to the information or how they feel about these boards or these labs?

Ms. Bryant. We have not done a national survey of our members on that, but I can tell you that, as I think was mentioned earlier, that depending on the lab, they are either very much involved with helping local districts or they're not.

So you happen to come, as does the Congressman from California, from two areas where there has been terrific outreach, terrific research.

But that is not true across the board. I think my point was that there ought to be one place where school board members or administrators can go to and get the kind of analysis that they can understand, so it's not six million footnotes, it's literally, actually, what the Assistant Secretary was describing that would make a lot of sense.

Mrs. Biggert. Thank you. Ms. Towne, do you have any opinion on how to make the lab or the centers more responsive to the needs of local schools? Is this in your report?

Ms. Towne. No. The precise structure of OERI with the centers and the regional labs was not something that the committee took up, and, more generally, the committee actually didn't go into depth on the issue of dissemination and knowledge utilization, which itself is a very complicated, very important task that we really should be researching more to find out how best to interface with school boards and other people and get research to them in ways that help them practice.

I should mention that there is another National Research Council effort that is trying to look at this connection between research and practice. It is called the Strategic Education Research Partnership.

If you would like information about that, I can certainly get it for you.

Mrs. Biggert. Thank you. Dr. Christensen, would you have any advice for getting information?

Mr. Christensen. I think the critical thing is to invent ways to structure conversations that I don't think we do now. There are opportunities for advisory groups, opportunities to use communications through the regional centers, the labs, the state education agencies, to go out and have face-to-face kinds of meetings.

I think the dialogue is very, very important, and relative to my comments on being from a state in the Midwest, we do not feel included in most of those things. We have a voice. We would like to be heard.

I think administrators would like to be heard. I think board members would like to be heard. And it's ways to structure conversations, and I think all of us have, if not a legal obligation to do that, a moral obligation to do that, so that we do work together.

There is no point in criticizing each other. I think this legislation gives us the opportunity to look at how we begin to build that partnership. And it has to be a partnership, and I don't think any one of us is the junior or senior partner. We come to the table as equal partners.

Mrs. Biggert. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Castle. Thank you. Thank you, Mrs. Biggert. We appreciate it. Mr. Kildee.

Mr. Kildee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Horne, you mentioned that there is more than just one research-based method and we have some concern here that in the reading program, that there may be an effort to push, one, the research-based method.

You would not want the Federal Government to determine a research-based method for reading or any other learning area, would you?

Mr. Horne. No, sir. We would not want that. I think the sovereignty of the states would rise up once again.

I think it is important that we do not lose focus on history, which has not really been based on sound science. I think that is the motivation behind No Child Left Behind and then the reauthorization of OERI.

I don't think that there is anything that I have read that would suggest that the Federal Government is dictating one particular curriculum or one particular program.

I think this approach is the right approach and that it does steer us to sort of change our ways a little bit, to be able to prove that things work.

I think for a long time, we have, with good intentions, looked at and thought up new ways to deliver some of our programs, and maybe, by chance, some worked, maybe some didn't.

I think that we should not be afraid to approve the effectiveness of our programs.

I think there is clearly going to be many new and very innovative and creative ways to deliver high quality reading.

In Florida, and we are probably no different than any other state, 47 percent of our fourth graders don't read on grade level and by tenth grade, it's 62 percent.

That is just unacceptable in a civilized nation. We have based a lot of our programs on what we thought was research.

I think now there seems to be a convergence of the great minds in this country on what is effective based upon sound science. And that will now, I think, move us forward to look at and revisit our curriculums and our programs to make sure that we can look you in the eye with the resources you send us, we're thankful for those resources, because right now some of the states are

hurting, and we will utilize those resources in a very positive way.

I think this approach is a very good approach. I think it is going to move us maybe in some different directions, but not just one direction.

Even within the State of Florida, you would not want to impose one research-based model for reading. You might let certain things develop in certain areas and look at how effective they may be.

We certainly do not plan to. We have made that clear in our first historic meeting of all of the college deans of education, reading instructors, our school superintendents, districts, community colleges, and everybody that is involved in preparing teachers.

We made it very clear that we are not looking to develop one program. Now, we will ensure - because that is the law - that it will be based upon sound science, that we will use scientific research evidence to prove its effectiveness. And we support that, but we have made it clear.

In fact, I said I'm going to look you in the eye and promise you this is not code for one program or one brand of curriculum. And we believe that the best way to produce this good reading is by using science, then allowing, even the local level – the state is not going to dictate to the school districts.

The school districts should be in charge of that. I am a proponent of local control, always have been, and we will continue to support local control.

Mr. Kildee. Appreciate your answer, Mr. Horne.

Ms. Towne, your testimony and the NRC report specifically objects to the definitions of research contained in the last Congress, H.R. 4875, as a Federal mandate on research, without getting to the real root of the problem.

Could you please expand on why we should not adopt such definitions?

Ms. Towne. Sure, I'd be happy to. Let me first say that included in these definitions, surely, are many of the concepts that the committee talks about as being the guiding principles of good science. Things like the use of empirical data, replication, peer review, that sort of thing.

Many of the concepts certainly are parts of science that are very important to uphold.

I think what seems problematic about them, I think, from the committee's perspective, is that the listing is of, if I'm correct, of scientifically based qualitative methods and scientifically based quantitative methods.

If you look at the committee's conclusions about what the principles of science are, methodology is one of them.

Method in science is clearly a very key part of the process of inquiry and understanding evidence, but it does not uniquely define science either.

For example, if you were to pull off a method on this list and have a poorly specified question and sloppy reasoning, you're not going to get good science out of that.

The other point is that science, while very disciplined and a disciplined form of reasoning can't be prescribed by a list. Methods, in particular, need to fit the particulars of whatever question is being addressed in a particular situation, not to mention the fact that methods actually evolve over time.

The history of science has shown, not just in social sciences, but in some of the harder sciences, if you will, that the types of tools that researchers use in their trade actually evolve as the types of questions they are addressing evolve, as well.

While I think the committee would feel that the notion of developing quality standards is very important, I think their use as a piece of legislation is what would be objectionable. And that more preferably, Assistant Secretary Whitehurst could engage with the field to develop such standards and to also enforce them over time.

Mr. Kildee. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Keller [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Kildee and Ms. Towne. They tell me I am next. So I'm going to recognize myself just for a couple of questions, the first one for you, Secretary Horne, and then, Dr. Bryant, I'm going to hit you with just about the same question.

That is this. Earlier, Dr. Whitehurst, from the U.S. Department of Education, talked about wanting to have an Office of Educational Research that was a user-friendly clearinghouse of information. And I said let's assume you get that and that you have this great What Works Clearinghouse.

I asked him how are you going to communicate to the rank and file in the field, the individual school board members, and the school superintendents? The gist of his response was that he's going to rely on you, the state chiefs of education to disseminate it.

Secretary Horne, you have 67 school districts. Do you have some method in place of letting them know that this is the place you go to get information about research topics?

Mr. Horne. We do, Congressman Keller, and it is great to see somebody from Florida in the chairman's seat, even though I know it's temporary for the moment.

But we do. It is very important that you have a mechanism for disseminating that kind of information, and I will tell you that we don't do it right yet in Florida.

I wish I could tell you that we do. It is somewhat disconnected. I think my partner to the north here said the same thing in terms of Federal Government down to the state level. But even

from the state level and local level, I think we are somewhat disconnected and that we probably disseminate information fairly well to some of the school districts.

However, oftentimes, those who are actually in the real laboratories, the teachers, we're disconnected from, and that information then doesn't filter down to them.

We do and have established mechanisms and we are working very hard.

I think the key is not so much this push down kind of system of pushing down the research and the information, but it is connecting the stakeholders to the input side of this process - because if they are not going to be involved in the input portion, then they are not going to be as interested in the output part. And I think therein lies probably part of the disconnection, that they were never involved, their opinions were never asked for. And as part of any legitimate, workable process, I think we have to establish the outreach for the input and then I think, naturally, it will then improve our ability to distribute that information.

We all have mechanisms. We could all stand to improve them, and we pledge in our cooperation to make sure that as information comes out of Washington, we are going to press it into, but I do think that we need to dramatically improve the input part of the process.

Mr. Keller. Thank you, Secretary Horne. Dr. Bryant, we've waved the magic wand and got the world's best web site, that's a clearinghouse of useful information, so that school board members all across the country can have access.

How are you going to let your school board members know about it?

Mr. Bryant. Well, I think that - and I would agree with Mr. Horne's comment about dialogue, but I think that technology has done wonders for all of us. I think using not only the National School Boards Association and our online learning center, which goes out to all 50 state associations and, therefore, to the 15,000 school boards, is a natural way and we can do that instantly.

But using other education organizations in the same way, I would urge that the new OERI and the Department of Education think about the use of these national education organizations, which are now, in fact, because of the Internet, literally connected to their members.

Mr. Keller. Thank you. Mr. Scott from Virginia.

Mr. Scott. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Bryant, I was intrigued by one of the things you said. It suggested a fairly radical idea that the research ought to be linked to actual student achievement.

That idea is often lost on Members of Congress, who are more interested in making sure the grants get into our district without any consideration of the overall impact on student achievement.

But I would want to see kind of how this would work if we kind of focused on research, improving student achievement.

You've got, I guess, two parts of that. One, you have to select the right thing to do research on, and then after you've got the results, you have to translate it into something that a school board, administration, into the classroom would actually do some good.

We are here to reauthorize OERI. What has OERI done for you to help improve student achievement?

Ms. Bryant. Well, you have about six parts to the question. So let me take two of them.

One is how do we make sure the research that is done on an ongoing basis is linked to student achievement?

My idea, which is a little bit radical, is to say school districts have a capacity, many of them do now, to be really data driven.

There are many districts in each of your states where there is terrific evidence about what is working for kids.

The link to the national research is very, very important. You can't make a decision just based on Mrs. Jones' sixth grade. You have to link it to the overall national research agenda.

Actually, the National School Boards Foundation is the recipient of an OERI grant to help train school board members on how to be good data driven decision-makers.

Part of our challenge is what are the right questions school board members should be asking to get them the answer regarding whether or not it is the right program? Not, I went to a conference and I heard about this great program at the exhibit booth given to us by, and name the product of the company. But rather, here is a research base and here is how it works for African-American boys, here is how it works for Hispanic girls, and it is proven to work for those populations.

I think, again, it is looking at how do you use the context of your own student data, own student demographics, and link it to good scientific research at the national level?

Mr. Scott. What should we be doing in the reauthorization of OERI to make sure that happens?

Ms. Bryant. Make sure there are grants that go to local education agencies and that link their work to the national agenda.

Mr. Scott. And do the local school boards have the expertise to do research, so you're counting appropriately from a research - that would be helpful in research?

Ms. Bryant. Not all of them. Obviously, one question is do they have the right staff and capacity, but also can they link with partners, can they link with universities, can they link up with labs, so that they are, in fact, doing scientifically based research?

Mr. Scott. You also mentioned technical assistance. Presumably, you are doing professional development, which is unrelated to OERI's. Is there some research based specific technical assistance that would be helpful to teachers generally or to school administrators generally or would you be looking just to make sure the school system has that in-house expertise?

Ms. Bryant. I think that, depending on the size of the school system, and, obviously, it ranges from 200 children and very few adults to Los Angeles, that you have a big variety of technical expertise.

I think that some of the recommendations that you have heard today are let's use the regional labs, let's use university centers to help bring together that expertise with those districts.

Mr. Scott. Ms. Towne mentioned the research they are doing. How can - what would you need from the research labs in terms of, I guess, translation from their research to something that would actually be helpful in the classroom?

Ms. Towne. As I said before, that question probably is the most important one that we have to figure out here.

After all, my committee really only focused on the scientific quality of the work. But it recognized up front that scientific quality and the rigor of the work is necessary, but not sufficient to get to where I think we all agree we need to be, which is a place where evidence and science is actually the driver of decision-making in the way that I think you are describing.

The committee really didn't go into a lot of how structures would need to be set up, certainly. It did talk about some of the roots of the problem.

It isn't just a matter, I think, of web sites and formats and all of that, although that's critical. There is also a cultural division. Someone mentioned it earlier today.

Researchers and practitioners speak different languages. They don't tend to hang out together and that is something that if we're actually going to get to that goal, is really going to have to change. There is going to have to be a little bit of the meeting of the minds over time.

Mr. Scott. Thank you.

Mr. Keller. Thank you, Mr. Scott. Mr. Osborne.

Mr. Osborne. Yes. I would like to ask one question of Dr. Christensen.

I think you started to discuss your use of a regional lab, Corel in Nebraska, and ran out of time. If you want to just take a moment and explain how you think that was important.

Mr. Christensen. The two things that we mentioned for which they have provided research documentation for us to feed back into us so that we can learn what worked, what we intended to have happen, did have happen, and what kind of unintended consequences we did have that we also

could learn from.

In addition, we have had annually - in fact, we will be having our fourth one this summer - a policy forum where all of the seven states in our region send a policy team of people, including the governor, chief state school officers, state boards, professional associations, administrators, teachers organization and so forth, who come together around an issue we have decided. And for the past three years, we have been dealing with the issue of teacher quality.

And that discussion at a policy level, which has had presentations on the research evidence, has energized conversations in every one of our states going back to help in that problem-solving process.

If you want to talk about one way in which that information can be made useful and disseminated-.

We have used those regional policy forums as a way to inform policy. A professional partnership team, from every state, is informed on what the major issues are, like teacher quality, and then each goes home and continues that conversation.

The final thing that I think the regional lab has done for us, complimentary to our forums, the chief state school officers from the region, the seven states, meet twice a year and we share ideas, share practices.

It is a lot of discussion about the research agenda and the research results that are out there and simply what is working in our states, so that we can learn from each other, and that simply would not be happening without Corel.

Mr. Osborne. Thank you, Dr. Christensen. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. Keller. Thank you, Mr. Osborne.

Ms. Woolsey. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, panel. It is so nice to hear research and witnesses that don't have an axe to grind.

This is really nice. Thank you very much.

Dr. Bryant, I want to tell you I think your constituency, the school board members, have the hardest political positions in the country. I mean, everybody thinks they are an expert on education, because they were all educated at one point or another or have kids, et cetera.

I have a question, and I'm going to start with you.

Do we or should we, through OERI, do research on programs that aren't specifically educational, but rather support good education, getting kids ready to learn, so that when they enter the classroom, they can do what they need?

Ms. Bryant. Absolutely. The whole area of early childhood education is coming into its own. We did a survey of our Council of Urban Boards of Ed, which is 100 school districts who are urban boards of education, and early childhood education is top on their list.

The beginning research is clear that the earlier you get to children in terms of habits of learning, habits of behavior, as well as reading and mathematical skills, the better off we are.

I would urge the new OERI to really look at that area. The little bit of research that I have seen shows that the amount of time you spend with younger children on reading skills gets them doubled and tripled and quadrupled by the time you get to third and fifth grade. So absolutely.

I also want to thank you for your comment about the tough political job of school board members. I'll bet you that Members of Congress don't have to spend three hours in a grocery store, for the very reasons you mentioned.

Ms. Woolsey. Well, I have to tell you that going to the grocery store is a long, long process for me. So I can't rush through the grocery store and get re-elected. It just doesn't work.

We talked about disconnection and we talked about disconnection coming - information coming down.

Let's talk about information going up. I would like to know from all of you or each of you that would respond to this if you think the classroom teachers and the school boards, but particularly the instructors, are being heard when it comes to what should be researched and who is making those decisions.

Start with you, Secretary Horne.

Mr. Horne. No.

Ms. Woolsey. Okay. That's good. I mean, it's not good.

Mr. Horne. We have identified that as an issue in Florida. I can't speak for other states. We are working on ways to-.

I think in many respects, and, I can just speak only for Florida at the moment, but we have identified our customers as just being school boards or school districts and not teachers, not parents, and not students, and that culture is changing.

Their input is very valuable. They are the front line. That is where it is delivered every day. They are in the trenches and their opinions matter.

And to even conduct and lead education research without their input is going to be a fatal mistake. I think their input is very, very important, and that of parents is, as well.

I mean, we often talk about the teachers and we talk about others, but we leave the parents out, and they are the actual first teacher to begin with.

I think our stakeholders need to be clearly identified. Their input ought to be sought and they ought to lead our priorities and help us develop the strategies by which we do our education research.

That's not to say that we don't have some great researchers who can, independent of that, develop some very sound programs, but I think we will be far more effective and efficient if we cast the net broad and bring in these stakeholders.

Ms. Woolsey. Would any of you like to comment? Dr. Bryant?

Ms. Bryant. I think, absolutely, I would agree with Mr. Horne. When you look at the sort of process of how a school board makes a decision on curriculum or pedagogy, it usually, or it should, involve a committee of teachers who are involved in that decision-making process.

Ms. Woolsey. Thank you.

Ms. Towne. I will comment from two perspectives. One is with respect to this committee that authored this report.

It did, in the process of talking about the setting of the research agenda for a Federal education research agency, suggest that a governing board that was broadly representative help define that agenda. It would include folks like teachers and people who are more on the ground level to help and do that.

After all, the priorities of a research agenda should be driven by the priorities of the nation for what is important to know. Along with scientists who can identify areas that are ripe for investigation and have a high likelihood of actually generating the kinds of insights that can be useful.

The second thing that I will mention is with respect to the National Research Council generally. The way we do our work is through these committees of experts.

We almost always have teachers on the committees that do education work because we believe they do bring unique insights to the process. And, in fact, we are in the process of putting together what would be something like a standing board within the National Research Council of teachers to advise us more broadly on our work in education, and I think, for the very reasons that you asked the question.

Mr. Christensen. If I could make one comment, in addition to all those, which I agree with.

I wish there was some requirement that on an annual or biannual basis, the state agency, specifically the chief state school officer, was required to report to the Federal Government on what he thought or she thought were the research priorities in that state, given that we are supposed to be

connected to the schools, to the boards, to the administrators, to the teachers, and to the communities. I think you could create a tremendous dialogue around that kind of information gathering process.

I hope I live long enough to be asked.

Ms. Woolsey. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this good hearing.

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Ms. Woolsey. We appreciate it. I will yield to myself, since I didn't take the opportunity to ask questions originally.

I just want to say a couple of things. One, the chart, you can read the charts up there, can't you? I'm just kidding.

But those charts basically are a demonstration of the procedural structure for OERI before and hopefully afterwards, with some degree of simplification. We don't need to go into the details on that.

Secondly, we have had some discussion today, and I have provoked it a little bit with questions and you all have talked a little bit about the scientifically based research, et cetera.

We need to remember that that is in the No Child Left Behind Act, which was signed by the President. It was bipartisanly supported, and that is the law that we have to look to.

So not that we can't discuss it, but I am just saying it is already there, and it's really not as much a part of this bill as it is the law that is presently with us today.

Let me just also say that my interest in this is in getting the best research product we can. I haven't heard - I mean, some people defend the labs, because they're in their districts or whatever, but the truth of the matter is, I haven't heard too many Republicans or Democrats saying that we need to defend the system as it currently exists.

Our goal is to move this legislation along, but at the end of it, to be able to have something that is meaningful in terms of research.

If you have direct input on the changes we need, you should get that to us.

Let me just ask a few questions, if I can. Dr. Christensen, a couple of things, going back to your original testimony. And, I'm sorry, I had to step out for a phone call and then, also, part of this was when I was over voting, so I may be repeating a little bit.

But you indicated in both your written testimony and your oral testimony that you in Nebraska feel remote and disconnected from national research issues and the national research agenda.

We hear this from everybody in Nebraska - or any other remote part of the country. They always feel remote; we don't get enough money or whatever. And we understand that.

Mr. Christensen. You are right.

Chairman Castle. Also, later, we were talking about - and I can't remember where it was, but you were talking about the lab in, I think, Denver and how good a job they do.

It seems somewhat inconsistent to me. I'm sure there is an explanation, but if you could just sort of balance that for me a little bit, I'd appreciate it. Briefly, please.

Mr. Christensen. Initially, like I said, eight years ago, when I took over as Commissioner, the lab was doing its own thing. It never asked us, "Are there research issues you would like us to be focusing on which would be helpful to Nebraska."

I have no idea why that was the case. I don't know whether it was the specifics of the leadership at that time of the agency, but it changed about five years ago and the new director and the new board of the lab have absolutely made it their cause to find out what is going on.

Chairman Castle. I'm going to sort of interrupt you, because I want to keep things moving. So they are now corresponding with you and asking you what you need in Nebraska, and you are inputting stuff to them or information to them?

Mr. Christensen. We meet with them regularly. The chiefs meet with them. They come to our state. They talk to the stakeholder groups.

Every state gets to say something about the research and development agenda of Macrell, absolutely critical to-.

Chairman Castle. Do you feel as disconnected as you did before as a result of this?

Mr. Christensen. No. My disconnection is with the Federal kinds of issues. I never know why they come up. I never know if there is a purpose behind them. They just seem to appear and then seem to be dropped. There is never a dissemination in what I call the development phase that begins to translate that into - all right, what does this stuff mean, what does it mean to policy, what does it mean to practice.

That's what I'm referring to.

Chairman Castle. Let me sort of jump over to Dr. Bryant. I think Mrs. Biggert asked you this question in a way, but I also want to ask it, perhaps in a slightly different way.

That is, to the extent that you can help us with this, is the real use of this data at the teaching level or even at the school building level, if you will?

To the best of your knowledge, it is really getting down to that level? Do the teachers even care if it gets down to that level?

I think the dissemination aspect of this is very, very important and I, frankly, don't think it has been handled particularly well.

I know there are web sites and there are various other ways of disseminating it, but I just am not convinced. When I talk to people at home, they don't even know what I'm talking about. They don't even know this office exists, for the most part. I would be curious as to your viewpoint on that, your vantage point.

Ms. Bryant. I think that is right. I think there is still a disconnect between a teacher who is very adept at analyzing the data on her students and figuring out what teaching strategies are best for pockets of students in her classroom.

I think that is sort of the brilliant teacher who is connected to the research arena.

And then there is the teacher who is going along and doing it the way she has done it for 20 years or he has done it for 20 years.

I think where the district can be helpful – and we shouldn't say to every principal that they have to be a research center.

I think what we say is a school district is a school district, to try to leverage the capacity of all the schools and all the teachers and the student data in that district to make good decisions around curriculum and pedagogy. And that is where I think what you've heard from a lot of us is that you shouldn't adopt a curriculum based on whim or based on a good anecdote.

You ought to adopt a curriculum based on good, sound research.

I think teachers do want to have the capability, the capacity to get to that research. They spend their lives with these kids. They want to be providing the best, whether it's success for all or reading recovery or whatever.

Teachers really don't want to be spinning their wheels. They want to be using the best products and curriculum and textbooks.

Chairman Castle. I agree with that. I go back to the story that was circulated last year regarding 100,000 reading studies being done in this country, with most of these reading programs being stamped satisfactory by somebody doing education research, maybe OERI, maybe somebody else.

What is it, 30 or 40 percent of our kids can't read by the third grade or something of that nature now? Reading doesn't seem to be taught any differently than it was heretofore.

It just seems to me that if I was a teacher in the classroom someplace in Nebraska or Florida or wherever, I wouldn't know where to turn in terms of what is a new methodology for doing this,

and that is a frustration to me that it is not happening.

Ms. Bryant. Let me just add that I actually think the reading research is better than almost every other subject, and we have made huge progress in reading.

In fact, that is probably the most available content data for teachers.

Quite frankly, we're teaching it differently. There is much more use of the sort of phonics based early on and then an integration of loving literature.

Now, I won't use the words ``whole language,'' because I know Mr. Horne will probably jump at me, but there is a piece of loving to read and loving literature that we know is important, especially as we become more proficient in reading.

So actually the research around reading is, in a very exciting way, further along, and then I could name all the other subjects.

Chairman Castle. I thank you for that. Mr. Horne is a nice man. I just wanted you to know that, too, before we had him come up here.

This may have been asked of you, Ms. Towne - again, I was out of the room - but what prompted the National Research Council to undertake the report on scientific principles and education research?

Because that is sort of an important change that we're going through right now.

Ms. Towne. That is a very interesting question. There had been quite a bit of debate in the field of education research since it began about 100 years ago about what is the nature of this work - is it really like other science, what does quality mean, all of the issues that have come to bear here in the policy environment in No Child Left Behind.

So that had been brewing for a very long time. And then in the last couple of years, this idea of evidence-based practice started working its way into Federal legislation and into comprehensive school reform, the Reading Act, and then much more prominently, as I said, in the No Child Left Behind Act.

The National Education Research Policy and Priorities Board, which is OERI's current board, came to the National Research Council and said it would really be nice to have a group of researchers and a group of scholars and experts come together and try and clarify actually what this very loaded term means. And, in doing so, we also have the reauthorization of OERI coming up, can you think about the implications of what that means for a Federal agency that is charged with supporting this research.

So that is the context.

Chairman Castle. Thank you. That's helpful, and we'll take a good look at that.

Finally, Secretary Horne, I am going to ask you the final question, and this is going to be rather open-ended, because I have a lot of specific questions I could have asked you.

That is, based on - and I know, obviously, you haven't had a chance to study this legislation, but based on what you know of OERI today, based on what you know from conversations today or otherwise about the legislation which we are proposing, can you highlight anything for us that you would be concerned about out or warnings?

Are we going in the right - what is your general view about what you're hearing, or specifically, is there something in there that you think is just off base?

Mr. Horne. I'm not sure there is anything off base. I think there is a very powerful element at play. It's a very positive force and one that we have really not discussed at any great length.

That is the piece that begins to separate some of the functional areas that have previously been conducted all in one area. I think the separation of some of these functions is critical to the effectiveness of the overall effort of education and research.

I might get myself into a little trouble about what I'm about ready to say, but at the state level, we are somewhat suspect of the quality of the product because of what appears to be political interference, and I think that to the degree that you can create some autonomy and independence.

Now, while we recognize the need to have some executive oversight, and I think that is the path that this bill is taking, that is important. Any level of quasi-independence to research from program evaluation is important.

I'm a CPA by trade and I recognize the need to separate and have control mechanisms in place.

And so I think this bill is taking appropriate steps, even within retaining its existence within the Department. Yet it has created, I think, a powerful enough element of independence so that you can separate the research from program evaluation.

We in Florida have likewise taken similar steps. We are in the midst of a massive reorganization of our education system. We have created what we call an accountability research measurement office, ARM, some would call it the long arm of the law, but it is an effort to remove the research from the program areas and also remove it from the budgetary side.

We think it's critically important to have that independence. And it will go a long way to establish credibility in the eyes, I believe, of state chiefs throughout the country.

So I would say that that is probably one of the most powerful pieces of the legislation. I think it's a good piece and I urge you to hold onto that piece, because I think that is critical.

Chairman Castle. Thank you. I actually agree with you on that. When we started this process, there was a previous administration in place and I wanted the board to be completely independent. And I didn't necessarily win that argument.

Now we have a new administration in place and I still think it should be completely independent, if I have my druthers.

I guess the example is NIH. And I don't want to get into the medical-educational comparisons here, but in terms of an independent research entity - and that actually happens to be under a department that I didn't even know.

I would like to see the same thing happen. I mean, when I started down here, I didn't know. I learned it.

I want to see the same thing happen with this. We're trying to make it strong enough so that it can stand up to any administration and not just carry out political whims, which is, in my judgment, a terrible way to do educational research.

Whether we have achieved that-.

I'm glad to hear you think we're moving in that direction. Hopefully we have achieved that. We'll find out.

Mr. Horne. In the CPA world, the appearance of independence is almost as important as independence in fact. So to the extent that you can create the appearance of independence, it will establish almost instant credibility at the state level and will assure the value that we want for the research.

Chairman Castle. Thank you. I appreciate it. Mr. Scott, do you have anything further?

Mr. Scott. The CPA independence is a bigger issue.

Chairman Castle. I was going to ask him if he worked for Arthur Andersen at any point, but I thought I better leave it alone.

Mr. Christensen. Price Waterhouse.

Chairman Castle. I had that same question in mind.

Mr. Scott. Thank you.

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Mr. Scott. We appreciate your participation.

Let me thank the panel. We are at our conclusion now.

Obviously, after the last vote, you start to lose members, as you can see. But your testimony is very important and as you all know, that testimony is brought in and looked at by all the staff and we will consider it as part of our final push to this legislation.

We appreciate you being here. If you have any thoughts after the fact, let us hear from you in some way or another and we will try to incorporate them, as well.

DOCUMENT REGARDING THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE CENTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE HILDA SOLIS, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C. – SEE APPENDIX I

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY WHITEHURST BY THE HONORABLE HILDA SOLIS, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C. – SEE APPENDIX J

RESPONSE SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WHITEHURST TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE HONORABLE HILDA SOLIS, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C. – SEE APPENDIX K

With that, the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:33 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX A - WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Chairman Michael N. Castle
Subcommittee on Education Reform

Opening Statement

February 28, 2002

Good morning. I would like to welcome everyone to this subcommittee's final hearing in preparation for the reauthorization of the Office of Educational Reform and Improvement (OERI).

Two years ago, I introduced H.R. 4875, the Scientifically Based Education Research, Statistics, Evaluation and Information Act, to reform OERI and to institutionalize new standards of quality to ensure that our federal investments produced results where they mattered most -- in the classroom.

Then, and now, I am seeking to insulate our federal research, evaluation and statistics activities from partisan or undue political influences, put the needs of our teachers and students first, insist on the use of rigorous scientific standards to identify and disseminate effective strategies and methods, and ensure that program evaluations are impartial.

Today's hearing will focus on the reauthorization of OERI, and our discussion will be based, in large part, on H.R. 4875, which was unanimously approved by the subcommittee last Congress. It is my hope that we will also discuss my new legislation, H.R. 3801, the Education Sciences Reform Act, which I believe incorporates the best ideas of H.R. 4875 and other reauthorization proposals.

During the 106th Congress, we all agreed that reform and restructuring of OERI were needed, and we agreed that improving student achievement -- not protecting the current structure -- was our main objective. H.R. 4875, as reported by the subcommittee, established a bipartisan benchmark in the reauthorization process. It created a more independent federal education research, statistics, and evaluation entity, it simplified the federal education research process, and it provided independent, objective evaluations of federal education programs, among other things.

Much like H.R. 4875, my new bill would replace OERI with a new Academy of Education Sciences, which would provide the infrastructure for the undertaking of coordinated and high quality education research, statistics gathering, program evaluation, and dissemination.

The Academy would be located within the Department of Education, but it would

function as a separate office under the direction of a National Board for Education Sciences. I believe this change will help ensure that the Academy's activities are carried out with the greatest levels of independence and integrity.

We all know that tried and true information is critical to the development of sound education policy. For this reason, my bill adopts clear standards and definitions to define the degree of precision that must be used when individuals and organizations conduct education research with federal funds. As many of us will recall, these definitions were threaded throughout the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act.

Then, through a new Knowledge Utilization Office, information on the findings of scientifically valid research would be disseminated in an understandable format, ensuring that teachers and school administrators receive the latest information on proven learning programs and strategies.

Finally, my new legislation attempts to fill the need for high quality technical assistance by giving the Secretary of Education new authority to oversee a regionally-based , consumer-driven grant program. As envisioned in my bill, the grant program would combine and direct existing funds to address issues and questions regarding core academic areas, such as reading, math, science, and technology. The regional structure would also be used to assess local needs and provide federal education program support to local schools and school districts, including the administration and implementation of Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs.

This change, I believe, is significant. As I am sure we will hear today, school administrators, educators and parents are already examining various strategies and methods to help their students meet and exceed new and more challenging standards of achievement and accountability. And I want quality education research, not fads or anecdotes, to inform their decisions on the best way to improve student learning and narrow achievement gaps.

By holding education research, evaluations and statistics to new standards of quality, improving the focus of these activities so they address the needs of educators and policymakers, and laying the framework for the dissemination of high quality, scientifically valid information, I believe we can build the foundation to improve the education of our children and all of our nation's students. And I believe my bill, H.R. 3801, is a good start.

I wish to thank each of you for taking time to be with us. In just a few moments I will proceed with the introduction of OERI Assistant Secretary Whitehurst, but at this time I will yield to ranking member Kildee for any statement that he may wish to make.

APPENDIX B - WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GROVER "RUSS" WHITEHURST, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

STATEMENT
of
GROVER J. WHITEHURST
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
before
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC
February 28, 2002

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

Last year's bipartisan bill, which was considered by this subcommittee, was an important step toward improving the rigor and relevance of education research. The Administration supports the fundamental principles underlying that bill, and we look forward to working with you to refine it. We applaud you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Committee for your efforts.

I have been impressed and gratified by the Committee's attention and commitment to an issue that does not generate the wide popular notice of some other areas of education. In making that commitment, you share with this Administration the view that scientifically based research and evidence on what works are the cornerstones of educational reform.

The shared understanding of the Congress and the Administration about the role of research in educational reform was evidenced vividly in the recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In that bill, passed by overwhelming majorities in both chambers and signed into law by the President on January 8, the phrase scientifically based research appears 110 times.

Scientifically based research will be a component of reform in the upcoming reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Elementary and Secondary Education, along with Special Education, account for approximately $30 billion in annual federal expenditures within the Department of Education. Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, $30 billion is a lot of money. We all recognize that, historically, this huge annual investment in the education of disadvantaged students and students with disabilities has not achieved everything that was expected of it. For instance, in the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress in reading, 40 percent of white 4th graders read at a proficient level, compared with only 12 percent

of African-American students. In some urban school districts that serve predominantly disadvantaged children, 70 percent of 4th graders cannot read at the basic level. Nothing has changed in the last decade in these statistics, and the overall gap between the highest and lowest performing students has actually increased in some subjects.

If scientifically based research is going to be the key to reform of our most important federal education programs, then we had better make sure that the federal office with the principal responsibility for generating that research has the tools it needs to get the job done. That is what we are here today to address.

In facing that task, I want this Committee to understand that we are dealing not only with gaps in student achievement, but also gaps in scientific knowledge. Consider some of the major program areas in the ESEA in which Congress instructed that funding decisions and practice should adhere to scientifically based research. These include the core academic subjects of reading, math, and science, school wide reform models, early literacy programs in preschools, professional development of teachers, supplementary educational services, education of gifted and talented students, educational technology, and programs for safe and drug-free schools, among others.

We have a substantial and persuasive research base in only one of these topics, learning how to read. That research base is the result of 30 years of continuous and cumulative work, funded primarily by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. That body of work was synthesized in the National Reading Panel report that formed the basis of the Reading First program in No Child Left Behind. However, even within reading, the research becomes substantially thinner when we move from learning to read at the beginning of elementary school to reading to learn, otherwise known as reading comprehension, at later points in schooling. In the other core academic subjects of math and science, research has not progressed to a level at which it is possible to make strong statements about which approaches produce the strongest effects on academic achievement for which children in which circumstances. In the professional development of teachers we don't have research to answer dozens of fundamental policy issues about how to best train and sustain teachers in order to enhance student learning. ESEA authorizes supplementary educational services, such as after school tutoring, for children in failing schools. Which of the available tutoring programs work best for which types of academic skill deficits? Sorry, we don't know. How about comprehensive school reform? ESEA instructs local education agencies to consider successful external models and to develop an approach to reform of their school that is derived from scientifically based research. By one count there are well over 100 comprehensive school reform models from which a local educational agency might choose. Which of these are successful? That is hard to say, because only a few have been subjected to research, and much of that research isn't sufficiently rigorous to permit strong conclusion about the effects of the models compared to business as usual, much less compared to each other.

My point, and I apologize for making it repetitiously, is that there is a lot we don't know about how learners learn and how to deliver instruction effectively.

The extent of our ignorance is masked by a "folk wisdom" of education based on the experience of human beings over the millennia in passing information and skills from one generation to the next. This folk wisdom employs unsystematic techniques. It doesn't demand scientific knowledge of mechanisms of learning. It is inefficient, and it is hit or miss. It lets us muddle through when the tasks to be learned are simple, or in a highly elitist system in which we only expect those with the most talent and most cultural support to learn advanced skills. But it fails when the tasks to be learned are complex or when we expect that no child will be left behind. The tasks to be learned in a 21st century economy are without a doubt complex, and we have decided that our education system must serve all learners well. We have to do better than we have done in the past.

Consider the analogy of medicine. For thousands of years folk remedies have been used to cure disease or relieve symptoms. But the successes of modern medicine have emerged in the last 75 years and derive from advances in the sciences of physiology and biochemistry that allowed us to understand the mechanisms of disease, and from the wide use of randomized clinical trials to determine which prevention and treatment approaches drawn from these sciences work as intended.

Or consider the analogy of agriculture. For thousands of years humans barely managed to avoid starvation by using agricultural methods that were passed from generation to generation. The abundance of inexpensive and nutritious foods that can be found at any neighborhood grocery store today result from agricultural practice that has moved from reliance on folk wisdom to reliance on science.

When we come to education, the picture is different. The National Research Council has concluded that "the world of education, unlike defense, health care, or industrial production, does not rest on a strong research base. In no other field are personal experience and ideology so frequently relied on to make policy choices, and in no other field is the research base so inadequate and little used." At the same time, the National Research Council has concluded that scientific inquiry in education is at its core the same as in all other fields. In other words, the core principles of scientific inquiry are as relevant for education as they are for medicine. There is every reason to believe that, if we invest in the education sciences and develop mechanisms to encourage evidence-based practice, we will see progress and transformation in education of the same order of magnitude as we have seen in medicine and agriculture. I believe we are at the dawn of exactly that process, and it is very exciting.

How quickly will the transformation of education into an evidence-based field occur? The actions of this Committee and the Congress as it considers the reauthorization of the research functions in the Department of Education will have a lot to do with the answer to that question.

A number of significant changes are necessary in the way we do business, so that we operate consistently with the standards of a science-based research agency. This

Committee recognized this and addressed many of the important issues last year. I look forward to working with the Committee on refinements to the bill this year.

Before assuming my current position, I spent 31 years conducting research on children's learning. I am proud to say that some of that research has proven useful to educators and parents. For the last ten months, I have been focusing exclusively on OERI, first as a consultant to the Department, and since July of last year as Assistant Secretary for Research and Improvement. My testimony today is informed both by my background as a practicing scientist and by my experiences to date in trying to lead OERI.

Let me give you my reflections on how new legislation could help us move forward towards our overriding goal of making education an evidence-based field. To achieve that goal, Secretary Paige has asked me to focus on the quality, relevance, and utilization of the Department's research products. In other words, my marching orders are to fund research that is scientifically strong, that is relevant to pressing problems in education, and that will be utilized by educators and education decision makers.

Organizational structure

OERI is currently divided into four principal operational arms: 1) the National Center for Education Statistics, which conducts surveys and assessments to determine the condition of education; 2) the Office of Reform Assistance and Dissemination, which monitors ten regional educational laboratories and administers a large number of programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; 3) the National Library of Education, which manages a physical library in the Department of Education as well as an electronic repository of documents in education called the Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse; and 4) the National Research Institutes, which are five administrative units that manage research centers at universities and grants to individual researchers.

This administrative structure is problematic. For instance, the five national research institutes have overlapping responsibilities and generate impediments to research initiatives that do not neatly fall within the purview of one of the institutes. We have, for example, a new research initiative underway in reading comprehension. Should this be the responsibility of the At-Risk Institute or the Achievement and Assessment Institute? And isn't it also an initiative of relevance to the Early Childhood Institute and the Postsecondary and Adult Learning Institute? It is difficult to assemble staff outside the Institute structure to focus on cross-cutting issues. It would be much better if we had the ability to organize and reorganize ourselves as needed to pursue the tasks at hand. This is an issue of organizational flexibility that I will address again subsequently.

We believe that new legislation should provide for organizational division into three centers responsible for research, statistics, and evaluation, each with its own Commissioner. The Director would head the agency of which the centers are a part and would provide leadership and management for the centers. In addition, the Director

would take direct responsibility for a knowledge utilization branch that would work with the research, statistics, and evaluation centers to promote and make accessible the results of their work. The knowledge utilization branch would differ from current efforts in using clear standards for data quality and scientific rigor in determining what to disseminate, and promoting broad public awareness of the importance of scientific evidence in making education decisions.

Creating a culture of science

In striving to enhance the scientific quality of our work, we have focused on people. It is people who have the responsibility for conceptualizing and coordinating research programs. The recent National Research Council report on scientific inquiry in education concluded that building a scientific culture within the Department's research agency is a prerequisite for all else, and this reflects our approach as well. I think it is critically important to understand that successful research agencies, such as the NIH, embody a scientific culture because the people in the principal program management roles share the dispositions and training that characterize scientists. It is this shared culture, much more than statutes, rules, and regulations, that supports high-quality research. Scattering a few scientists among a large number of employees without the training and dispositions of scientists does not work. Several months ago I identified the relatively small number of accomplished scientists in OERI and asked them to meet regularly as a group to move our new programs forward. The day after the first meeting, I received an email from one of the older hands in attendance. He wrote that it was the first time he had actually felt like he was working in a research agency. Creating a culture in which those experiences are routine is essential.

My experience in trying to increase the number of qualified scientists at OERI highlights an area in which new legislation can be useful. We need to be able to hire scientists on excepted service positions outside the regular civil service. OERI currently has this authority, and we want to see it continued. One of the people I have recruited, a very senior distinguished scientist, was hired on an excepted service line, and it took us only two weeks. Had we not had that authority, she would not be here yet, and the critical work that she has done over the last six months would not have been accomplished. In hiring scientists, we need to move quickly and flexibly. We also need to hire scientists for limited terms, so that we will be continuously able to bring new scientists into the agency as others return to their institutions or move on to other positions. Other science agencies find this strategy invaluable.

Building a scientific culture at the Department's research agency also requires stability in leadership and the shared sense that the organization can pursue its agenda over the long term. The Office of Educational Research and Improvement has had more Assistant Secretaries and Acting Assistant Secretaries than it has had years of existence. That is not a recipe for building a strong organization. In making appointments under the new legislation, the Department intends to emphasize the scientific and management qualifications of the Director and Commissioners of the principal centers of operation

and, in particular, their willingness to serve for a substantial period of time, so as to encourage stability and continuity in leadership and management of the centers.

With highly qualified scientists throughout the agency and in leadership roles, we can address the quality issues that arise from inadequate peer review, which has been a chronic problem. A 1999 study of peer review in OERI by the National Educational Research Policy and Priorities Board found three panels of reviewers for the field-initiated studies competition that did not have a single member with research training and experience in the subject area of the competition. I will state the obvious: If the reviewers don't know anything about what they are reviewing, they aren't going to be able to separate the scientifically strong applications from the weak.

We hope new legislation will make it easier for us to set up standing review panels comprised of experts on particular topics, instead of using panels that can only meet once and that consist of members who are forced to be jacks of all trades. That structural feature, when combined with a selection process for peer reviewers that is carried out by staff in the agency who are themselves accomplished scientists, will have more effect in raising the quality standards than anything else we can do.

Focus

Research expenditures in the Department have been dispersed over far too many topics and projects to achieve the critical mass of scientific knowledge that leads to breakthroughs in practice. In the past, there has been very little sense of what the Department expects to accomplish with its research activities. We need to identify a limited number of core problems in education in which research has the potential to generate breakthroughs in teaching, learning, and management.

Current law forces us to support too many topics of research through specific research funding mechanisms that may not be optimal. Current law requires us to establish research priorities, but has provisions that prevent those priorities from being imposed on our field-initiated research. In other words, when we invite applications from the field for at least 25 percent of our annual appropriation, we cannot specify those topics that need to be addressed.

New legislation should allow us to hold focused research competitions in areas that are consistent with long-term priorities. The agency and the centers should set their priorities through a process that provides for obtaining and carefully considering public comments. Research funded under these priorities would not be to the exclusion of all other activities, but we could give our priority areas the resources and prolonged investment they need to generate useful and relevant results that can be used by educators to improve teaching and learning.

Flexibility

Many of the Department's research activities are legislated and regulated in a way that provides very little flexibility to respond to new opportunities and challenges, or to administer programs effectively. Under the current statute, we must have exactly five national research institutes, we must divide the money between research centers and field-initiated studies in a set proportion, we must regulate in order to direct money to a new research topic, and on and on. We need not only the flexibility to direct funds into particular areas of national need, but also the ability for our organization to evolve and adapt over time without requiring an act of Congress. In a recent workshop held at the National Academy of Sciences, a research administrator at the NIH said, "I work for an organization that can literally turn on a dime. We are not encumbered by the amount of regulation that OERI is. OERI should never be held to a quality standard until regulations are out of there."

While regulatory action is needed in some aspects of our work, strict procedures and constraints are detrimental to providing timely and useful research. At the NIH and other federal agencies, the initiation of grant competitions requires only internal review. In the Department of Education, in contrast, we are required by law to regulate separately for each competition and review. Thus we must publish what we intend to do in the Federal Register, wait for public comment, and revise in light of that comment. Establishing review criteria and standing review panels also require regulation. New legislation can release us from the heavy burden of regulation involved in new grant competitions.

These regulatory hurdles add up to six months to the time necessary to initiate funding competitions in the Department of Education compared to the NIH. We believe that the occasion for public comment through the regulatory process is when long-term priorities are being set, not when specific research funding announcements are sent to the scientific community. Releasing the research agency from these regulatory burdens for routine grant competitions would be tremendously helpful, both for managing the agency and for improving the quality of research.

Another area in which we need more flexibility is in budget and appropriations. When there are separate authorizations for particular, narrow components of our work, there are two predictable consequences. The first is that we are not able to move quickly into a new area of activity that is important. The second is increased pressure to fund work of lower than desirable quality. New legislation that would give us a consolidated budget and that would allow us the flexibility to shift funds to areas of promising research would help tremendously. We could respond quickly to new areas of research need and ensure that our funding decisions are driven entirely by the quality and relevance of the projects that are competing for awards.

Nonpartisan Research

The research activities within the Department have sometimes been seen by the outside community and Congress as more subject to political involvement than would be the case for research conducted by NIH or NSF. Regardless of the accuracy of that view, the perception that politics is driving research needs to be avoided if we expect the Department's research activities to have the force of scientific findings.

There are a number of ways that new legislation could increase the perception and reality of nonpartisanship of the research process. A consolidated budget would help because it would isolate the agency's budget for personnel and supplies from the core Department budget for those items. An agency staffed predominantly by scientists, who are committed by virtue of their training to the integrity of the research process, will contribute significantly to the goals of nonpartisanship and objectivity. Placing the responsibility for evaluation of federal education programs in a center for evaluation within the agency will provide useful distance between the program evaluation and program management functions within the Department.

The centers for research, statistics, and evaluation need to conduct their work based on sound science and independent of politics or partisanship. We look forward to working with the Committee towards legislation that supports that goal.

Finally in terms of nonpartisanship and independence, we believe it is critically important to separate the research agency from the responsibility of delivering educational programs and technical assistance. Over the years an increasing number of such activities have been assigned to OERI to the point that over two-thirds of the budget is devoted to non-research programs. The agency responsible for evaluating program effectiveness and upholding high standards of evidence cannot fulfill its role if it is directly delivering the very educational programs and technical assistance that it is supposed to evaluate. We need a solid intellectual connection between scientific research, program design, and technical assistance, but in keeping with the recent National Research Council report on scientific inquiry in education, we believe it is very important to keep these two types of activity operationally distinct.

Funding

The entire research and statistics budget of OERI for fiscal year 2002 is less than ½ of 1 percent of the Department's discretionary budget. The core research and dissemination budget for 2002, leaving out statistics, is only $122 million. The education research agency needs adequate resources in order to support a sustained and cumulative research effort in its areas of responsibility. I am very pleased that the President understands and is committed to investments in education research. Accordingly, he has proposed a 44 percent increase for fiscal year 2003 in our core research budget. This is an unprecedented increase. We need the support of Congress in making an appropriation

consistent with the President's request so that we can move forward on the important work that needs to be done.

In an effort as large, complex, and important as this, informed, well-intentioned individuals and groups will differ on details. Let us talk about those details and compromise on those that seem to represent different routes to the same goal. However, we cannot and should not compromise on the end points. We need an invigorated agency that is capable of carrying out a coordinated, focused agenda of high quality research, statistics, and evaluation that is relevant to the educational challenges of the nation, and that has sufficient flexibility to adjust to new opportunities and problems when they arise. This is a unique and unparalleled opportunity to begin a process that will make American education an evidence-based field. If we succeed in this task, historians may look back at our actions in the next weeks and months as building the foundation for a new era in learning and teaching, an era that propelled the United States into another century of preeminence.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify.

APPENDIX C - QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY WHITEHURST BY THE HONORABLE HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON
25TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PROCUREMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY READINESS

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETITIVENESS
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February 28, 2002

The Honorable Mike Castle
Chairman
Subcommittee on Education Reform
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mike:

I would like to take this opportunity to submit the following questions to Dr. Russ Whitehurst, the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, for appropriate and timely answers.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Buck

Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Member of Congress

1. Teachers and administrators in my Congressional district have been very satisfied with the hands-on support that they have received from the Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center. The Center has been pivotal in turning around low performing schools--helping these schools to meet and exceed their Academic Performance Index target.

   I understand the Department has collected data on client satisfaction related to the Comprehensive Centers? What was the response? And how does this information compare to client satisfaction data on other federally funded technical assistance providers?

2. Early literacy is a very high priority in my school districts and for the Administration. Which of the many federally funded technical assistance providers have, as a network, reading as a priority of their services?

3. I believe that serving the needs of high poverty, low performing schools should be a national priority. Which of the federally funded technical assistance providers have been serving the greatest number of students that are Title I identified or living in poverty?

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APPENDIX D - RESPONSE SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WHITEHURST TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE HONORABLE HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL ASSISTANCE CENTERS

Question: Teachers and administrators in my Congressional district have been very satisfied with the hands-on support that they have received from the Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center. The Center has been pivotal in turning around low performing schools -- helping these schools meet and exceed their Academic Performance Index target.

I understand the Department has collected data on client satisfaction related to the Comprehensive Centers? What was the response? And how does this information compare to client satisfaction data on other federally funded technical assistance providers?

Answer: To answer your questions, we have looked at six Department of Education programs that provide technical assistance services to improve elementary and secondary education: (1) the Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers, (2) the Regional Educational Laboratories, (3) the Regional Technology in Education Consortia (R*TECs), (4) the Eisenhower Regional Mathematics and Science Consortia, (5) the Parent Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs), and (6) the Training and Advisory Services Equity Assistance Centers (EACs).

According to preliminary data from a recent survey of elementary and secondary school teachers who received professional development or training from the Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers in 2000 and 2001, 95 percent of the respondents to the survey indicated that the products and services provided to them by the Centers fit their needs, were responsive, timely, and usable; 88 percent indicated that the Comprehensive Center activities had some positive effect on their work and on the way their organization does its work. Preliminary data from a similar survey of State educational agency (SEA) and local educational agency (LEA) administrators served by the Comprehensive Centers during this same period found that 85 percent of those customers rated Center products and services either "excellent" or "good "on similar criteria (meeting their need and interests, responsiveness to specific local conditions their organizations face, timeliness, and the usefulness of the services for guiding improvement efforts). Also among the SEA and LEA survey respondents, 88 percent reported that participation in Center activities had some positive impact on their own work performance, while 78 percent reported that participation in Center activities had a positive impact on their organization's performance.

For the other programs listed above: The most recent customer service data for the Regional Educational Laboratories indicate that 93 percent of clients sampled in 2001 reported that the laboratory products and services they received were of high quality; for the R*TECs, in 2000, performance data indicate that customers rated 86 percent of services and 89 percent of products to be of high quality. These respondents reported that 82 percent of services and 79 percent of products were relevant to their needs as consumers. Under the Eisenhower Regional Mathematics and Science Consortia

program, in 1999 (the most recent data available), 77 percent of customers sampled reported that Consortia services contributed moderately or significantly to improving the customers' work, and 82 percent of customers rated the Consortia products as moderately or significantly effective. For the EACs, a customer satisfaction survey in 2000 found that 90 percent of customers were either very or moderately satisfied with the technical assistance services received from EACs. Customer satisfaction data on the PIRCs is not available.

Apart from the above data, however, a 2000 evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers found that the Centers face a number of challenges. According to the evaluation, the Centers' broad mandate and limited resources have forced them to make choices about which clients, and how many clients, they serve and the breadth and depth of the services they will provide; as a result, they have organized most of their work around a small group of key initiatives that engage them in long-term relationships with customers. The evaluation concluded, among other findings, that Comprehensive Center services, at their present level of intensity, do not produce radical changes in the behavior of organizations and individuals in any but a few instances, and that changes in teaching and learning are particularly limited. Increases in student achievement were the least commonly reported effect of Comprehensive Center services.

A January 2002 GAO report entitled "Education Research: Education Should Improve Assessments of R&D Centers, Regional Labs, and Comprehensive Centers" criticized the 2000 evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers (which also had customer satisfaction survey data for the 1998-99 school year comparable to that above for the 2000-2001 school year) for findings that were only able to be generalized across all 15 Comprehensive Centers but (due to limited sample size and methodology) could not be attributable to any of the individual Comprehensive Centers. As GAO points out in its report, information on the performance of each individual Center would allow the Department to determine if each Comprehensive Center is meeting the needs of its customers, and if its customers are satisfied with some or all of its products and services; identify variations across Comprehensive Centers; and obtain information to improve practices at individual Comprehensive Centers.

The GAO study also found deficiencies in how the Department assesses the work of the Regional Labs and made recommendations for improving the assessments of the Regional Labs. Specifically, the GAO recommends that the Department use random selection of projects, services, and products to be reviewed when conducting future evaluations of the Regional Labs, and revise the peer review standards for the Regional Labs to allow for division of labor and greater concentration on assessing the quality of projects, services, and products.

Question: Early literacy is a very high priority in my school districts and for the Administration. Which of the many federally funded technical assistance providers have, as a network, reading as a priority for their services?

Answer: The 15 Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers have, on a collaborative basis, addressed the need for improving the reading achievement of young readers in low-performing schools through the support of what they call the Reading Success Network (RSN). Through the RSN, staff from the Comprehensive Centers provide training for teachers in implementing scientifically-based content and instructional methods for teaching reading. Teachers are then coached by skilled peers to assess student needs, to use data for diagnosing difficulties, and to provide intervention strategies to meet their individual needs.

Some of the other technical assistance providers also support reading activities to some degree. For example, each of the 10 Regional Educational Laboratories is assigned a different national leadership area. The Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) laboratory, based in Honolulu, Hawaii, is responsible for improving early reading achievement. PREL works collaboratively with schools to develop site-based school improvement plans focused on early reading, provides intensive professional development and in-class teacher guidance and support, and develops reading materials and assessments for English-language and language minority students. Many of the other Regional Educational Laboratories also support specific activities related to reading.

Question: I believe that serving the needs of high poverty, low performing schools should be a national priority. Which of the federally funded technical assistance providers have been serving the greatest number of students that are Title I identified or living in poverty?

Answer: We don't have data on the numbers of *students* served by any of these programs, primarily because technical assistance is generally provided directly to teachers or to State and local school administrators, and not to students. However, the services provided by most of these programs are otherwise targeted along the lines you describe. For example, by statute, the Comprehensive Centers are required to give priority to serving Title I schoolwide programs and local educational agencies and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)-funded schools with the highest percentages or numbers of children in poverty. In the 2000-2001 school year, 87 percent of the schools that received services from the Comprehensive Centers were Title I schoolwide programs or high-poverty non-schoolwide programs, and 3 percent were BIA schools.

Among the other programs listed above, the Regional Educational Laboratories give priority to serving high-poverty school districts and schools that are most in need of raising student achievement; the R*TECS give priority to assisting schools with high numbers or percentages of disadvantaged students with little or no access to technology in the classroom; the Eisenhower Consortia provide intensive technical assistance targeted to at-risk students (in 2000, 80 percent of intensive technical assistance provided by the Eisenhower Consortia was targeted to at-risk students, up from 73 percent in 1999); and the PIRCs must use at least 50 percent of their funds in each fiscal year to serve areas with high concentrations of low-income families, in order to serve parents who are severely educationally or economically disadvantaged. In

addition, PIRC funds may be used to develop and implement parent involvement activities and school improvement plans under Title I.

APPENDIX E - WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JIM HORNE, SECRETARY, FLORIDA BOARD OF EDUCATION, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, AND ON BEHALF OF THE EDUCATION LEADERS COUNCIL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

JIM HORNE, SECRETARY
FLORIDA BOARD OF EDUCATION

And

VICE CHAIRMAN, EDUCATION LEADERS COUNCIL

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM

HEARING ON

THE REAUTHORIZATION OF
THE OFFICE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

FEBRUARY 28, 2002

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. It is a pleasure and honor to be here today to testify on issues surrounding the reauthorization of the Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI).

My name is Jim Horne, and I serve as the first Secretary of the Florida Board of Education. I am testifying today on behalf of the Education Leaders Council (ELC). ELC is a non-profit, non-partisan organization of practicing reformers. Its leadership includes ten state education chiefs, including myself, representing over 30 percent of the nation's K-12 population as well as governors, state boards of education and practicing reformers throughout the nation's education systems.

First, on behalf of ELC let me commend you, Mr. Chairman, and the rest of the Committee, for your work on the "No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001," which I believe is truly a landmark education reform that will have a profound impact in this nation toward ensuring all children are provided the opportunity for a high-quality education.

The "No Child Left Behind Act" includes many important provisions, but I believe one that is particularly key and relevant to this morning's hearing is the focus on "scientifically based research." This term is used throughout the new law in a way which will require everything from technical assistance for failing schools to reading programs to be based upon sound scientific evidence that shows such strategies are effective toward improving student academic achievement.

Although often overlooked in many of the summaries and press accounts of "No Child Left Behind," I believe this focus on scientifically-based research may in fact be among

the provisions in the new law which has the most lasting and positive impact toward education reform in this nation. And there is no place where this principle needs to be applied with greater diligence than in the work of the Federal government's own education research endeavors.

In effect, what Congress has said is that federal funds may no longer be used to support programs that have no basis for being effective. To those not familiar with the world of education, this may seem like common sense. However, I can attest that in my many years of being involved with education at the ground level, "what works" is often defined by a variety of things including good intentions, expensive marketing – and of course, a whole lot of politics – all at the expense of a hard look at the evidence and ultimately at the expense of our nations' students.

"No Child Left Behind" will force schools, districts, and States to focus far more on evidence and to demonstrate that funds are being used for programs that scientific inquiry has shown to have positive results.

This is why today's hearing on federal-education research is critical to ensuring the promises of the NCLB become a reality.

Specifically, today's focus on the federal role in education research is important because to date, ELC believes that there is much room for improvement in this area.

Simply put, I believe there is a broad consensus among those at the state and local levels that much of the research funded and disseminated by the Federal government, has not too date, met the same stringent criteria which will now be applied to schools, districts and the States.

For this to occur, OERI must be significantly reformed as part of the current reauthorization. ELC believes that such reform must, at a minimum, focus upon three pillars: Integrity, quality, and utility of educational research.

I am pleased to say that the Subcommittee's previous work, embodied in Chairman Castle's bill introduced in the last Congress, leads me to believe that you are already on a path toward achieving each of these goals.

Let me begin with integrity.

By integrity, I am of course not talking about the personal honesty of those working within the department on education research. Instead, I am talking about the soundness of the system and the infrastructure through which education research is produced.

I understand that over the course of the past year or so, this Subcommittee has heard from many witnesses testifying that far too much of the research overseen by OERI has suffered from a lack of credibility. As an education reformer from the State level, I don't pretend to be an expert on why this has historically been the case. However, I would

agree there is clearly the perception out in the field that too often, this research – and more specifically, the topics, the timing, and the findings – is driven more by politics than sound-scientific inquiry. I think it needs to be admitted that the "canons of science" haven't always worked well even when applied to education research, which is why we find so many 'peer reviewed' reports and studies that turn out to be just ideological soap boxes.

In discussing research, let me highlight evaluations done within the Department. To the extent that such evaluations are conducted by the same agency administering the program being evaluated, it seems this is very much the case of the fox minding the hen house.

ELC believes the issue of integrity must be addressed.

How this comes about is most certainly a combination of many factors – some of which, such as changing the culture of education research may be hard to legislate. However, I believe that a great deal can be done by simply creating an infrastructure that is conducive to building integrity and staving off the appearance (or realities) of undue political influence.

At a minimum, this should include providing as much independence for research and evaluations as possible while ensuring proper checks and balances. This may be easier said than done, as there is a fine line between autonomy and a lack of accountability. ELC encourages this Subcommittee to closely examine the options in this area, which may include consideration for a quasi-independent agency for research and evaluation while retaining the oversight of a Cabinet level executive department.

Indeed, there are many examples throughout the Federal government upon which education research efforts may be modeled. This includes the National Institute of Health, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Census Bureau. We know that OERI has already taken steps to increase the rigor of its scientific review process, and we commend them for this report. We also applaud the appointment of Dr. Russ Whitehurst as the new head of OERI. His reputation for rigorous scientific inquiry on educational topics will help with the process of cultural change at OERI.

Although some changes were made to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) statute to meet the needs of No Child Left Behind, there are additional issues regarding the independence and integrity of the NAEP and the role of the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) that remain to be addressed. We believe it is important to grant additional independence and authority to NAGB in the administration of the NAEP. NAGB should not have to depend for its effectiveness and autonomy on the sufferance of particular officials in the education department and should be entrusted by the Congress with full responsibility for NAEP rather than splitting that jurisdiction with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

<u>The second pillar of reform is quality.</u>

Many of us by now are familiar with the National Reading Panel's review of research on reading and the fact that such a large amount of research in this area was simply not scientifically sound. I would not be at all surprised to learn that a vast majority of this research was in fact funded in whole or in part by the Federal government.

Just imagine where we would be if each and every federal dollar that the Federal government spent on education research for the past 20 years had met the same type of definition of research passed as part of NCLB. We would clearly have a far better understanding of education and learning on all topics ranging from the teaching of mathematics to relatively newer areas related to education technology. Unfortunately, this is not the case. At the dawn of passage of the NCLB Act, many of us at the state and local level are waking up to realize that the requirement that our programs use scientific research was based upon the premise that such research has existed all along – a premise that is simply not true.

Albeit late in coming, it is simply imperative that Congress take this opportunity to ensure that education research is in fact held to the same level of scrutiny as exists in other fields of inquiry and that a body of knowledge be created for the education issues facing this nation. For too long, we have heard excuses of why such research is not fitting for education, when all along, it has been this failure to hold education research to these standards that has left a vacuum of knowledge that has instead been filled with hunches.

I am especially pleased to read the testimony from the National Academy of Sciences, summarizing their recent report on this topic that has come to a similar conclusion with respect to the need and ability to hold education research to a far higher standard.

Finally, let me discuss the third pillar of reform, which is utility.

The key question I asked myself in preparing this testimony was this: In all my years involved in education reform, what role has federal-education research and the research infrastructure (including the federal education labs, research centers and comprehensive centers) played in my role as an education reformer?

I believe that far too large a portion of limited federal research resources continues to support projects and organizations that are not useful for the production of high quality R&D (Research and Development), statistics, assessments and program evaluations. This has been the result of unfocused priorities and mandates derived from prescriptive statutory requirements, separate federal priority boards, and pressure to adhere to political and education fads.

Congress must not micromanage the priorities of the research agency but instead establish a workable process by which ongoing input from parents, teachers, schools, researchers, policy-makers and others, form the basis for specific priorities and a strategy for carrying them out. For example, it would be wonderful if we could develop a

knowledge base about the development of math ability that was as powerful as the one we have developed for reading. In Florida, we are also enormously concerned about how to maintain the growth of higher level reading skills and "thoughtful literacy" in middle and high school. We are also concerned about how to help children who have fallen seriously behind in the growth of their literacy skill catch up to their peers. We would welcome carefully designed studies in this area, and would be most willing to consider their results as we formulate educational policy in our state.

In determining research priorities and implementing them on a timely basis, the agency should not be hampered by a cumbersome statutorily mandated structure or by earmarks and set asides for specific categories of grantees and contractors (including the research institutes, labs and centers). These are major obstacles to the agency's efficiency and effectiveness. Instead, OERI or its successor should be provided proper latitude in determining the best nationwide structure to carry out its mission and disseminate its work.

Such a structure is imperative if federal research is to be useful to those who are supposed to be the end users of this valuable information. As you consider and evaluate specific proposals for reforming and refocusing OERI, we suggest that you address the following important questions:

1) Does the structure adequately insulate key decisions about federal education R&D (and statistics assessment) from education and other interest groups?

2) Does the statistics and assessment operation enjoy the political autonomy and professional integrity needed for its data to be trustworthy—while also making that operation accountable for the speed, accuracy and utility of its data?

Conclusion.

We are at a critical juncture with respect to education in this country. The many reforms now taking place at the state and local levels – aided greatly by passage of the No Child Left Behind – are largely predicated on the belief that we know what works. Unfortunately, we know far less of what works than we all admit. However, the opportunity to gain a far better understanding of the complexity of education is upon us with the reauthorization of OERI. ELC encourages you to take advantage of this opportunity and greatly increase the integrity, quality and utility of education research in this nation.

ELC stands ready to assist you in this endeavor.

Committee on Education and the Workforce

Witness Disclosure Requirement -- "Truth in Testimony"
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)

Your Name:		
1. Will you be representing a federal, State, or local government entity? (If the answer is yes please contact the committee).	Yes ✓	No
2. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which you have received since October 1, 1999: NA		
3. Will you be representing an entity other than a government entity?	Yes ✓	No
4. Other than yourself, please list what entity or entities you will be representing: THE EDUCATION LEADERS COUNCIL (ELC)		
5. Please list any offices or elected positions held and/or briefly describe your representational capacity with each of the entities you listed in response to question 4: I AM VICE CHAIRMAN OF ELC & SERVE W/ STATE & LOCAL EDUCATION OFFICIALS TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE EDUCATION REFORM		
6. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received by the entities you listed in response to question 4 since October 1, 1999, including the source and amount of each grant or contract: U.S. DOE → AMERICAN BOARD FOR CERTIFICATION OF TEACHER EXCELLENCE (IN PARTNERSHIP W/ NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR TEACHER QUALITY) $2.5 MILLION U.S. DOE → STATE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP NETWORK (SUBCONTRACT W/ EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES) $150,000 U.S. DOE → SECS CONFERENCE ON VALUE-ADDED MEASURES (SUBCONTRACT) $3,800		
7. Are there parent organizations, subsidiaries, or partnerships to the entities you disclosed in response to question number 4 that you will not be representing? If so, please list:	Yes	No ✓

Signature: _____ Date: 3/4/02

Please attach this sheet to your written testimony.

APPENDIX F - WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS CHRISTENSEN, COMMISSIONER, NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, AND ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS, WASHINGTON, D.C.

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Douglas D. Christensen, Commissioner
Polly Feis, Deputy Commissioner

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Date: February 28, 2002

To: Subcommittee on Education Reform

From: Dr. Doug Christensen, Commissioner of Education for Nebraska

Representing: State of Nebraska
Council of Chief State School Officers

Re: Testimony for "The Reauthorization of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)"

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments and verbal testimony on the Reauthorization of OERI. I represent both the State of Nebraska and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

RECOMMENDATION #1: We need clear state and national priorities for research and development in education and priorities that are critical to both the states and the nation.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of research and development in education. We cannot afford to develop policies and practices in education without a solid, focused and comprehensive research and development agenda.

Progress in the improvement of education has long been inhibited by the lack of quality research and development. Progress in the improvement of education will continue to be hampered if we fail to design and implement a quality research and development agenda that is clear, focused and comprehensive. Our current research agenda and current research activities are far too narrow to inform the comprehensive nature of the educational systems of changes and improvements that are needed.

State Board of Education

Stephen A. Scherr, President, District 5, PO Box 2004, Hastings, NE 68902
Ann Mactier, Vice-President, District 2, 3031 North Post Road, Omaha, NE 68112
Kimberly J. Peterson, District 1, 1521 SW 14th Street, Lincoln, NE 68522
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Fred Meyer, District 6, 1980 Highway 281, St. Paul, NE 68873
Kathy Wilmot, District 7, Route 1, Box 6, Beaver City, NE 68926
Kathryn Piller, District 8, 132 North 30th Street, Omaha, NE 68132

an equal opportunity agency

RECOMMENDATION #2: We need a state-federal research and development partnership.

Speaking for Nebraska, we feel remote and disconnected from national research issues and the national research agenda. We have little connection to how the agenda is determined. We are suspicious of and see little utility in the research results. And, we are disenfranchised by the politics that seem to swirl around the entire research and development process from setting the agenda through dissemination of the results.

Like all states, we have state-specific research and development needs. And, we have research and development needs that are complimentary to the national agenda. We need a state-federal partnership to determine the research agenda at both levels, to provide sufficient resources and support for research and development activities, to prevent duplication of efforts and to prevent the research and development agenda and activities from becoming selective, exclusive, narrow and self-serving.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Research and development should be a major role and responsibility for the federal government.

The federal government has the capacity to focus on broad, comprehensive and systemic issues. The federal financial resources represent "contributions" of taxes from all states and applying those resources to research and development activities in education gives us all a chance to share in the support and to realize a return from our joint investment.

RECOMMENDATION #4: To raise achievement of all students and close the achievement gap between different groups of students, education research must be strongly supported and effectively focused.

On behalf of the nation's chief state school officers, I submit the CCSSO position on OERI reauthorization, which was adopted in November 2000 and ask that it be entered into the record. Enactment of the "No Child Left Behind" legislation has made action on these recommendations even more important.

We urge the Committee to consider the following in the OERI reauthorization:

- *Authorize and provide significantly increased funding for educational research.* Successful businesses across America devote ten times more resources to R & D than we invest in educational research. The continuous breakthroughs in health research attest to the wisdom of investing significant resources in scientifically-based research.

- *Enhance the responsiveness of federally-supported research to the needs of educators by authorizing substantial new funding for "draw-down accounts". State and large local districts can direct resources from these "draw-down accounts" to the labs and centers performing the most relevant research.* Built on a base of direct federal support to labs and centers, this market-driven approach would enable practitioners and educators to use their allocations for research in ways that reflect their needs and priorities, as well as increase the competitiveness of educational research. Research must be responsive to need if we are to leave no child behind.

- *Keep educational research connected to educational programming through the U.S. Department of Education.* Major federal programs have separate authorities for research related to the priority. It is key for this research, as well as basic research, to be closely tied to program implementation and disseminated to practitioners in the field.

- *Strengthen connections between the excellent research being conducted by other federal agencies to the research agenda of the Department of Education.* Brain and behavioral research by the National Institutes of Health, training studies by the Department of Defense, and other federally-supported research have valuable insights and applications in education.

RECOMMENDATION #5: Focus and fund both research and development with the intent of closing the gap between researchers and practitioners.

We need to find effective strategies for connecting the research agenda to the needs of practitioners. Bridging the gap between researchers and practitioners and getting research results to be used in policy development and practice implementation requires equal emphasis on both "research and development." We must insure that research results are translated into policy and practice recommendations if we have any hope that practitioners will use the results.

While closing this gap will not be simple, it will help if we set clear priorities for research and if we could help researchers and practitioners better understand each other. Setting clear priorities for the research agenda would help to align research studies with the existing or emerging priorities of practitioners. Connecting researchers with practitioners would not only help clarify priorities but also help both the researcher and practitioner to better understand the context within which each must work.

Attachment A of this testimony outlines a framework for closing this gap between researches and practitioners.

RECOMMENDATION #6: Provide access to research and development funds and/or support for research and development at state and regional levels so that states can be partners with the national agenda while focusing on state and regional needs and priorities.

In Nebraska, we have used our regional education laboratory, the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) as a source of assistance and support for our research and development needs. McREL has provided critical support through personnel, consultative expertise, research and funding.

I was appointed Commissioner of Education in December 1994. At that time, I was an outspoken critic of McREL as it provided almost no assistance to our state agency and limited assistance to a few schools arbitrarily selected without any connection to the SEA issues or priorities. In fact, McREL staff and policies often worked in conflict to our needs, issues and priorities undermining our work and our attempts to provide leadership as an SEA.

Today, McREL is a full partner with us and we could not have achieved some of our critical initiatives without McREL's support. Let me explain.

In 1994, we initiated a major restructuring of our SEA that included changes in how we were organized as well as changing to a learning organization with a strong customer focus. Today, our SEA organizational structure includes a Commissioner of Education and a leadership council of fourteen individuals who provide leadership in decision-making and communication. There are no "middle managers" between the Commissioner and the leadership council. Management decisions are handled by standing and ad hoc teams representing all levels of SEA employees.

For the past two years, McREL has supported our work by providing a nationally recognized facilitator, Myron Kellner-Rogers, who has helped us develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions of a learning organization. McREL has also provided a researcher who is documenting our progress in becoming a learning organization with a customer service mission.

Also, our standards, assessment and accountability system is unique in the nation. We have a statewide system of accountability built from our schools up, not the state down. Our model requires classroom teachers to be highly skilled in assessing

student learning to the degree that their classroom-based assessments exceed in quality any external assessment. For the past three years, McREL has supported our model and provided consultants and financial resources to train trainers and has provided regional training for teachers implementing results of McREL's research in standards-based classroom assessment.

In addition, this August, we will be hosting our fourth "Policy Forum" for state teams from the McREL region gathering to focus on critical issues common to our seven states. For the past two years, we have focused on teacher quality with each state bringing teams representing the various policy and professional partners who are stakeholders in teacher quality issues. One of these policy forums resulted in a legislative bill on education reform being passed in the Nebraska Unicameral. McREL has provided the resources and personnel to support the policy forums.

Finally, our regional chiefs meet twice each year to discuss common issues and concerns and to learn from each other about successful implementation of practices in each state. McREL has provided the resources and support for our regional chiefs meetings.

The current leadership of McREL and its governing board exhibits the partner relationship critical to our states. All of our partner states support McREL as our regional center for assistance and support and for research and development focused to our needs.

ATTACHMENT A
Closing the Research-Practice Gap

The following outline is a framework for bridging this gap. Bridging this gap requires setting clear priorities are building a researcher-practitioner partnership.

UTILITY

A researcher-practitioner partnership must exist and address real priorities in order for each partner to understand the other. Clear priorities and mutual understanding by the partners cannot help but build a research agenda with real utility.

The utility of research could be broadly defined as (1) research that provides a foundation and catalyst for continuing research and (2) research conclusions that define promising or best practices that can be adopted/adapted by practitioners. The bottom line for the utility of the research agenda is the degree to which research results contribute to the improvement of instruction, leading to improved achievement by students.

COMPETING PERSPECTIVES

While classroom teachers are hungry for instructional strategies that work, techniques for improving classroom management and specific practices to address other classroom conditions, their administrators may place a priority on school-wide issues such as school environments and school safety. Teachers do not always see priorities for school-wide changes when the issues they deal with in their classroom demand their attention. Administrators may see the need for school-wide issues to be addressed in order to remove obstacles or barriers that inhibit or prevent the implementation of changes in classroom practices.

BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

It would seem obvious that in educational research, we would be looking for those things that would have the greatest impact on student achievement. If achievement is the bottom line, both researchers and practitioners are well advised to remember that:

- single practices rarely produce dramatic improvement;
- the type of student must be considered when initiating the study of a possible practice designed to improve student achievement;
- transplanting programs from high achieving schools is not a sufficient strategy unless the strategy includes the context, culture, and conditions of the classroom as well as the leadership and teamwork within the classroom and building;
- changes that result in measurable improvement in student learning are changes that are sustained over periods of years.

(Cawelti, 1999.)

Researchers and practitioners must also consider that lasting changes in schools and classrooms are often determined by preconditions (that already exist) such as a reliant and persistent focus on standards and clear goals; the daily presence of leadership to maintain focus and to serve as a catalyst in getting the change process moving; a commitment to making sure that teachers teach all children and that all children learn to the school's high standards; work takes place in and as teams; and a sustained concentration and focus over a period of time well beyond the normal cycle of a school year. (Cawelti, 1999)

THINGS CHANGE AND SHIFT HAPPENS

The knowledge base in education is ever changing and sometimes fragile. Because our students change, because the conditions under which they go to school change, and because society is changing around us, conventional wisdom may quickly become the traditions (or obstacles) we are trying to change. What was yesterday's best practice may be the very factor for which research is attempting to find an alternative strategy or change proposal.

Because things change around the schools, schools must respond or adapt. Schools that embrace change as a constant seem to be better at responding or adapting.

Many advocates for reform or changes in schools argue that all schools must have on-going innovation and improvement activities. Having continuous innovation and improvement as part of the culture of an organization insures that the organization

is constantly asking questions about the effectiveness of its practices which provides a supportive context in which research-based proposals can be implemented and/or embedded.

CONNECTING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Many educators see a lack of connection between the activities of researchers and the day-to-day demands in school leadership and instructional practices. The establishment or improvement of connections between research and practice will require that research be more persuasive and authoritative; more relevant; and more accessible. (Kennedy, 1997)

Strong connections between research and practice will require changes in the current educational system. The current educational system is far too unstable and unfocused to effectively respond to research findings.

Perhaps the development of standards, assessment and accountability will help to "stabilize" the system. However, it appears too early to tell.

THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION RESEARCH

Proposals to change our education system and the practices in our schools and classrooms are plagued by political influences. These influences have reached the level of a dark cloud hanging over the institution of educational research and the application of research to the various reform agendas of citizens, policymakers and educators. While education cannot live outside of its political context, the political context should not be a predetermining condition for deciding what is best practice and how such a best practice is implemented in our schools and classrooms.

RIGOR

As the research arm of education has attempted to become more relevant and applicable to teachers and schools, it has also become more anecdotal and qualitative. And, as a result, educational research is judged by some to be "without rigor, suffering from mediocrity and supporting the ability of individuals and groups to glean research until one has found sufficient findings to support a predetermined condition or perspective." (Sroufe, 1997) It is often said that if one looks at the research long enough, most any conclusion can be found and supported.

It is essential that there be a sufficient amount of educational research that is based upon controlled conditions. However, education research as well as other social

policy research will always and must have an anecdotal and qualitative nature to it. The context, cultures, and conditions of organizations in which human beings find themselves, do not always lend themselves to hard, controllable, scientific investigations. However, it is likewise true that anecdotal and qualitative research can and must be as rigorous as that in the hard sciences even though the study may not include control groups.

CAPACITY TO RESPOND

One of the major roadblocks associated with creating a strong connection between research and educational practice is the capacity of individual educators and schools to access the research findings, interpret them in appropriate ways, and plan systemic strategies for their implementation.

The major capacity issues are time, readily available training and coaching, and sustainable support resources. Rarely in the daily life of educators or in the transpiration of a school year is sufficient time devoted so that educators may review research, study and evaluate proposals, and create plans or strategies for implementation of ideas that seem desirable. Many schools and educators lack access to the training and professional development necessary for implementation of research based and proven practices. The presence of mentors and coaches who provide the educators with models and critical friends to help them through the implementation process is critical. Too often, we look at implementation as an event as opposed to a process and we rarely look at the implementation as a process that takes place over a period of several years

Any attempt to implement a change process should include a strategic plan. This plan should include professional development of educators, ongoing mentoring and coaching that is required; the opportunity of teachers to reflect on their practice with their peers; instrumentation for feedback and assessment of effectiveness; and appropriate strategies and instruments for monitoring, feedback, and assessment of the effectiveness of the proposed change. All of these require a resource plan to support them.

GETTING IT ALL TOGETHER

If we are to close the gap between the research and practice, and create strong connections between education researcher and educational practitioner, it is clear that many changes must be made, including research practices must change, as outlined; educators and schools as systems must change in order to be more receptive to

research findings; and the capacity considerations of organizations and individuals must become a critical part of the process for planning the implementation of the proposed change.

Given changes as outlined above, there is every reason to be optimistic about the potential of education research to change education practice by narrowing the gap between the research and practice and creating strong connections between researcher and the practicing education professional.

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Committee on Education and the Workforce

Witness Disclosure Requirement – "Truth in Testimony"
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)

Your Name: [illegible]		
1. Will you be representing a federal, State, or local government entity? (If the answer is yes please contact the committee). Nebraska Department of Education	Yes ✓	No
2. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which you have received since October 1, 1999:		
3. Will you be representing an entity other than a government entity?	Yes ✓	No
4. Other than yourself, please list what entity or entities you will be representing: Council of Chief State School Officers		
5. Please list any offices or elected positions held and/or briefly describe your representational capacity with each of the entities you listed in response to question 4: 1. Commissioner of Education 2. Board of Directors		
6. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received by the entities you listed in response to question 4 since October 1, 1999, including the source and amount of each grant or contract: See attached page		
7. Are there parent organizations, subsidiaries, or partnerships to the entities you disclosed in response to question number 4 that you will not be representing? If so, please list:	Yes	No ✓

Signature: [illegible] Date: 3-4-02

Please attach this sheet to your written testimony.

COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURES OF FEDERAL AWARDS
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2001

Federal Granting Agency	Program Title	Federal CFDA Number	Grant Number	Federal Expenditures	Amounts Provided to Subrecipients
U.S. Department of Education	Christa McAuliffe Fellowship	84.215U	R215U60011	$ 2,529,349	$ 2,147,800
U.S. Department of Education	Assessment Development	84.279A	R279A50006	47,526	-
U.S. Department of Education	Social Studies Assessment	84.215P	R215P70048	773,659	
U.S. Department of Education	Policymaker Partnership		H326A80003-2	140,450	-
U.S. Department of Education	TA needs of Elem. & Middle Schools		HS97016001	38,768	-
U.S. Department of Education	State Leadership	84.215U	R215U80002	738,027	-
U.S. Department of Education	State Education Indicators		EA 94052001	247,960	-
U.S. Department of Education	Electronic Data File Report	Purchase Order	EDOERI-98-008630	128,185	-
U.S. Department of Education	Technical Assistance/School-to-Work	84.158M	H158M50001-98	21,980	-
U.S. Department of Education	Administrative Records Development	none	ED-98-CO-0069	978,351	-
U.S. Department of Education	Urban Education Collaborative	84.010U	S010U70001	247,773	-
U.S. Department of Education	Laboratory for Student Success		RJ96006201	56,402	-
U.S. Department of Education	Laboratory for Student Success			38,538	-
U.S. Department of Education	INTASC	84.029U	H029U70001	92,246	-
U.S. Department of Education	NAEP Math 2004		ED00C00115	627,695	
U.S. Department of Education	International Research and Studies	84.017A	P017A000044	211,926	-
U.S. Department of Education	Special Education - disabilities	84.324D	H324D990005-00	115,448	-
U.S. Department of Education	National Education Reform	84.159C	H159C950001-99C	16,187	-
U.S. Department of Education	Arts Education - High Poverty Schools	84.215K	R215K010003	5,162	
U.S. Department of Education	Title II		EA95056001	7,247	
U.S. Department of Education	English Language Learners		EA94052001	59,542	-
National Science Foundation	State Indicators of Science and Math			163,748	-
National Science Foundation	State Indicators of Science and Math	47.076	REC-9803080	188,273	-
National Science Foundation	Evaluation of the NSF USI Program		REC-9874322	29,343	-
National Science Foundation	Promoting Applications of R&D		REC-0000509	45,303	-
National Science Foundation	INTASC		ESI-9731322	500,261	-
National Science Foundation	IEA Liaison		NSFG-3000-99-001	21,228	-
National Endowment for the Arts	Goals 2000 Arts Education	45.026	DCA 97-16	131,507	-
National Endowment for the Arts	Arts Education Partnership	45.026	DCA 99-19	94,876	-
National Endowment for the Arts	Arts Education Partnership	45.026	DCA 00-18	375,784	-
Health and Human Services	National AIDS Education	93.938	U87/CCU310210	113,922	-
Health and Human Services	National AIDS Education	93.938	U87/CCU310210-08	114,732	-
Health and Human Services	National AIDS Education	93.938	U87/CCU310210-07	261,666	-
Health and Human Services	SCASS		200-2000-10068	140,329	-
Health and Human Services	Reinventing Evaluations		282-98-0029	873	-
Health and Human Services	Welfare Reform and Disability		90DN0039	52,235	-
Total Expenditures of Federal Awards				$ 9,355,501	$ 2,147,800

Note: This Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards is prepared on the accrual basis of accounting.

APPENDIX G - WRITTEN STATEMENT OF LISA TOWNE, SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER AND STUDY DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR EDUCATION, NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN EDUCATION AND THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

Statement of

Lisa Towne, M.P.P.
Study Director, Committee on Scientific Principles in Education Research
National Research Council/National Academy of Sciences

Before the
Subcommittee on Education Reform
Committee on Education and the Workforce
United States House of Representatives

February 28, 2002

Good morning Chairman Castle and members of the Subcommittee. My name is Lisa Towne, and I am a Senior Program Officer at the National Research Council (NRC). The NRC is the operating arm of the National Academy of Sciences, chartered by Congress in 1863 to advise the government on matters of science and technology. I am accompanied today by Michael Feuer, director of the Center for Education at the NRC.

The NRC recently released a report titled "Scientific Research in Education" which described the nature of scientifically based education research and offered recommendations for the future of a federal education research agency. If permissible, I would like to submit a copy of the report for the record. This study was sponsored by the National Educational Research Policy and Priorities Board, the policy arm of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), under the leadership of its chair, Kenji Hakuta. Like all NRC studies, the report was authored by an interdisciplinary committee of prominent experts. This committee was chaired by Richard Shavelson of Stanford University and included experts in education research and practice, anthropology, economics, statistics, assessment, psychology, sociology, history, philosophy (of science), demography, chemistry and cell biology.

I'll start with some brief findings that relate broadly to understanding the nature of scientifically based education research, and then turn to the specifics of the NRC committee's findings regarding the future of a federal education research agency and the current bill pending before this Subcommittee.

Before I do, I should say a few words about what the report does not say, because the issues before the Subcommittee cover a broader scope than the NRC committee's work. Most importantly, the NRC committee did not take up the critical issue of research *use*. Understanding how to promote research-based decisionmaking and practice in schools is critical if efforts to make education a more evidence-based field are to be successful, but these issues were well beyond the scope of the charge to the committee. Indeed, another NRC effort—the Strategic Education Research Program—is taking up some of these very issues.

The Nature of Scientifically Based Research in Education

Much of the controversy about education research relates to its perceived lack of quality. It is important to say that the NRC committee did not evaluate the vast body of existing research literature related to education. Rather, it took up a related set of comparative questions to try and describe it in the ideal: is scientific education research the same as research in social and behavioral science generally or the same as research in the physical sciences? How does it compare in its basic principles to other applied fields, like medical or agricultural research? And based on its answers to these questions, the committee then explored implications for a federal educational research agency. Here, too, however, we did not evaluate the quality of OERI, but focused on the ideal conditions necessary for continued improvement in the quality of scientifically-based education research.

A key finding of this NRC committee is that at a fundamental level, scientific inquiry in education is no different from scientific inquiry in other fields and disciplines. A set of basic principles is common to all scientific endeavors: these principles include concepts like linking empirical data to theoretical models, using appropriate methods, applying rigorous reasoning, striving toward generalization, and the overarching role of the scientific community in unfettered, constructive debate in promoting the accumulation of scientific knowledge. This accumulation is similar across fields as well: it is circuitous and indirect, its path wanders over time, and it is enabled by time, money, and public support.

Does this finding mean that research in economics is the same as research in experimental ecology? Or that research in medicine is the same as research in sociology? No. Researchers in each field develop a specialization within the broad principles that unite all scientific endeavors that takes into account the specific "objects of inquiry" in a given field: heart cells, third graders, nations, black holes, or social organizations, for example.

These differences in what is studied often account for differences in method, a topic that has been at the center of debate within the research community for decades, and within this Subcommittee and other policy milieus more recently. Research methods are simply tools of the research trade. Some research methods are better than others in addressing different kinds of research questions—just like hammers, wrenches, or drills are critical for some, but obviously not all, parts of a carpentry job. It is the experienced carpenter who knows the exact tool needed for the many parts of the job. So too is it the job of the researcher to decide which tools of their trade—this time things like randomized field trials, surveys, and case studies—are appropriate for the variety of tasks that typically arise within a given investigation, whether that study be in medicine, education, or anything else.

Recommendations Regarding the Reauthorization of OERI

What does this all mean for the reauthorization of OERI? Before I address this critical question, I must make a few caveats. As I mentioned earlier, our committee *did not* evaluate OERI or attempt to judge its myriad past and current programs. Rather, they took their cue from their depiction of what constitutes scientific quality and relied on data from OERI and other social and behavioral science agencies and organizations within the federal government to understand the ways in which they accomplish their research missions. Further, the committee did not distinguish which branches of government should be responsible for implementing the various recommendations. Indeed, some of what we recommend may not be accomplished through legislation of any sort (and some may already be implemented in OERI currently). Nonetheless, it is essential that the authority you are crafting strike the right balance between legislative requirements and flexibility for agency staff, in close collaboration with the field, to implement the mission articulated in the statute successfully. It is in this spirit that I summarize the committee's findings regarding the future of the agency.

The NRC committee concluded that the precise structure of the agency is not the critical determinant of its success. Rather, healthy research agencies need to develop a *scientific culture* supported by structures, processes, resources, and norms. To elaborate this idea and to provide concrete advice to policymakers grappling with the reauthorization, the committee developed six "design principles" to guide the agency, and within each recommended specifics mechanisms that could be used to support it:

Staff the agency with people skilled in science, leadership, and management. The director of the agency should have demonstrated outstanding leadership capabilities and be a respected researcher in education. Research staff should hold similar qualifications, as well as be adept at writing grant announcements, engaging with the field to identify research gaps and priorities, and assembling panels of peers to review proposals. Qualified staff is so critical to a healthy agency that we believe without them, little else matters. The agency should be granted maximum flexibility to build a core of permanent staff as well as options for rotating scholars, postdoctoral fellows, interns, and other short-term appointments that can infuse new knowledge and energy into the organization. Only with such staff can the norms of scientific research in education become infused into the agency.

Create structures to guide the research agenda, inform funding decisions, and monitor work. The research agenda must be developed through a collaborative process that engages the range of stakeholders in education. An advisory board of researchers, practitioners, business people and policy makers (perhaps modeled after the National Science Board) could work in collaboration with an agenda-setting committee. To provide additional input to the agenda-setting process, as well as to vet research proposals, peer review is the single best, although certainly not perfect, model. Standing peer-review panels, preferably with rotating terms, can learn from, and communicate to, the field and in turn be especially strong instruments for promoting scientific progress over time. The choice of peers with excellent scientific credentials and an ability to think across areas is the key to making this commonly used mechanism work, and depends critically on an ample talent pool of peers.

Insulate the agency from inappropriate political interference. The research agency must be insulated from political micromanagement, the distortion of research agendas by excessive focus on immediate problems, and the use of the agency as a tool to promote particular policies or positions. Thus, it should have independent authority for publishing, hiring, and disbursal of funds and the head of the agency should serve a fixed term that spans political administrations. At the same time, the agency cannot and should not be separated from politics completely, and its portfolio should include policy research and short-term work that is responsive to current priorities and needs. Given trends in "hybrid" federal organizations that support both education research and service-oriented programs (OERI and the Education and Human Resources Directorate of the National Science Foundation), we suggest that the research function of an agency be organizationally separate from, though intellectually linked to, an educational improvement mission to ensure that the research mission is nurtured.

Develop a focused and balanced portfolio of research that addresses short-, medium-, and long-term issues of importance to policy and practice. Short- and medium-term scientific studies are most responsive to the need for answers to questions of pressing problems of practice and policy. Long-term studies address fundamental questions by focusing on the development and testing of theoretical frameworks. All should be organized in coherent programs of related work and include both new investigations and regular syntheses of the knowledge base. It is only through such sustained focus that research-based knowledge has accumulated, as is the case in early reading, testing and assessment, and educational resources.

Adequately fund the agency. Estimates of the federal investment in education research have shown it to be a few tenths of one percent of the total amount spent on public elementary and secondary education each year—far less than comparable investments for agriculture and medicine. The research budget of the OERI (and its predecessor agency, the National Institute of Education) has fallen drastically since its inception: in 1973, its budget was over $400 million; today, it is approximately $130 million (both in current dollars). As funding plummeted, there has been no commensurate change in the scope of its agenda, and thus there have been few opportunities for long-term research programs. We echo the calls of several previous studies and commissions for a significantly increased research budget if a federal education research agency's agenda is to cover the breadth of content required of its predecessors. Stagnant funding, an inconsistent commitment, or both, means that scientific research in education is not being taken seriously.

Invest in research infrastructure. The agency should consistently invest in infrastructure-building programs, to foster a scientifically competent, highly qualified community of education researchers and to strengthen its own capacity in turn. Since an agency in many ways is a reflection of the field it supports, such programs should include investment in human capital (e.g., research training and fellowship support). Promoting ethical access to research subjects and data should be an essential task as well. An agency should also do its part to facilitate relationships between practitioners and researchers both for basic access to data as well as, in many field-based research efforts, for long-term partnerships with practitioner communities to improve the research as well as its utilization.

In view of these recommendations from an expert committee of scientists and other experts, I would say that there is much to like in the bill pending before the Subcommittee[1]. For example, it frees the incumbent agency from restrictive requirements regarding its use of funds. The committee was very clear that decisions about research opportunities must be made based on a solid understanding of the state of knowledge in a particular field and thus must be delegated to agency staff (of the sort described above) to make flexibly in both the short and long term. The bill also provides a focus for the agency to concentrate on its primary mission as a research organization by requiring that service-oriented education programs be administered outside of OERI. The

[1] I base these judgments on HR 4875 as it passed the Subcommittee in summer of 2000. At the time this written testimony was submitted, I had not seen the revised version or the Administration's proposal.

committee believes that the "I" in "OERI"—that is, the improvement function—while an essential role of the federal government, has overwhelmed the agency budget and hampered its ability to develop research capacity both within its own walls and in the field more generally.

The primary problem with this bill is its inclusion of definitions for scientifically valid quantitative and scientifically qualitative methods. To be sure, many of the concepts in those draft definitions are the very same concepts that the NRC committee emphasized in its report: empirical data, replication, and peer review, for example. And the inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative methods is very positive, since both, when properly applied and implemented, can be very powerful research tools. The problem is with their use as a federal mandate. The NRC report makes clear that the objectivity and progress of scientific understanding in *any* field—not just education research—derives not from a given methodology or a given person. Rather, it comes from the community of researchers. Improving education research, then, requires improvements in the field itself.

A federal education research agency should play a major role in spurring those improvements. It must promote high quality scientific work through mechanisms like peer review, investing part of its annual appropriation in training and mentoring the next generation of researchers, and developing high standards of quality in close collaboration with the field.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the invitation to appear before the Subcommittee and discuss these very important issues, and for your leadership in promoting high quality education research. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other Members may have.

Committee on Education and the Workforce

Witness Disclosure Requirement – "Truth in Testimony"
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)

Your Name: Lisa Towne

	Yes	No
1. Will you be representing a federal, State, or local government entity? (If the answer is yes please contact the committee).		✓

2. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which you have received since October 1, 1999:

N/A

	Yes	No
3. Will you be representing an entity other than a government entity?	✓	

4. Other than yourself, please list what entity or entities you will be representing:

National Research Council / National Academy of Sciences (Center for Education)

5. Please list any offices or elected positions held and/or briefly describe your representational capacity with each of the entities you listed in response to question 4:

Senior Program Officer

6. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received by the entities you listed in response to question 4 since October 1, 1999, including the source and amount of each grant or contract:

list attached

	Yes	No
7. Are there parent organizations, subsidiaries, or partnerships to the entities you disclosed in response to question number 4 that you will not be representing? If so, please list:		✓

Signature: LMTowne Date: 2/27/02

Please attach this sheet to your written testimony.

Witness Disclosure Requirement, Lisa Towne, Question #6 Attachment
Federal Grants and Contracts Received the National Research Council, Center for Education, since October

Name	Agreement #	U.S. Gov't Department	Amt.
Board on Testing and Assessment	R215U990016	Educ	$ 2,374,999
Adult Literacy	ED-01-CO-0135	Educ	$ 250,000
Improved Learning with Technology	R303U000001	Educ	$ 997,500
Scientific Principles	ED-00-CO-0088	OERI/Educ	$ 749,000
Next Steps in Education Research (SPAG)	ESI-0002231	NSF	$ 1,047,500
U.S. Japan Teacher Development	ESI-0001439	NSF	$ 180,000
High Quality Math, Science, Educ.	ESI-0102582	NSF	$ 1,943,999
Toward Improved Intn'l Labor Standards	J-9-K-1-0021	Labor	$ 4,500,000

APPENDIX H - WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANNE BRYANT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

TESTIMONY

on behalf of

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

on

The Reauthorization of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement

before the

Committee on Education and the Workforce
Subcommittee on Education Reform
Washington, D.C.

February 28, 2002

By

Anne L. Bryant
Executive Director
National School Boards Association
Alexandria, VA

·NSBA·

Excellence and Equity in Public Education through School Board Leadership

Office of Advocacy

- James R. Ruhland
  President
- Anne L. Bryant
  Executive Director
- Michael A. Resnick
  Associate Executive Director

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- Technical Assistance Grants and Research Grants ..... Page 3
- Funding of Education Research ..... Page 4
- Conclusion ..... Page 5

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Education and the Workforce
Subcommittee on Education Reform
Testimony on the Reauthorization of the
Office of Education Research and Improvement
February 28, 2002

- **Introduction**

Good morning. I am Anne Bryant, executive director of the National School Boards Association (NSBA). I am pleased to have this opportunity to talk to you about the important role of education research in raising student achievement and ways that current research initiatives can be enhanced so that local practitioners have improved access to the findings.

NSBA is the nationwide advocacy organization for public school governance; through our federation of 53 states and territories, we represent 95,000 elected and appointed school board members. Local school board members are the representatives of parents and local communities who are responsible for governing local public school districts across the nation.

I would like to stress four main points today with respect to education research.

First, because of our desire to raise *all* children's achievement, research on how to achieve this goal is critical. ESEA further drives this agenda and underscores the need for quality data not only around reading, math, and science, but also on effective instructional techniques and programs to reach all demographic subgroups and help close the achievement gap between the highest and lowest performing students.

Second, research must be disseminated in a way that is useful to teachers, district staff, and school board members.

Third, federal research should provide for a grant process to fund local initiatives regarding data driven decision making, and to train district staff and to be their own research teams.

Finally, providing the necessary federal funding for these priorities in education research is crucial.

- **A Research Agenda Linked to Student Achievement**

School board members, like members of Congress, are policy makers who are accountable to and represent the communities that have elected them. Accordingly, they need high-quality research matched to the subject matter at hand in order to make informed policy decisions. In public education, of course, the policy decisions center around increasing student achievement.

It has never been more important for local school districts to have access to high-quality research linked to raising student achievement. The recently reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) raised the stakes on increasing student achievement. Consequently, there needs to be an articulation between a federal research agenda and the requirements in ESEA. Annual testing for students in grades 3-8 in reading and math and severe sanctions for failing to make adequate yearly progress will drive many local school district decisions. Additionally, ESEA sets the new goal of having *all* students proficient in critical subject areas. The federal education research agenda must support this outcome. The ESEA provides a promising framework for raising standards and accountability for all students. Local educators and local school board members want this legislation to work. More importantly, they want the nation's 47 million public school children to reach high levels of academic achievement.

This mandate to increase student achievement could make "reform of the day" initiatives seem appealing. But education reform initiatives should be linked to research. For example, many school districts are embracing technology and it is important for research to be funded to determine the most effective use of technology to improve student achievement. School board members are held accountable by parents and the community at large for increasing student achievement. They must have the resources and tools necessary for making sound decisions. Having access to high-quality data is critical to this process.

- **Dissemination of Research**

High-quality education research can play a critical role in raising student achievement if it is properly disseminated to those who are directly linked to our nation's schools. Even the best of ideas is not valued until it is shared with practitioners. School board members should be viewed along with professional educators as customers of education research, given their governance role over school districts and their ability to engage the community in education.

For too long, reliable education data has not consistently been collected and used effectively. For instance, one school board member from the Forestville Union School District in Forestville, California, recently said, "I can attest to the non dissemination of the research to school board members. My board receives very little, if any, results of quality research." Certainly, some school boards have had more positive experiences with federal education research. For instance, the president of the Brandywine Board of Education from Delaware notes that OERI's research on teacher effectiveness has been critical in ".... developing our Strategic Plan for the next five years along with funding, measures and targets, and in coming to a consensus and commitment with our community around aggressive investments in early recruitment, quality induction for beginning teachers, and on-going professional development for all." In light of the two totally different experiences these boards have had with federal education research it is

clear that *all* local school boards must have access to high-quality education research if *all* students in the nation are to meet the proficiency standards outlined in ESEA.

Data should be disseminated in a format that is easily understandable. Most school board members have full-time employment outside of their school board responsibilities, so their time is valuable. There should be an effort to make sure that school districts are regularly made aware of where to go for up-to-date education research. Additionally, the context of the research is important; a policy maker is interested in "what happened" and "why it happened" and "was it sustained over time?" Vehicles for delivering information, such as the Internet, can serve a valuable purpose in disseminating research in a user-friendly format.

There are a variety of research customers within a school district which makes a "one size fits all solution" problematic. Research must be oriented for the different customers in a school district who are working together to raise student achievement. In addition to school board members, these customers include administrators, the central office staff, principals, and teachers. The research around key topics should be provided to meet the needs of each audience with a level of coherency that makes it accessible to all practitioners.

The federal research agenda must be aimed in the broadest sense toward raising student achievement. There must be research into instructional methods and strategies that focuses on what works and what does not work. And equally important, the research must be usable by the practitioners. Teachers, administrators, and school board members have different roles within a school district, but they all need reliable, high-quality information in a format that works for them. They can also be part of larger studies to gather empirical data on student achievement.

Local school boards must be focused on setting policies that lead to continuous improvement. They must use data on student achievement to set priorities for allocating resources and adjust their strategic plans on the basis of this data. Local school board members play a leadership role in increasing student achievement. Providing research that analyzes instructional programs and techniques based on real students in real school situations can drive quality decisions and ultimately raise student achievement.

- **Technical Assistance Grants and Research Grants**

Federal legislation should enable local school districts to have increased access to high quality technical assistance and grants to do the research and to train district staff. Local education agencies need to be data driven and need to make decisions on everything from curriculum, pedagogy, textbooks, and on-line learning based on research. In essence, a program's effectiveness and decisions about teacher and staff placement must be made on student achievement data.

In the earlier bill, NSBA proposed that federal legislation enable local school districts to have increased access to high-quality technical assistance. School boards must have the

opportunity for capacity building (such as strategic planning, professional development opportunities for administrators, and using data more effectively) to enable entire districts to move systemically. School board members should have the flexibility to determine who can best provide the required assistance.

In light of this need, we are pleased that H.R. 4875 from the 106th Congress includes the provision on school-based customer driven technical assistance and urge that it be included in legislation in the 107th Congress. Under this provision, local education agencies (LEAs) will be given the opportunity to choose technical assistance from high-quality providers able to meet their particular needs, with a priority for LEAs with a high percentage of low-income children. This is certainly a step in the right direction. We are concerned however, that the funding would provide only $11.8 million to local education agencies to purchase technical assistance. Essentially the nation's 15,000 school districts will be competing for these funds. Ideally, each district would have adequate funding to undertake such an initiative. If each district were to receive funds under the current structure, there would be less than $800 per school district for high-quality technical assistance. Accordingly, this level of funding would not meet the existing needs of school districts nationwide. Additional funds would better guarantee that school districts get information in a useable format and may also set in motion a model for greater customer service in other research endeavors. In addition, although there is a priority for providing funds to LEAs with a high percentage of low-income children, there is still the likelihood that small and rural districts would have difficulty responding to a competitive grant design because they lack grant development expertise and the resources needed to succeed in a competitive grant process. Special challenges in instructional delivery place an added burden on these districts.

It is a step in the right direction to allow LEAs to use funds to acquire the technical assistance they need to increase opportunities for all children to achieve challenging state academic content standards.

Additionally, training for the district staff regarding data tracking should be part of an OERI agenda in an effort to build the capacity of school districts to track data. A grant program to enable district staff to conduct their own research on their own practices for the purpose of continually raising students' learning is needed. Such a program could leverage the capacity of school districts to use district-based research to track their students' progress. This program could be designed to enable partnerships between local school districts and institutions of higher education or other experts in scientifically based research. Teaching individuals at the school district level how to conduct research on their own would enhance the ability to monitor student achievement while at the same time expanding the capacity of the school district.

- **Funding of Education Research**

As indicated, Congress has created a promising framework for raising student achievement in the reauthorized ESEA. As members of this committee know well, the new law seeks to make sure that "No Child is Left Behind." The federal education

research agenda must receive adequate funding to make sure that school districts have the information they need to meet that challenge.

Additionally, ESEA contains more than one hundred references to "scientifically based research." The bar has been raised for school districts to have programs that meet the detailed definition of scientifically based research. Many questions exist as to exactly how many programs and practices meet this new requirement and how much research exists to support this requirement, which underscores the need for adequate funding for high-quality education research that is disseminated to local practitioners.

We urge the committee to help ensure that more of the existing federal dollars that are available for education research go toward the issues identified today. Additionally it is important for the organizational structure of the agency to have stability in high-quality staff. We also urge that the bill build in self evaluation procedures whereby local school board members and other practitioners can provide feedback to the Office of Educational Research and Improvement as to whether education research priorities and dissemination meets their needs.

- **Conclusion**

In the 106th Congress, there had been efforts to create a new national academy outside the Department of Education that would be responsible for research, statistics gathering, program evaluation, and dissemination. While NSBA certainly understands the desire to protect education research from political whims, we had serious concerns with the approach. One of the primary functions of the Department of Education is to serve as a clearinghouse and to coordinate national education information. The Department of Education, by design, is closely linked with many education practitioners.

On a final note, a child gets only once chance to be a third-grader or a fifth-grader. We need to provide the necessary services at each grade level to make sure that child is meeting academic standards. We need to make sure that federal education research funding is adequate to ensure that a research agenda focused on student achievement can be achieved and translated in terms that are understandable and usable by practitioners.

Committee on Education and the Workforce

Witness Disclosure Requirement — "Truth in Testimony"
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)

Your Name: Anne L. Bryant		
1. Will you be representing a federal, State, or local government entity? (If the answer is yes please contact the committee).	Yes	No X*
2. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which you have received since October 1, 1999: N/A		
3. Will you be representing an entity other than a government entity?	Yes X	No
4. Other than yourself, please list what entity or entities you will be representing: The National School Boards Association (NSBA) as well as state school boards associations that are part of our membership and who in turn represent local school boards.		
5. Please list any office or elected positions held and/or briefly describe your representational capacity with each of the entities you listed in response to question 4: Executive Director for NSBA, which includes a federation of 53 states and territories.		
6. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received by the entities you listed in response to question 4 since October 1, 1999, including the source and amount of each grant or contract: ◆ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): National Programs to Promote Physical Activity Especially Among Youth—One year funding $100,000 ◆ The Centers for Disease Control, Division of Adolescent and School Health: March 15, 2000 - $507,036; March 15, 2001 - $413,660, March 15, 2002 - $413, 660 (in process, but have not received award letter yet). ◆ U.S. Department of Education: Office of Educational Research and Improvement - $760,000 ◆ U.S. Department of Education grant for comprehensive policy manual for safe and disciplined schools - $24,544		
7. Are there parent organizations, subsidiaries, or partnerships to the entities you disclosed in response to question number 4 that you will not be representing? If so, please list: National School Boards Foundation	Yes X	No

Signature: Anne L. Bryant Date: Feb. 27 2002

Please attach this sheet to your written testimony.

*Dr. Bryant, as executive director of NSBA, is not personally affiliated with a local government entity, but the association itself represents school districts, which are local government entities

APPENDIX I - DOCUMENT REGARDING THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE CENTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE HILDA SOLIS, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center: Turning Around Low Performing Schools

The Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center (SCCAC) has been pivotal in turning around low performing schools throughout Southern California, helping schools meet and exceed (often far exceed) their Academic Performance Index (API) target. (In California, API forms the backbone of the State's school accountability system.) Following are examples of SCCAC's work and success:

Mammoth Elementary School, Mammoth Unified School District, Mono County

Mammoth Elementary School is a K-5 school of just under 600 students located in the mountains of the Eastern Sierras. It is in an area classified by the SEA as "severely rural" where the nearest urban center is hours away by car.

This area has recently seen a drastic increase in the numbers of English language learners (ELLs) as area ski resorts have produced a lot of low-paying jobs that are being filled with an influx of Spanish-speaking families. ELLs have risen from 2% in 1994 to 24% in 1997 to 32% in 2001. As a result, teachers did not have the skills or knowledge to work effectively with these students.

SCCAC stepped in, partnering with the Mono County Office of Education, to provide extensive professional development and consultation to the school in the areas of English Language Acquisition and bilingual intervention training. In addition, Mammoth staff participated in SCCAC's Reading Success Network and Using Classroom Data to Improve Student Achievement Institute.

Results at Mammoth have been great. Since its base year of 1999, Mammoth Elementary School has met its overall API growth target and has far exceeded the target for the numerically significant subgroup of English Language Learners both years.

API Year 1: Mammoth Elementary School

Population	1999 Base	2000 Target	2000 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	660	667	683	+23	+16
Hispanics	440	446	478	+38	+32

API Year 2: Mammoth Elementary School

Population	2000 Base	2001 Target	2001 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	683	689	716	+33	+27
Hispanics	478	483	545	+67	+62

Nan Sanders Elementary School, Perris School District, Riverside County

Nan Sanders Elementary School is located in the urban fringe of a large metropolitan serve area with about 800 students in grades K-5. Over 73% of the students are on Free or Reduced Lunch and 39% are learning English. Three years ago, the school set about turning around student achievement and enlisted the assistance of the SCCAC in partnership with the Statewide System of School Support and the Riverside County Office of Education.

The Achievement Team led the school through a comprehensive needs assessment and goal setting. Ongoing technical assistance and professional development were provided in the areas of aligning curriculum with standards, implementing math instructional strategies, promoting reading fluency, and using assessment data for program improvement. As a result of this technical assistance, the school implemented a 2-hour literacy block each morning, adopted a new language arts program (Open Court), worked toward aligning the curriculum with state standards, and trained parents in working with their children at home.

API Year 1: Nan Sanders Elementary School

Population	1999 Base	2000 Target	2000 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	521	535	647	+126	+112
African American	522	533	639	+117	+106
Hispanics	471	482	618	+147	+136

API Year 2: Nan Sanders Elementary School

Population	2000 Base	2001 Target	2001 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	647	655	694	+47	+39
African American	639	645	674	+35	+29
Hispanics	618	624	679	+61	+55

Maxwell and Andres Duarte Elementary Schools, Duarte Unified School District, Los Angeles County

Duarte Unified School District is a small district (4,000 students) located at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains 21 miles northeast of Los Angeles. Over the past several years, Early Literacy was embraced as a total community priority with support from the City Council, Mayor, and district. SCCAC, in partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education, provided professional development and

technical assistance in Direct Instruction for the district as a whole and intensive ongoing classroom-based work in two elementary schools, Maxwell, and Andres Duarte.

API Year 1: Maxwell Elementary School

Population	1999 Base	2000 Target	2000 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	457	474	489	+32	+15
Hispanics	455	469	483	+28	+14

API Year 2: Maxwell Elementary School

Population	2000 Base	2001 Target	2001 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	489	505	515	+26	+10
Hispanics	483	496	519	+36	+23

API Year 1: Andres Duarte Elementary School

Population	1999 Base	2000 Target	2000 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	494	509	532	+38	+23
Hispanics	470	482	524	+54	+42

API Year 2: Andres Duarte Elementary School

Population	2000 Base	2001 Target	2001 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	532	545	561	+29	+16
Hispanics	524	534	554	+30	+20

Davis Elementary School, Santa Ana Unified School District, Orange County

Davis Elementary School is a low-performing K-5 school in a very poor, Hispanic community in the heart of Orange County. Of the over 800 students, 89% are on Free or Reduced Lunch and 88% are Limited English Proficient. SCCAC, in partnership with the Orange County Department of Education, has provided intensive services along with technical assistance in data analysis, early literacy, and strategies for English learners. Davis Elementary has been actively involved in SCCAC's Reading Success Network over the past four years and is currently a Compact for Reading Pilot School.

API Year 1: Davis Elementary School

Population	1999 Base	2000 Target	2000 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	381	402	471	+90	+69
Hispanics	380	397	469	+89	+72

API Year 2: Davis Elementary School

Population	2000 Base	2001 Target	2001 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	471	487	483	+12	-4
Hispanics	469	482	483	+14	+1

Bancroft Elementary School, La Mesa-Spring Valley School District, San Diego County

Bancroft Elementary School is located in a low to middle class suburban area 20 miles southeast of San Diego. The school sought assistance in improving student performance through a school-wide effort. SCCAC stepped in, partnering with the San Diego County Office of Education, and took the school through a data gathering and analysis process and then helped the school determine specific goals based on the data. The selected focus was on reading instruction and school climate. SCCAC provided weekly coaching with the principal and involved the school in SCCAC's Reading Success Network.

API Year 1: Bancroft Elementary School

Population	1999 Base	2000 Target	2000 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	599	609	679	+80	+70
African American	525	533	653	+128	+120
Hispanics	517	525	618	+101	+93

API Year 2: Bancroft Elementary School

Population	2000 Base	2001 Target	2001 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	679	685	693	+14	+8
African American	653	658	653	0	-5
Hispanics	618	623	664	+46	+41

Ramona Elementary School, Ramona Unified School District, San Diego County

Ramona Elementary School is located in a rural area 40 miles northeast of San Diego. The school sought assistance in improving student performance through standards-based instruction. SCCAC, in partnership with the San Diego County Office of Education, provided weekly coaching with the principal and professional development in standards-based instruction, early literacy, and strategies for English language learners. The school was also involved in SCCAC's Reading Success Network.

API Year 1: Ramona Elementary School

Population	1999 Base	2000 Target	2000 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	667	674	685	+18	+11
Hispanics	569	575	580	+11	+5

API Year 2: Ramona Elementary School

Population	2000 Base	2001 Target	2001 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	685	691	678	-7	-13
Hispanics	580	585	597	+17	+12

Bill E. Young, Jr. Middle School, Calipatria Unified School District, Imperial County

Bill E. Young Middle School is located in Calipatria, which is a very small and poor school district in the low desert of Imperial County. Its student population is 79% Hispanic with 43% being Limited English Proficient. Three out of four students are eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch. SCCAC, in partnership with Imperial County Office of Education, has worked extensively at the school over the past three years beginning with a comprehensive needs assessment. This was followed by ongoing coaching of the school leadership team, classroom observations, targeted technical assistance, and focused professional development.

API Year 1: Bill E. Young, Jr. Middle School

Population	1999 Base	2000 Target	2000 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	562	574	588	+26	+14
Hispanics	532	542	562	+30	+20

API Year 2: Bill E. Young, Jr. Middle School

Population	2000 Base	2001 Target	2001 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	588	599	616	+28	+17
Hispanics	562	571	594	+32	+23

Holtville Junior High School, Holtville Unified School District, Imperial County

Holtville Junior High School is located in the low desert of Imperial County just miles for the US/Mexico border. Its student population is 75% Hispanic with 41% being Limited English Proficient. Over 70% percent of the students are eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch. SCCAC, in partnership with Imperial County Office of Education, has provided assistance for the past two years beginning with a comprehensive needs assessment. SCCAC has provided extensive professional development for the school leadership team in the areas of standards and analyzing student data for instructional decision-making, and has provided ongoing technical assistance.

API Year 1: Holtville Junior High School

Population	1999 Base	2000 Target	2000 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	574	585	605	+31	+20
Hispanics	532	541	560	+28	+19

API Year 2: Holtville Junior High School

Population	2000 Base	2001 Target	2001 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	605	615	640	+35	+25
Hispanics	560	568	609	+49	+41

Holtville High School, Holtville Unified School District, Imperial County

Holtville High School is located in the low desert of Imperial County just miles for the US/Mexico border. Its student population is 72% Hispanic with 25% being Limited English Proficient. Fifty-seven percent of the students are eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch. SCCAC, in partnership with Imperial County Office of Education, has provided assistance for the past two years beginning with a comprehensive needs assessment. SCCAC has provided ongoing coaching of the school leadership team, conducted classroom observations, provided ongoing technical assistance, and professional development in the areas of teaching to standards, strategies for the reluctant reader, and analyzing student data for instructional decision-making.

API Year 1: Holtville High School

Population	1999 Base	2000 Target	2000 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	525	539	534	+22	-5
Hispanics	464	475	486	+22	+11

API Year 2: Holtville High School

Population	2000 Base	2001 Target	2001 Actual	Total Gain	Gain Above API Target
Whole school	534	547	554	+20	+7
Hispanics	486	496	501	+15	+5

APPENDIX J - QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY WHITEHURST BY THE HONORABLE HILDA SOLIS, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

HILDA L. SOLIS
31st District, California
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Questions of Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis
OERI Reauthorization Hearing
February 28, 2002

For Dr. Whitehurtst, OERI

Teachers and administrators in my Congressional district have been very satisfied with the hands-on support they have received from the Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center. The center provides professional development and technical assistance to teachers in the 232 school districts in the region, which serve 3.4 million public school students.

The Center has been particularly helpful in getting low performing schools to meet and exceed their Academic Performance Index target.

Before I ask my questions I'd like to ask unanimous consent to have inserted in the record some information about the great work the Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center has been doing.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Whitehurst, has the Department collected data on client satisfaction related to Comprehensive Centers?

What was the response?

How does this information compare to client satisfaction data on other federally funded technical assistance providers?

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APPENDIX K - RESPONSE SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WHITEHURST TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE HONORABLE HILDA SOLIS, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL ASSISTANCE CENTERS

Questions: Teachers and administrators in my Congressional district have been very satisfied with the hands-on support they have received from the Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center. The Center provides professional development and technical assistance to teachers in the 232 school districts in the region, which serve 3.4 million public school students.

The Center has been particularly helpful in getting low performing schools to meet and exceed their Academic Performance Index target.

Dr. Whitehurst, has the Department collected data on client satisfaction related to Comprehensive Centers? What was the response? How does this information compare to client satisfaction data on other federally funded technical assistance providers?

Answer: To answer your questions, we have looked at six Department of Education programs that provide technical assistance services to improve elementary and secondary education: (1) the Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers, (2) the Regional Educational Laboratories, (3) the Regional Technology in Education Consortia (R*TECs), (4) the Eisenhower Regional Mathematics and Science Consortia, (5) the Parent Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs), and (6) the Training and Advisory Services Equity Assistance Centers (EACs).

According to preliminary data from a recent survey of elementary and secondary school teachers who received professional development or training from the Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers in 2000 and 2001, 95 percent of the respondents to the survey indicated that the products and services provided to them by the Centers fit their needs, were responsive, timely, and usable; 88 percent indicated that the Comprehensive Center activities had some positive effect on their work and on the way their organization does its work. Preliminary data from a similar survey of State educational agency (SEA) and local educational agency (LEA) administrators served by the Comprehensive Centers during this same period found that 85 percent of those customers rated Center products and services either "excellent" or "good "on similar criteria (meeting their need and interests, responsiveness to specific local conditions their organizations face, timeliness, and the usefulness of the services for guiding improvement efforts). Also among the SEA and LEA survey respondents, 88 percent reported that participation in Center activities had some positive impact on their own work performance, while 78 percent reported that participation in Center activities had a positive impact on their organization's performance.

For the other programs listed above: The most recent customer service data for the Regional Educational Laboratories indicate that 93 percent of clients sampled in 2001 reported that the laboratory products and services they received were of high quality; for the R*TECs, in 2000, performance data indicate that customers rated 86 percent of

services and 89 percent of products to be of high quality. These respondents reported that 82 percent of services and 79 percent of products were relevant to their needs as consumers. Under the Eisenhower Regional Mathematics and Science Consortia program, in 1999 (the most recent data available), 77 percent of customers sampled reported that Consortia services contributed moderately or significantly to improving the customers' work, and 82 percent of customers rated the Consortia products as moderately or significantly effective. For the EACs, a customer satisfaction survey in 2000 found that 90 percent of customers were either very or moderately satisfied with the technical assistance services received from EACs. Customer satisfaction data on the PIRCs is not available.

Apart from the above data, however, a 2000 evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers found that the Centers face a number of challenges. According to the evaluation, the Centers' broad mandate and limited resources have forced them to make choices about which clients, and how many clients, they serve and the breadth and depth of the services they will provide; as a result, they have organized most of their work around a small group of key initiatives that engage them in long-term relationships with customers. The evaluation concluded, among other findings, that Comprehensive Center services, at their present level of intensity, do not produce radical changes in the behavior of organizations and individuals in any but a few instances, and that changes in teaching and learning are particularly limited. Increases in student achievement were the least commonly reported effect of Comprehensive Center services.

A January 2002 GAO report entitled "Education Research: Education Should Improve Assessments of R&D Centers, Regional Labs, and Comprehensive Centers" criticized the 2000 evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers (which also had customer satisfaction survey data for the 1998-99 school year comparable to that above for the 2000-2001 school year) for findings that were only able to be generalized across all 15 Comprehensive Centers but (due to limited sample size and methodology) could not be attributable to any of the individual Comprehensive Centers. As GAO points out in its report, information on the performance of each individual Center would allow the Department to determine if each Comprehensive Center is meeting the needs of its customers, and if its customers are satisfied with some or all of its products and services; identify variations across Comprehensive Centers; and obtain information to improve practices at individual Comprehensive Centers.

The GAO study also found deficiencies in how the Department assesses the work of the Regional Labs and made recommendations for improving the assessments of the Regional Labs. Specifically, the GAO recommends that the Department use random selection of projects, services, and products to be reviewed when conducting future evaluations of the Regional Labs, and revise the peer review standards for the Regional Labs to allow for division of labor and greater concentration on assessing the quality of projects, services, and products.

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