

**DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION, AND RE-
LATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2006**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2005

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 9:30 a.m. in room SD-126, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Arlen Specter (chairman) presiding.
Present: Senators Specter, Cochran, Harkin, and Kohl.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

STATEMENT OF HON. MARGARET SPELLINGS, SECRETARY

ACCOMPANIED BY:

**C. TODD JONES, ASSOCIATE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR BUDGET
AND STRATEGIC ACCOUNTABILITY**
THOMAS SKELLY, DIRECTOR, BUDGET SERVICE

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER

Senator SPECTER. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Human Services, and Education will now proceed. We are joined by the distinguished Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, who has had an outstanding academic and professional career, served for 6 years with then-Governor George Bush of Texas, came to the White House 4 years ago and has recently been appointed and confirmed as Secretary of Education.

As I had talked to the Secretary earlier, our Senate schedule is very, very crowded. We have on the floor at the moment the Bankruptcy bill, for which I have duties as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and the majority leader has scheduled a meeting at 10 o'clock on pending asbestos legislation, which is a matter of real importance to the administration and to the Congress, so I'm going to have to excuse myself a few minutes before 10 to attend that meeting, but my distinguished ranking member, Senator Harkin, has agreed to take my place. He does that with great distinction. He and I have exchanged the gavel seamlessly for longer than either of us is prepared to admit. But we have a true partnership, and when he's here I know it will be in very good hands.

I've already talked to Senator Harkin about waiving our opening statements so we can go right to your testimony, Madame Secretary, and use the time to the maximum advantage to hear from you.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF HON. MARGARET SPELLINGS

Secretary SPELLINGS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you; good morning, Mr. Chairman, Senator Harkin, I'm thrilled to be here. This is my first appearance before your committee and I know you'll be as kind and gentle on me as you are with other administration officials.

I certainly appreciate the hard work that we have to do together, a lot of tough choices this year, and I pledge to work with you productively to get to a good result.

First, I'd like to introduce my budget team: Tom Skelly, the Budget Service Director, and Todd Jones, Associate Deputy Secretary for Budget and Strategic Accountability. And let me take this opportunity to say a special thanks to Chairman Specter. I, and my entire Department, wish you a full and speedy recovery.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you.

REDUCING THE DEFICIT AND IMPROVING RESULTS

Secretary SPELLINGS. I am here to testify on behalf of President Bush's 2006 discretionary budget request for the Department of Education. The President's budget accomplishes several goals; the first is fiscal discipline. In his February 2 State of the Union Address, the President underscored the need to restrain spending in order to sustain our economic growth and prosperity. It is important that total discretionary and non-security spending be held to levels proposed in the 2006 budget. Its savings and reforms will help us achieve the President's goal of cutting the budget deficit in half by 2009, and we urge Congress to support them.

The fiscal year 2006 budget includes more than 150 reductions, reforms, and terminations in non-defense discretionary programs, and of those, a third are under the Department of Education. We are committed to working with Congress to achieve these savings. Given the fiscal realities, we must target our resources towards flexibility and results, and let me tell you a little about those results.

HIGH SCHOOL REFORM

First, the budget would expand the promise of the No Child Left Behind Act to our Nation's high schools. No Child Left Behind rests on the common sense principles of accountability for results, data-based decisionmaking, high expectations for all, and empowering change. These principles have proven good for our elementary and middle schools, and they are needed today in our high schools.

Let me share a few facts that I know you probably have heard before: our 15-year-olds perform below average internationally in mathematics, literacy, and problem solving. Just 68 out of every 100 entering ninth-graders will receive their high school diploma on time. Just 27 will enter college and still be enrolled by their sophomore year, when nearly 80 percent of the fastest-growing jobs

require at least that level of preparation. Two-thirds of those who do graduate from high school are not adequately prepared for college, and more than half of all college students take remedial education courses when they go to post-secondary education.

Last weekend, the bipartisan National Governors Association reported that high schools are failing to prepare too many of our students for work and higher education, and Bill Gates told them, “Training the workforce of tomorrow with today’s high schools is like trying to teach kids about today’s computers on a 50-year-old mainframe.” Even the New York Times, just yesterday, and the Washington Post editorial pages have weighed in. The Times said, “American students are falling farther and farther behind their peers in Asia and Europe.” It called for a far more rigorous curriculum across the board, and the Post called on States to “stop blocking testing and standards and find ways to raise them.” Call it what you will—a challenge, a problem, a crisis—it’s imperative that we give our high schools the tools to succeed in the economy in which 80 percent of these jobs require more rigorous levels of education.

HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION INITIATIVE

The President’s \$1.24 billion High School Intervention Initiative would help give students the academic skills needed to succeed in the 21st century. These reforms would be designed and directed, not by the Federal Government, but by States and school districts themselves. The budget would provide \$250 million to measure student achievement annually, and hold schools accountable for student performance. As we have learned from No Child Left Behind, what gets measured, gets done.

READING FIRST STATE GRANTS

We’ve made a serious effort in improving basic literacy in the early grades. We spent more than \$2.7 billion in Reading First grants to States and school districts, training more than 90,000 teachers, and teaching 1.5 million students. Today, reading and math scores are up in all States across the Nation, and urban school districts are leading the way.

RAISING READING AND MATH AND TEACHER INCENTIVES

Some high school students struggle with reading and math, too. They would benefit from our Striving Readers program, \$200 million, a \$175 million increase over 2005, and a new secondary education mathematics initiative of \$120 million. A \$500 million Teacher Incentive Fund would reward our best educators, and attract more of them to serve in our most challenging schools.

PROVIDING FOR MORE CHALLENGING CURRICULA

As you’ve heard, there is a near-unanimous call for more rigorous high school curricula. The President’s budget would invest \$45 million, an increase of \$42.5 million, to encourage students to take more challenging course work. This includes a boost for the public-private State Scholars program, which strives for a college-ready

curriculum in every high school, and new, enhanced Pell Grants for students completing such rigorous programs.

The budget also provides a 73 percent increase to expand the availability of advanced placement in international baccalaureate programs in high-poverty schools.

CONTINUING PRIORITIES

Second, the President's budget continues the solid progress begun under No Child Left Behind. Congress overwhelmingly passed this bipartisan law just 3 years ago, and today, across the country, test scores are rising, schools are improving, and the achievement gap is beginning to close. The budget would increase Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies, the engine of No Child Left Behind, by \$603 million. This represents a 52 percent increase since the law was signed. The budget also provides a \$508 million increase for the Special Education Grants to States program, 75 percent higher than 5 years ago.

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

Finally, the President's budget makes college affordability a high priority. It would provide \$19 billion over 10 years in mandatory funds for Pell Grants, resulting from student loan program reforms. This will retire the Pell Grant funding shortfall and help more than 5 million recipients attend college next year alone. The maximum individual Pell Grant would be increased by \$100 for each of the next 5 years, to \$4,550, and grants would be available year-round, so students can learn on their own time-table.

PRESIDENTIAL MATH AND SCIENCE SCHOLARS

To encourage more students, especially poor and minority students, to enter the critical fields of math and science, our budget also includes a new Presidential Math/Science Scholars Program, which would award up to \$5,000 each to low-income college students pursuing degrees in those demanding and in-demand fields.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACCESS GRANTS

Finally, the budget establishes a new \$125 million Community College Access Grants fund to support dual enrollment credit transfers for high school students taking college-level course work. With this budget's passage, student financial assistance will have risen from \$48 billion to \$78 billion during this administration.

In conclusion, let me say that I appreciate and respect the priorities you make and the promises you keep as the people's representatives. What I have just outlined are the President's education priorities; the common thread in all of them is aligning needs with results.

PREPARED STATEMENT

We will not agree on everything, it will not always be easy to find common ground in a Nation on wartime footing, and a tight fiscal climate, but I am here to listen to your priorities. The President has made tough choices, we know you will, too. And we want

to work with you to make the very best choices for America's students.

Thank you very much.
[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARGARET SPELLINGS

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of President Bush's 2006 discretionary request for the Department of Education. I believe we have a strong, focused budget proposal this year, one that reflects the need for both fiscal discipline and continuing support for State and local efforts to carry out No Child Left Behind. Moreover, our budget would significantly strengthen the impact of No Child Left Behind at the high school level, helping to ensure that every student not only graduates from high school, but graduates with the skills to succeed in either the workforce or in postsecondary education.

President Bush is requesting \$56.0 billion in discretionary appropriations for the Department of Education in fiscal year 2006, a decrease of \$529.6 million, or less than 1 percent, from the 2005 level. This request is consistent with the President's overall 2006 budget, and reflects his determination to cut the Federal budget deficit in half over the next 5 years. Even with the proposed reduction, discretionary appropriations for education would be up nearly \$14 billion, or 33 percent, since fiscal year 2001.

REDUCING THE DEFICIT AND IMPROVING RESULTS

In his February 2 State of the Union Address, the President underscored the need to restrain spending in order to sustain our economic prosperity. As part of this restraint, it is important that total discretionary and non-discretionary spending be held to levels proposed in his fiscal year 2006 budget request. The savings and reforms proposed in this request are critical to achieving the President's goal of cutting the budget deficit in half by 2009, and we urge the Congress to support this goal.

Overall, the President's 2006 discretionary request proposes more than 150 reductions, reforms, and terminations in non-defense programs. The Department of Education's budget proposal includes several major reductions and 48 terminations, 33 of which are small, narrow-purpose programs funded at less than \$40 million in 2005. On behalf of the Department, I want the Members of this Subcommittee to know that we are determined to work with the Congress to achieve these savings.

Let me add that our proposed reductions and terminations reflect the long-standing practice of this administration to streamline government, end unnecessary duplication, and redirect scarce taxpayer dollars only to those programs that work. Many of our proposed eliminations were requested by previous administrations as well, on the grounds that they were a low priority and lacked results. In other words, the reductions proposed in our 2006 request reflect not only the obvious need for fiscal discipline, but also our determination to spend taxpayer dollars as effectively as possible. As President Bush has said, "A taxpayer dollar ought to be spent wisely, or not spent at all."

HIGH SCHOOL REFORM

As most of you know, our request for elementary and secondary education focuses on strengthening the impact of No Child Left Behind in our high schools through the \$1.5 billion High School Initiative. Our key proposal in this area is \$1.24 billion for High School Intervention, which would support a wide range of locally determined reforms aimed at ensuring that every student not only graduates from high school, but graduates with the skills to succeed in either college or the workforce. We also are asking for \$250 million for High School Assessments to increase accountability for high school achievement and give principals and teachers new tools and data to guide instruction and meet the specific needs of each student.

Together, these two components of the President's High School Initiative would give States and school district administrators more effective tools for improving high schools than they have under the existing array of uncoordinated, narrow-purpose programs that this initiative would replace.

The need to direct more attention to our high schools is beyond question. Currently just 68 out of every 100 ninth-graders will graduate from high school on time. Moreover, a recent study by the Manhattan Institute showed that two-thirds of students leave high school without the skills to succeed in college. As a result, only

27 of those original 100 ninth-graders make it to their sophomore year of college, and just 18 graduate from college. These figures are even more troubling when you consider that 80 percent of the fastest-growing jobs require at least some postsecondary education.

In addition to High School Intervention and Assessments, we are seeking a \$175 million expansion of the new Striving Readers program, which supports the development and implementation of research-based methods for improving the skills of teenage students who are reading below grade level. Similarly, a new, \$120 million Secondary Education Mathematics Initiative would help raise mathematics achievement, especially for at-risk students, in our high schools. We also want to help strengthen high school curricula by providing a \$22 million increase for the Advanced Placement program, as well as a total increase of \$45 million for the State Scholars programs to encourage more students to complete a rigorous high school curriculum.

And as you consider our High School Initiative, I hope you will keep in mind the startling costs of the alternative: American companies and universities currently spend as much as \$16 billion annually on remedial education to teach employees and students the basic skills they should have mastered in high school.

CONTINUING PRIORITIES

The 2006 budget continues to place a strong priority on our three largest programs, which together form the foundation of the Department's efforts to help ensure that students at all levels have the opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. We are asking for a \$603 million increase for the Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies program, which is the engine driving the President's No Child Left Behind reforms. If enacted, this request would result in a \$4.6 billion or 52 percent increase for Title I since the passage of the NCLB Act.

The budget also provides a \$508 million increase for the reauthorized Special Education Grants to States program, for a total increase of \$4.8 billion, or 75 percent, over the past 5 years.

The third major continuing priority for 2006 is the Pell Grant program. Our budget includes a comprehensive package of proposals to restore Pell Grants to sound financial footing and significantly increase the purchasing power of the Pell Grant. These proposals would provide a combination of discretionary and mandatory funding that would retire the \$4.3 billion Pell Grant shortfall, while raising the Pell Grant maximum award from \$4,050 to \$4,550 over the next 5 years. In 2006 alone, the request would provide a \$1.3 billion increase for Pell Grants, for a total of \$13.7 billion, to raise the maximum award to \$4,150 and provide grants to an estimated 5.5 million low-income postsecondary students.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Title I remains our key priority for successfully implementing No Child Left Behind, but our 2006 request includes a major new proposal to help meet the law's requirement that every classroom be led by a highly qualified teacher. The new Teacher Incentive Fund would provide \$500 million to help stimulate closer alignment of teacher compensation systems with better teaching, higher student achievement, and stronger teaching in high-poverty schools.

Data on teacher qualifications show that high-poverty schools continue to have greater difficulty than low-poverty schools in attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers. For example, a recent study of California schools by The Education Trust-West showed that high-poverty schools tend to have teachers with fewer years of experience who, by definition under current, seniority-based compensation systems, are paid lower salaries than more veteran teachers.

The Teacher Incentive Fund would give States \$450 million in formula grants to reward and retain effective teachers and offer incentives for highly qualified teachers to teach in high-poverty schools. A separate, \$50 million competitive grant program would encourage the development and implementation of performance-based compensation systems to serve as models for districts seeking to more closely link teacher compensation to student achievement.

In addition to Title I and the Teacher Incentive Fund, our 2006 request maintains strong support for No Child Left Behind programs, including almost \$3 billion for Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, \$1.1 billion for Reading First and Early Reading First, and \$412 million for State Assessment Grants.

EXPANDING OPTIONS FOR STUDENT AND PARENTS

Finally, our request includes funding to continue the expansion of educational options for students and families. No Child Left Behind is helping to ensure that stu-

dents in low-performing schools have the opportunity to transfer to a better school, or to obtain tutoring or other supplemental educational services from the provider of their choice. And Federal dollars are now financing opportunity scholarships that permit low-income students here in the District of Columbia to attend better-performing private schools.

The 2006 budget would build on these new options by providing \$50 million for a new Choice Incentive Fund that would support State and local efforts to give parents the opportunity to transfer their children to a higher-performing public, private, or charter school. The request also maintains significant support for the charter school movement, with \$219 million for Charter Schools grants and \$37 million for the Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities program.

CONCLUSION

I believe these highlights of our 2006 request show that we have a strong budget for education, one that makes hard but necessary decisions to put significant resources where they can do the most to help improve the quality of our education system at all levels. I want to conclude with just a few comments on recent charges that our Administration is underfunding education, or that our 2006 proposal is an "anti-education" budget.

First, the numbers just don't add up for our critics. As I noted earlier, under our request, President Bush would increase discretionary spending for the Department by \$14 billion, or 33 percent, since taking office in 2001. Key programs have done even better: Title I would be up \$4.6 billion, or 52 percent; Special Education Grants to States would rise \$4.8 billion, 75 percent; and Pell Grants would be up \$4.5 billion, or 51 percent. And by the way, all of these increases have come at a time of historically low inflation.

Second, with total national spending on elementary and secondary education more than doubling over the past decade, from roughly \$260 billion to well over \$500 billion, it's very hard to make the case that money is where we are falling short in education, especially when all that new money has produced so little in the way of improved student achievement.

Third, like nearly all Federal education spending, No Child Left Behind is intended to leverage "not replace" the much larger share of education funding coming from State and local sources. Even the tremendous increases of the past 4 years have succeeded in lifting the Federal share of elementary and secondary spending by just 1 percentage point, from roughly 7 percent to about 8 percent. Our goal should be to help States and school districts spend smarter on education, not just more, and No Child Left Behind is accomplishing this goal.

Fourth, fully 3 years after the passage of No Child Left Behind, and during its third school year of implementation, I have yet to see a methodologically sound study providing any documentation of the charge that the law is underfunded. Does the law entail additional costs? The answer is yes, and our budgets have reflected those costs, but I have yet to see any evidence that we have significantly increased financial burdens on States or school districts, much less passed on any "unfunded mandate."

Finally, context matters, and the size of the Federal budget deficit matters. To keep our economy strong, and to create new jobs for future graduates, we need to reduce the deficit and encourage more private sector investment in our economy. The Department of Education is doing its part to help achieve this critical goal.

Thank you, and I will be happy to take any questions you may have.

INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Madame Secretary. We've been joined by the distinguished chairman of the full Committee, Senator Cochran. Would you care to make an opening statement?

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR THAD COCHRAN

Senator COCHRAN. Mr. Chairman, I'm happy to join you this morning to welcome the Secretary to our hearings. I'm encouraged by the progress that the administration has made in targeting funds to areas of special need where school districts don't have the resources to do the job they would like to do in helping educate our

elementary and secondary students. I think the traditional programs that have helped in this regard, such as Title I, need to be supported and we hope we can build on the things we've learned in the past about some teacher training programs that have improved morale, like the National Writing Project. I hope that we can get the administration's support for continuing programs of that kind. But, overall I think you have a big task, no more important job in Government than helping to see that we do the right thing for education programs throughout the country. It's the bulwark of our freedom and our economic prospects for the future. Everyone has a right to enjoy a good, quality education, and I think that's the goal of this administration. Strong leadership has been provided in that regard, and I congratulate you for the work you've done in the past, and also the President, for his leadership.

Secretary SPELLINGS. Thank you, Senator.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you for being here and cooperating with our committee.

Secretary SPELLINGS. Thank you.

PROPOSED REDUCTIONS TO FEDERAL EDUCATION BUDGET

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for an abbreviated statement, Madame Secretary, which gives me time to initiate a round of questioning for which we customarily have 5 minutes; although with only a few of our members present, that will be elongated into a number of rounds.

As I mentioned to you in our conversation earlier, I'm very much concerned about the fact that the budget has a reduction of .9—almost 1 percent—and that is in the face of the inevitable problem of inflation. And we are telling the American people about this budget in the context of tremendous expenses which are going in other directions—very necessary expenses beyond any doubt—in what's happening around the world as we defend freedom with the President's initiative, and he deserves a lot of credit for what is happening around the world, with his leadership. With elections in surprising places, and more elections forthcoming. But, when we return to our constituents, we have some very tough questions to answer about education.

FEDERAL SHARE OF EDUCATION FUNDING

Education is a capital asset, and a capital investment. There's no more important expenditure that the government makes, and we all know the Federal share of that is relatively limited, somewhere in the 7 to 8 percent range. And, appropriately—as you have already noted—the initiatives are to come from local school boards, where they are close to the problem in the States, that is our system of federalism, and it is a good system.

PROPOSED PROGRAM ELIMINATIONS

I would begin on my request to you, Madame Secretary, as we work through the process—and you've only been in office since January 20—but, this subcommittee is going to need to have the specifics on why you have eliminated 48 programs. Those programs have come into existence as a result of study by the Congress,

which has the fundamental appropriations authority under the Constitution. The President has to sign the bills, but the Congress has the authority under appropriations, and these programs have been suggested by a variety of people—one of them is mentoring seventh grade students which has come out of Philadelphia, and has very, very strong support. And every one of these programs has a sponsor. And when we sit down on our legislative agenda, people are very concerned. So, a beginning point is to give us—with specificity—why those programs have been eliminated.

[The information follows:]

PROGRAMS PROPOSED FOR ELIMINATION

The 2006 request continues the practice of the Bush Administration—also consistent with previous administrations over the past 25 years—of proposing to eliminate or consolidate funding for programs that have achieved their original purpose, that duplicate other programs, that may be carried out with flexible State formula grant funds, or that involve activities that are better or more appropriately supported through State, local, or private resources. In addition, the government-wide Program Assessment Rating Tool, or PART, helps focus funding on Department of Education programs that generate positive results for students and that meet strong accountability standards. For 2006, PART findings were used to redirect funds from ineffective programs to more effective activities, as well as to identify reforms to help address program weaknesses.

The following table shows the programs proposed for elimination in the President's 2006 budget request. Termination of these 48 programs frees up almost \$4.3 billion—based on 2005 levels—for reallocation to more effective, higher-priority activities. Following the table is a brief summary of each program and the rationale for its elimination.

[In millions of dollars]

Program terminations	Amount
Alcohol Abuse Reduction	32.7
Arts in Education	35.6
B.J. Stupak Olympic Scholarships	1.0
Byrd Honors Scholarships	40.7
Civic Education	29.4
Close Up Fellowships	1.5
Community Technology Centers	5.0
Comprehensive School Reform	205.3
Demonstration Projects for Students with Disabilities	6.9
Educational Technology State Grants	496.0
Elementary and Secondary School Counseling	34.7
Even Start	225.1
Excellence in Economic Education	1.5
Exchanges with Historic Whaling and Trading Partners	8.6
Federal Perkins Loans Cancellations	66.1
Foreign Language Assistance	17.9
Foundations for Learning	1.0
Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs	306.5
Interest Subsidy Grants	1.5
Javits Gifted and Talented Education	11.0
Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships	65.6
Literacy Programs for Prisoners	5.0
Mental Health Integration in Schools	5.0
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers	2.3
National Writing Project	20.3
Occupational and Employment Information	9.3
Parental Information and Resource Centers	41.9
Projects With Industry	21.6
Ready to Teach	14.3
Recreational Programs	2.5
Regional Educational Laboratories	66.1
Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities State Grants	437.4
School Dropout Prevention	4.9

[In millions of dollars]

Program terminations	Amount
School Leadership	14.9
Smaller Learning Communities	94.5
Star Schools	20.8
State Grants for Incarcerated Youth Offenders	21.8
Supported Employment State Grants	37.4
Teacher Quality Enhancement	68.3
Tech-Prep Demonstration	4.9
Tech-Prep Education State Grants	105.8
Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program	3.0
TRIO Talent Search	144.9
TRIO Upward Bound	312.6
Underground Railroad Program	2.2
Vocational Education National Programs	11.8
Vocational Education State Grants	1,194.3
Women's Educational Equity	3.0
Total	4,264.4

PROGRAM TERMINATIONS (DESCRIPTIONS)

Alcohol Abuse Reduction	<i>Millions</i> \$32.7
<p>Supports programs to reduce alcohol abuse in secondary schools. These programs may be funded through other Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities National Programs and State Grants for Innovative Programs.</p>	
Arts in Education	35.6
<p>Makes non-competitive awards to VSA arts and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as well as competitive awards for national demonstrations and Federal leadership activities to encourage the integration of the arts into the school curriculum. Eliminating funding for the program is consistent with Administration policy of terminating small categorical programs with limited impact in order to fund higher priorities. Arts education programs may be funded under other authorities.</p>	
B.J. Stupak Olympic Scholarships	1.0
<p>Provides financial assistance to athletes who are training at the United States Olympic Education Center or one of the United States Olympic Training centers and who are pursuing a postsecondary education. Athletes can receive grant, work-study, and loan assistance through the Department's postsecondary student aid programs. Rated Results Not Demonstrated by the PART due to lack of performance data and program design deficiencies, including its duplication of other Federal student aid programs.</p>	
Byrd Honors Scholarships	40.7
<p>Promotes academic excellence and achievement by awarding merit-based scholarships to high school students, through formula grants to State educational agencies, who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement and who show promise of continued academic excellence. This program duplicates existing Federal student financial assistance programs, as well as State, local and private efforts that provide merit-based resources for postsecondary education. Rated Results Not Demonstrated by the PART due to lack of performance data and program design deficiencies.</p>	
Civic Education	29.4
<p>Provides a single non-competitive award to the Center for Civic Education to conduct We the People, a program to improve the quality of civics and government education. Also makes non-competitive and competitive awards for the Cooperative Education Exchange, a program to improve civic and economic education through exchange programs. Request is consistent with the Administration's policy of terminating small categorical programs that have limited impact, and for which there is little or no evidence of effectiveness, to fund higher priority programs.</p>	
Close Up Fellowships	1.5

Non-competitive award to Close Up Foundation supports fellowships to low-income students and teachers participating in Close Up visits to Washington, DC and other activities. Peer organizations provide scholarships to some of their participants without Federal assistance, and the organization’s successful private fundraising eliminates the need for the program.

Community Technology Centers *Millions*
\$5.0

Supports centers that offer disadvantaged residents of economically distressed areas access to computers and training. Program has limited impact and funding for similar activities is available through other Federal agencies.

Comprehensive School Reform 205.3

This program largely duplicates activities that are readily carried out under the Title I Grants to LEAs program. In the 2000–01 school year, about 30,000 Title I schools (62 percent) were implementing research-based reform models and, beginning with 2002, the NCLB Act made statutory changes to further encourage schools to carry out the types of whole-school reforms supported by the Comprehensive School Reform program. For Comprehensive School Reform (continued): example, comprehensive reform is encouraged as part of school improvement efforts undertaken by Title I schools that do not make adequate yearly progress toward State standards for at least 2 consecutive years. Also, the Act lowered the poverty threshold for Title I schoolwide projects to 40 percent, thus expanding the number of Title I schools that are eligible to use Title I funds to carry out comprehensive school reform.

Demonstration Projects to Ensure Quality Higher Education for Students
with Disabilities 6.9

Funds technical assistance and professional development activities for faculty and administrators in institutions of higher education in order to improve the quality of education for students with disabilities. This program has achieved its primary goal of funding model demonstration projects. New projects can and do receive funding under FIPSE.

Educational Technology State Grants 496.0

This program provides funding to States and school districts to support the integration of educational technology into classroom instruction, technology deployment, and a host of other activities designed to utilize technology to improve instruction and student learning. Schools today offer a greater level of technology infrastructure than just a few years ago, and there is no longer a significant need for a State formula grant program targeted specifically on (and limited to) the effective integration of technology into schools and classrooms. Districts seeking funds to integrate technology into teaching and learning can use other Federal program funds such as Improving Teacher Quality State Grants and Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies.

Elementary and Secondary School Counseling 34.7

Elementary school and secondary school counseling may be funded through other larger and more flexible Federal programs, such as ESEA Title V—A State Grants for Innovative Programs.

Even Start 225.1

This program aims to improve educational opportunities for children and their parents in low-income areas by integrating early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education into “family literacy” programs. However, three separate national evaluations of the program reached the same conclusion: children and adults participating in Even Start generally made gains in literacy skills, but these gains were not significantly greater than those of non-participants. Also, the Administration rated the program as Ineffective in the 2004 PART process. Other high priority programs such as Reading First and Early Reading First are better structured to implement proven research and to achieve the President’s literacy goals.

Excellence in Economic Education 1.5

Supports a grant to a single national non-profit educational organization to promote economic and financial literacy for K–12 students. Elimination is consistent with Administration policy of terminating small categorical programs with limited impact in order to fund higher priorities.

Exchanges with Historic Whaling and Trading Partners	<i>Millions</i> \$8.6
<p>Supports culturally based educational activities, internships, apprenticeship programs and exchanges for Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and children and families of Massachusetts. Elimination is consistent with Administration policy of terminating small categorical programs with limited impact in order to fund higher priorities.</p>	
Federal Perkins Loans Cancellations	66.1
<p>Reimburses institutional revolving funds for borrowers whose loan repayments are canceled in exchange for undertaking public service employment, such as teaching in Head Start programs, full-time law enforcement, or nursing. These reimbursements are no longer needed as the Administration is proposing to eliminate the Perkins Loan program, which duplicates other student loan programs and serves a limited number of institutions.</p>	
Foreign Language Assistance	17.9
<p>Activities to promote improvement and expansion of foreign language instruction may be supported by larger, more flexible ESEA programs, such as Improving Teacher Quality State Grants and State Grants for Innovative Programs.</p>	
Foundations for Learning	1.0
<p>Competitive grants provide services to children and their families to enhance young children's development so that they become ready for school. The request is consistent with the Administration's effort to increase resources for high-priority programs by eliminating small, narrow categorical programs that duplicate other programs, have limited impact, or for which there is little or no evidence of effect. The budget request includes funding for other, larger programs that support early childhood education and development.</p>	
Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs	306.5
<p>Provides grants to States and partnerships to support early college preparation and awareness activities at the State and local levels to ensure low-income elementary and secondary school students are prepared for and pursue postsecondary education. GEAR UP received an Adequate PART rating because it employs a number of strategies that other studies have found to be effective, but no data are available to measure progress toward long-term program goals. The proposed new High School Intervention initiative would provide a more comprehensive approach to improving high school education and increasing student achievement, especially the achievement of those most at-risk of educational failure and dropping out.</p>	
Interest Subsidy Grants	1.5
<p>Program finances interest subsidy costs of a portfolio of higher education facilities loans guaranteed under Federal agreements with participating institutions of higher education. Balances from prior year appropriations are sufficient to cover all remaining obligations.</p>	
Javits Gifted and Talented Education	11.0
<p>Primarily supports research and demonstration grants, but these grants are not structured to assess program effectiveness and identify successful intervention strategies that could have broad national impact. Only research programs that can be held accountable to rigorous standards warrant further investment.</p>	
Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships	65.6
<p>Program has accomplished its objective of stimulating all States to establish need-based postsecondary student grant programs, and Federal incentives for such aid are no longer required. State grant levels have expanded greatly over the years, and most States significantly exceed the statutory matching requirements. State matching funds in academic year 1999-2000, for example, totaled nearly \$1 billion or more than \$950 million over the level generated by a dollar-for-dollar match.</p>	
Literacy Programs for Prisoners	5.0
<p>Provides competitive grants to State and local correctional agencies and correctional education agencies to support programs that reduce recidivism through the improvement of "life skills." Request is consistent with the Administration's effort to eliminate small programs that have only indirect or limited effect.</p>	

	<i>Millions</i>
Mental Health Integration in Schools	\$5.0
<p>Makes competitive grants to increase student access to mental health care by linking school systems with the mental health system. The request is consistent with the Administration’s effort to increase resources for high-priority programs by eliminating small, narrow categorical programs that duplicate other programs, have limited impact, or for which there is little or no evidence of effect.</p>	
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers	2.3
<p>Supports rehabilitation services to migratory workers with disabilities, but such activities may be funded through the VR State Grants program.</p>	
National Writing Project	20.3
<p>Supports a nationwide nonprofit educational organization that promotes K–16 teacher training programs in the effective teaching of writing. States may support such activities through flexible programs like Improving Teacher Quality State Grants. Rated Results Not Demonstrated by the PART review due to lack of reliable performance or evaluation data on the effectiveness of supported interventions.</p>	
Occupational and Employment Information	9.3
<p>This career guidance and counseling program has a narrow purpose and no demonstrated results. The PART review of this program rated it Results Not Demonstrated, largely due to a lack of data on program outcomes.</p>	
Parental Information and Resource Centers	41.9
<p>Parent education and family involvement activities are required and funded under other ESEA programs, such as Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies, and are a specifically authorized use of funds under ESEA Title V-A State Grants for Innovative Programs. The PART review of this program rated it Results Not Demonstrated, partly because of its unclear statutory purposes.</p>	
Projects With Industry	21.6
<p>PWI projects help individuals with disabilities obtain employment in the competitive labor market. VR State Grants serves the same target populations and may provide the same services. Rated Adequate by the PART process but also determined to be duplicative of the much larger VR State Grants program. In addition, data reliability problems undermine accurate assessment of program performance.</p>	
Ready to Teach	14.3
<p>This program supports competitive grants to nonprofit telecommunications entities to carry out programs to improve teaching in core curriculum areas, and to develop, produce, and distribute innovative educational and instructional video programming. State Grants for Innovative Programs and Improving Teacher Quality State Grants provide ample resources for the types of activities supported by this program.</p>	
Recreational Programs	2.5
<p>Supports projects that provide recreation and related activities for individuals with disabilities to aid in their employment, mobility, independence, socialization, and community integration. The program has limited impact, and such activities are more appropriately financed by State and local agencies and the private sector.</p>	
Regional Educational Laboratories	66.1
<p>Recent reauthorization did not make needed improvement in structure and function of the Regional Educational Laboratories, which have not consistently provided high quality research and development products or evidence-based training and technical assistance.</p>	
Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities State Grants	437.4
<p>Provides formula grants to States to help create and maintain drug-free, safe, and orderly environments for learning in and around schools. The program has not demonstrated effectiveness and grant funds are spread too thinly to support quality interventions. The Administration proposes to redirect some of the program’s funds to provide an increase for Safe and Drug-Free Schools National Programs, which is better structured to support quality interventions, and to permit grantees and independent evaluators to measure Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities State Grants progress, hold projects accountable, and determine which interventions are</p>	

most effective. The Administration’s Performance Assessment Rating Tool (PART) rated this program as Ineffective in 2004.

School Dropout Prevention *Millions*
\$4.9

Significantly higher funding for dropout prevention and re-entry programs available through Title I Grants to LEAs, Title I Migrant State Grants, and State Grants for Innovative Programs makes this program unnecessary. Also, at the 2006 request level, States are required to reserve approximately \$110 million from their Title I allocation for purposes of helping students stay in school and make the transition to public schools from local corrections facilities and community day programs.

School Leadership 14.9

Program supports recruiting, training, and retaining principals and assistant principals—activities that are specifically authorized under other, much larger programs such as Improving Teacher Quality State Grants and State Grants for Innovative Programs.

Smaller Learning Communities 94.5

A separate program is not needed for the purpose of creating smaller learning communities. The number of fundable applications for grants under the 2004 competitions dropped significantly and the Department lapsed more than \$26.4 million from the fiscal year 2003 program appropriation. One likely reason for the low level of interest in the program is the lack of compelling evidence on the effectiveness of the smaller learning communities strategy in strengthening high school education and raising achievement. The creation or expansion of smaller learning communities in large high schools may be supported by Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies or State Grants for Innovative Programs—the latter of which specifically authorizes the creation of smaller learning communities. Also, the President’s proposed new High School Initiative will give educators greater flexibility to design and implement approaches for improving the achievement of high-school students.

Star Schools 20.8

Supports distance education projects to improve instruction in a variety of curricular areas. Programs such as State Grants for Innovative Programs and Improving Teacher Quality State grants provide ample resources for these activities.

State Grants for Incarcerated Youth Offenders 21.8

Formula grants to State correctional agencies assist and encourage incarcerated youth to acquire functional literacy skills and life and job skills. Request is consistent with the Administration’s effort to eliminate small programs that have only indirect or limited effect on improving student outcomes.

Supported Employment State Grants 37.4

Program has accomplished its goal of developing collaborative programs with appropriate public and private nonprofit organizations to provide supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Supported employment services are also provided by the VR State Grants program.

Teacher Quality Enhancement 68.3

Program provides funds to improve recruitment, preparation, licensure, and support for teachers by providing incentives, encouraging reforms, and leveraging local and State resources to ensure that current and future teachers have the necessary teaching skills and academic content knowledge to teach effectively. All of the activities allowable under the Teacher Quality Enhancement program can be carried out under other existing Federal programs. Rated Results Not Demonstrated by the PART process due to lack of performance data and program design deficiencies.

Tech-Prep Demonstration 4.9

This program to establish secondary technical education programs on community college campuses has narrow and limited impact. The Administration’s proposed \$1.2 billion High School Initiative will give educators greater flexibility to design and implement programs that best meet the needs of their students, including Tech-Prep programs. States could use funds to support vocational education, mentoring and counseling programs, partnerships between high schools and colleges, or other approaches.

	<i>Millions</i>
Tech-Prep Education State Grants	\$105.8
<p>A separate State grant program to support State efforts to develop structural links between secondary and postsecondary institutions that integrate academic and vocational education is unnecessary. The Administration’s proposed \$1.2 billion High School Initiative will give educators greater flexibility to design and implement programs that best meet the needs to their students. States could use funds to support vocational education, mentoring and counseling programs, partnerships between high schools and colleges, or other approaches.</p>	
Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program	3.0
<p>Program provides minority, low-income or disadvantaged college students with the information, preparation, and financial assistance needed to gain access to and complete law school study. Disadvantaged individuals can receive assistance through the Department’s student financial assistance programs.</p>	
TRIO Talent Search	144.9
<p>Provides grants to colleges to encourage disadvantaged youth to graduate from high school and enroll in a postsecondary education program. The proposed new High School Intervention initiative would provide a more comprehensive approach to improving high school education and increasing student achievement, especially the achievement of those most at-risk of educational failure and dropping out. Talent Search received a Results Not Demonstrated PART rating due to a lack of data on key performance measures and no evaluation findings.</p>	
TRIO Upward Bound	312.6
<p>Provides grants to colleges to support intensive academic instruction for disadvantaged high school students and veterans to generate the skills and motivation needed to pursue and complete a postsecondary education. The proposed new High School Intervention initiative would provide a more comprehensive approach to improving high school education and increasing student achievement, especially the achievement of those most at-risk of educational failure and dropping out. Upward Bound received an Ineffective PART rating due to a lack of data on key performance measures and evaluation results that found the program has limited overall impact because services are not sufficiently well targeted to higher-risk students.</p>	
Underground Railroad Program	2.2
<p>Provides grants to non-profit educational organizations to establish facilities that house, display, and interpret artifacts relating to the history of the Underground Railroad, as well as to make the interpretive efforts available to institutions of higher education. The program has largely achieved its original purpose.</p>	
Vocational Education National Programs	11.8
<p>The program’s activities, which include research, assessment, evaluation, dissemination, and technical assistance, would be addressed as part of the Administration’s proposed High School Initiative for ensuring that secondary students improve their academic achievement and graduation rates.</p>	
Vocational Education State Grants	1,194.3
<p>Funds would be redirected to support a new comprehensive strategy for improving the effectiveness of Federal investments at the high school level and for a community college access initiative. The High School Initiative will give educators greater flexibility (coupled with enhanced accountability) to design and implement programs that best meet the needs of their students. States could use funds to support vocational education, mentoring and counseling programs, partnerships between high schools and colleges, or other approaches.</p>	
Women’s Educational Equity	3.0
<p>Activities promoting educational equity for girls and women may be supported through larger, more flexible programs like ESEA Title V-A State Grants for Innovative Programs.</p>	

PROPOSED REDUCTIONS TO EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Then there’s almost \$1 billion in program reductions, so we need to know the specifics there, again. There are new initiatives which

we will consider very, very carefully, \$2.325 billion, but those are some of the places where we're going to need to start.
[The information follows:]

PROGRAMS PROPOSED FOR REDUCTION IN FISCAL YEAR 2006

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DISCRETIONARY BUDGET, DECREASES

[Dollars in thousands]

Program	2005 appropriation	2006 request	2006 request over 2005 appropriation	
			Amount	Percent
ESEA:				
Indian Education National Activities	\$5,129	\$4,000	-\$1,129	-22.0
Education for Native Hawaiians	34,224	32,624	-1,600	-4.7
Impact Aid Construction	48,544	45,544	-3,000	-6.2
Alaska Native Education Equity	34,224	31,224	-3,000	-8.8
Advanced Credentialing	16,864	8,000	-8,864	-52.6
Physical Education Program	73,408	55,000	-18,408	-25.1
State Grants for Innovative Programs	198,400	100,000	-98,400	-49.6
Total, ESEA	410,793	276,392	-134,401	-32.7
IDEA:				
IDEA Technical Assistance & Dissemination	52,396	49,397	-2,999	-5.7
IDEA Technology and Media Services	38,816	31,992	-6,824	-17.6
IDEA State Personnel Development	50,653	-50,653	-100.0
Total, IDEA	141,865	81,389	-60,476	-42.6
Postsecondary:				
National Technical Institute for the Deaf	55,344	54,472	-872	-1.6
Strengthening Alaska Native & Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions	11,904	6,500	-5,404	-45.4
TRIO Other	13,335	3,625	-9,710	-72.8
Total, Postsecondary	80,583	64,597	-15,986	-19.8
All Other ED Programs:				
Helen Keller National Center	10,581	8,597	-1,984	-18.8
Research & Innovation in Special Education	83,104	72,566	-10,538	-12.7
VR Assistive Technology	29,760	15,000	-14,760	-49.6
VR Demonstration and Training	25,607	6,577	-19,030	-74.3
Adult Basic & Literacy Education State Grants	569,672	200,000	-369,672	-64.9
Subtotal, Other ED Programs	718,724	302,740	-415,984	-57.9
S&E: Program Administration	419,280	418,992	-288	-0.1
Subtotal, S&E	419,280	418,992	-288	-0.1
Total, All Other ED	1,138,004	721,732	-416,272	-36.6
Total, Decreases	1,771,245	1,144,110	-627,135	-35.4

PROGRAM REDUCTIONS (DESCRIPTION)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB):

Indian Education National Activities	<i>Millions</i> \$4.0
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The request provides \$4.0 million for National Activities, which funds research, evaluation, and data collection designed to fill gaps in our understanding of the educational status and needs of Indians and on identifying educational practices that are effective with Indian students. The program also provides technical assistance

to school districts and other entities receiving Indian Education formula and discretionary grants.

Education for Native Hawaiians	<i>Millions</i> \$32.6
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The Education for Native Hawaiians program provides supplemental education services and activities for Native Hawaiians, many of whom perform below national norms on achievement tests of basic skills in reading, science, and math. Grants support a variety of authorized activities. Other Department elementary and secondary education programs, particularly the State formula grant programs, also support improved achievement for Native Hawaiians. The proposed \$1.6 million reduction in funding reflects the elimination of two one-time grants included in the 2005 appropriation.

Impact Aid Construction	45.5
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School districts also generally pay for most of their school construction costs using their own resources and rely on property taxes to finance these costs. Districts affected by Federal operations have limited access to those sources of funding. The \$45.5 million proposed for Construction would provide both formula and competitive grants to school districts. Formula grants assist districts with large proportions of military dependent students and students residing on Indian lands. Competitive grants focus on helping LEAs make emergency renovations and modernization upgrades. The request is reduced by \$3 million in funding reflecting a one-time project in fiscal year 2005.

Alaska Native Education Equity	31.2
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The Alaska Native Education Equity program provides educational services to meet the special needs of Native Alaskan children. By statute, a portion of funds must be awarded annually to specific entities. The remaining funds support competitive grants for teacher training, student enrichment, and other activities that address the special needs of Alaska Native students in order to enhance their academic performance. Other Department elementary and secondary education programs, particularly the State formula grant programs, also support improved achievement for Alaska Native students. The proposed \$3 million reduction reflects the elimination of two one-time grants included in the 2005 appropriation.

Advanced Credentialing	8.0
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This program supports the development of advanced credentials based on the content expertise of master teachers. Funds also support related activities to encourage and support teachers seeking advanced credentials. The 2006 request would support the American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence's development of an Initial Certification and a Master Certification to give States and districts more options for improving teacher quality and, most importantly, raising student achievement. The reduced request reflects the Department's decision not to extend its 5-year grant to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards beyond the additional year of funding directed in the fiscal year 2005 appropriation.

Physical Education Program	55.0
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This program provides competitive grants to local educational agencies and community-based organizations to pay the Federal share of the costs of initiating, expanding, and improving physical education programs (including after-school programs) for students in kindergarten through 12th grade, in order to make progress toward meeting State standards for physical education. Funds may be used to provide equipment and other support enabling students to participate in physical education activities and for training and education for teachers and staff. The 2006 request includes funds to pay for continuation costs for physical education grants, as the first year of a 2-year phase out of the program in order to redirect resources to higher-priority activities.

State Grants for Innovative Programs	100.0
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This program provides flexible funding to State and local educational agencies for a wide range of authorized activities serving all students. Examples include reducing class size, professional development, funding Title I supplemental educational services, and creating smaller learning communities. The reduced request reflects a decision to redirect funding to higher-priority activities that are better targeted to national needs and have stronger accountability mechanisms.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

	<i>Millions</i>
IDEA Technical Assistance and Dissemination	\$49.4

This program provides technical assistance and disseminates materials based on knowledge gained through research and practice. The proposed reduction reflects a restructuring of funding for technical assistance. This request is in addition to the separate \$5 million request for a Transition Initiative and \$10 million to be set-aside under the Grants to States program under a newly authorized technical assistance authority to help States meet data collection requirements. These other sources of funding for technical assistance will free up funds under this program for activities to help States, local educational agencies, teachers, parents, and others to implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

IDEA Technology and Media Services	32.0
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This program supports research, development, and other activities that promote the use of technologies in providing special education and early intervention services. Funds are also used for media-related activities, such as providing video description and captioning of films and television appropriate for use in classrooms for individuals with visual and hearing impairments and improving accessibility to textbooks for individuals with visual impairments. The proposed reduction reflects the elimination of funding for one-time projects funded in 2005.

IDEA State Personnel Development	0
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No funds are requested for the State Personnel Grants program, newly authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, because the entire fiscal year 2005 appropriation remains available for obligation through September 30, 2006. These funds will be used to support 41 continuation awards and 8 new awards.

Postsecondary:

National Technical Institute for the Deaf	54.5
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The request represents a decrease of \$872,000 below the 2005 appropriation reflecting completion of construction projects funded in 2005.

Strengthening Alaska Native & Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions	6.5
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The request includes \$6.5 million for Part A, Section 317, Strengthening Alaska Native & Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions to cover the continuation of 12 projects. No funds are requested for new awards. The Administration does not believe a new round of awards is appropriate until we have the opportunity to determine the extent of need and the most effective means of helping to strengthen these institutions. In fiscal year 2005, we are proposing to increase the average new award size to an estimated \$500,000 and invite eligible applicants to propose projects with a specific focus on renovation and improvements to their classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other instructional facilities.

Federal TRIO Programs, Other	3.6
Staff Training	2.5
Dissemination Partnership Projects	0
Evaluation	0
Administration/Peer Review	1.1

The reduced request for TRIO activities, overall, for 2006 reflects the decision to shift high-school-related TRIO resources to the proposed High School Intervention initiative, which would provide a more flexible, comprehensive, and accountable approach to addressing the college preparation needs of high school students. The new initiative would help ensure that the types of services currently provided by programs like Upward Bound and Talent Search are part of a broader effort to provide students, especially those most at-risk, with the full range of services they need in order to succeed.

The remaining Federal TRIO Programs would receive \$369.4 million to maintain services for more than 420,000 low-income, first-generation (or disabled) individuals. Among these remaining programs, Staff Training, Dissemination Partnership Grants, Evaluation, and Administrative Expenses would be reduced by a total of \$9.7 million due to the elimination of the Upward Bound and Talent Search programs, which typically comprise more than half of TRIO grants. New Staff Training funds, down \$2.8 million from 2005, would fund 6 new awards, at an average funding level of \$417,000, to provide nearly 2,000 TRIO professionals with the skills necessary to run effective projects. Funding for Dissemination Partnership Grants

would be eliminated because sufficient best practices at the postsecondary level are already available. Evaluation funding would be temporarily reduced by \$525,000 due to the completion of the current round of program studies. Funding for administrative expenses, covering peer review of new award applications and other expenses, including performance measurement and analysis, would decrease by \$2 million.

All Other ED Programs:

	<i>Millions</i>
Helen Keller National Center	\$8.6

This program serves individuals who are deaf-blind, their families, and service providers through a national headquarters Center with a residential training and rehabilitation facility and a network of 10 regional offices that provide referral, counseling, and technical assistance. The reduced request does not include the additional \$2.0 million earmarked for the Center in 2005, which is not expected to be fully expended in 2005. At the request level, the Center would provide direct services for approximately 95 adult clients, 12 high school students, and 10 senior citizens at its residential training and rehabilitation program and serve 2,000 individuals, 500 families, and 1,100 agencies through its regional offices.

Research & Innovation in Special Education	72.6
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This program supports research to address gaps in scientific knowledge in order to improve special education and early intervention services and results for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities. The request would support investments in special education research to advance our understanding of early intervention and assessment for young children with disabilities, language and vocabulary development, assessment for accountability, secondary and postsecondary outcomes, and serious behavior disorders. The decrease is equivalent to the amount of funds earmarked by Congress in 2005 for one-time projects. This program, which received a Results Not Demonstrated rating following a PART analysis completed during the 2005 budget process, was recently moved to IES as part of IDEA reauthorization. The new Center for Special Education Research within IES will develop priorities for future research, as well as a plan for carrying out research programs with measurable indicators of progress and results.

Vocational Rehabilitation—Assistive Technology	15.0
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The request includes \$15 million for the Alternative Financing Program (AFP), which provides grants to States to establish or expand loan programs that help individuals with disabilities purchase assistive technology devices and services. To date, the AFP has provided or facilitated loans totaling \$15.5 million to 1,515 individuals with disabilities. These loans are enabling individuals to acquire technology they might not otherwise be able to obtain that improves their quality of life and, in many cases, enables them to work or participate in other productive activities. No funding is requested for other programs authorized under the Assistive Technology Act, as recently revised, including the AT State grant program, the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) for Assistive Technology program, and National Activities. While States have received more than 10 years of support for activities under the antecedent program, the Department has been unable to identify and document any significant benefits. The Administration has proposed to discontinue funding for the AT State grant program and instead, as part of the New Freedom Initiative, support the AFP, which holds greater promise of providing tangible benefits to individuals with disabilities. Activities carried out under the AT P&A program can be carried out under the Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights program.

Vocational Rehabilitation—Demonstration and Training	6.6
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Demonstration and Training programs support projects that expand and improve the provision of rehabilitation and other services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act, including related research and evaluation activities. The request would provide a total of \$6.6 million for new activities, including \$2.0 million that would be used to jointly fund the Transition Initiative under the Special Education account. The request would eliminate \$8 million for one-time projects in fiscal year 2005.

Adult Basic and Literacy Education State Grants	200.0
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The Administration requests \$200 million for Adult Basic and Literacy Education State Grants, with the expectation that new authorizing legislation will be enacted in 2006. This request is consistent with the Administration's goal of decreasing funding for programs with limited impact or for which there is little or no evidence

of effectiveness. A PART analysis of the program carried out as part of the fiscal year 2004 budget process produced a Results Not Demonstrated rating. The program was found to have a modest impact on adult literacy, skill attainment and job placement, but data quality problems and the lack of a national evaluation made it difficult to assess the program's effectiveness. The request for State Grants includes level funding for the English Language and Civics Education grants, which enable States experiencing high levels of immigration to respond to the specialized educational needs of the immigrant/limited English proficient population.

Salaries and Expenses: Program Administration	<i>Millions</i> \$419.0
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The 2006 request includes \$419 million, a slight decrease of \$300,000 from the 2005 level, for the Program Administration account, which funds administrative support for most programs and offices in the Department. The request includes \$254.2 million for the 2,242 FTE, and \$164.8 million for non-pay costs. The non-pay request includes \$4.1 million to continue implementation of the Performance Based Data Management Initiative, which will collect timely data on student achievement and educational outcomes. Other non-pay costs include rent, travel, data collection, evaluations, computer hardware and software support for the staff, and other administrative activities.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Let me begin as to a question—in the minute and a half that I have remaining—with a letter which Senator Cochran and I sent to you earlier this month, which you have responded to, regarding the new grant competition under the Foreign Language Assistance Program. We're concerned that the competition does not reflect congressional intent in appropriating these funds; we intended that they would help schools offer foreign language instruction to their students. Will you comment on that, please?

Secretary SPELLINGS. Senator, I've just recently become familiar with that issue, and I am trying to get to the bottom of all the various local issues that undergird that, but I think one of the things that we at the Department are trying to do is to provide maximum latitude to States and local districts on funding, and yet hold them accountable for results, and I will be glad to look into that issue more—I know that you just received the letter, I think, late last night—so, I want to work with you on these issues, and I'll look forward to talking with the local folks in your communities who have raised their concerns.

Senator SPECTER. As I had announced earlier, I have other commitments, which I'm going to have to leave for, and as I said earlier, Senator Harkin will take over on the hearing if there is no other Republican present. Let me now turn to Senator Harkin for questioning. Senator Harkin, you have the floor.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR TOM HARKIN

Senator HARKIN [presiding]. Madame Secretary, again, thank you very much for appearing before the subcommittee, I thank the chairman for being here, too, and in absentia, thank Senator Specter for his great leadership of this subcommittee. I was just thinking, it has been 15 years, really, that we've worked together as chairman and ranking member, back and forth on this subcommittee, and it has been a great partnership. I think this really is one subcommittee that has worked together in a true bipartisan fashion—through Republican and Democratic administrations—through all those years. I've really appreciated that working relationship that we've had, especially on this subcommittee.

PROPOSED REDUCTION IN TOTAL EDUCATION FUNDING

I just wanted to make a couple of statements about the budget that has come up here. I think we have to take a look at where we're headed, and why we're shifting some of the monies around. I—first of all—think that we need to put some more into the budget for education. The President's budget cuts funding for education for the first time in 10 years—now I'd be glad to listen to any counters to that—and we look at No Child Left Behind, and we discussed this before, you can say, "Well, it's funded." But I'm talking about what expectations were when we passed No Child Left Behind—which I supported at that time—and I think the expectation level was that we would be at a certain level of funding, and we're not there.

Title I, if it were fully funded, would cover about 3 million more children. As for special education, and kudos to this administration for moving ahead on funding—but the fact is, we still are only around 19 percent of what we had promised 30 years ago. And, so I will continue to prod whether it's this administration or any other one, as I did the one before yours, to continue to try to get towards that 40 percent full funding level. So, we're still underfunded, I think, in special education. In Iowa—we had the Governor in yesterday talking to our bipartisan group, Senator Grassley and I and our congressional delegation—he said Iowa would stand to lose about \$14.1 million for career and technical education, \$2.4 million for education technology, \$3.4 million for safe and drug-free schools, \$1 million for family literacy programs, and \$1.1 million for comprehensive school reform. That's the money that Iowa gets now that we wouldn't get under this budget. Again, it comes at an especially bad time, some 11,000 schools across the country have been designated "in need of improvement," meaning they failed to make adequate yearly progress for 2 years in a row, and now they face sanction. That's about twice as many schools as last year. The number will go up sharply next year when AYP requirements even get tougher, this thing keeps getting tougher, year after year.

So with this new budget, it seems like we're again asking for more reforms without really getting the resources; we're asking local school districts to make dramatic academic gains at the same time that we're cutting their funding. So, I don't know how we can expect 11,000 schools that are in need of improvement to hire better teachers, to close the achievement gap at a time when funding is being cut.

I looked at the \$1.5 billion High School Initiative, and then I thought, well, you couple that with the \$2.2 billion in cuts to other education programs—like voc ed and GEAR UP and TRIO and smaller learning communities and things like that—so it seems like we're eliminating \$2.2 billion for high schools, and replacing it with \$1.5 billion for the new High School Initiative, which still represents a cut to our high schools.

The Perkins/Voc Ed Program is also one that bothers me greatly, because you say that this would go to other high school initiatives, but in Iowa, 30 percent of our Perkins money goes to community colleges—so it's not high school—it goes to community colleges. And this has been a great thing in Iowa for economic development

and for getting skills to our high school students going to community colleges.

So, anyway, these are just some of the questions that I have about the budget, and about the thrust of it. Have I seen worse? Yes. Have I seen better? Yes. So, this falls someplace in the middle, at least as I see it. But I'd like to just ask a few questions.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND REQUIREMENTS

First of all, about No Child Left Behind, Madame Secretary, you've got to be aware—as we all are—that we're hearing from our constituents about No Child Left Behind. A lot of concerns about it, educators, parents, they believe the law is too rigid, it's narrowing the curriculum. I don't know if this is just anecdotal or not, but I keep hearing stories about schools—in order to meet the rigid requirements of hiring better trained teachers, and qualified teachers for curriculums to meet No Child Left Behind—the first person that gets fired is the art teacher, or the music teacher, or the P.E. teacher. They're the ones who are let go. So, curriculums are being narrowed.

The goal of 100 percent proficiency for all sub-groups in all subject areas seems to me to be unrealistic for our schools. We see States like Virginia, talking about pulling out from the law, even if it means giving up hundreds of millions of dollars from the Federal Government. So I was kind of surprised to see that now we want to extend this into high schools. It seems to me we ought to make the system work for grade schools first, before we go to high schools.

Now—I'm going to bring this to a close here—you talked about remedial education. We're spending all this money later on downstream for remedial. If you're doing this in high school, that's kind of remedial. If we get it early on in grade schools, we don't have to remediate it in high school. So, it would seem to me that this high school initiative—I'm not adamantly opposed to it—it just seems to me that this is not the right time to do it. It seems to me, we've got to put those resources more into No Child Left Behind in elementary schools.

HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Last, I must say I wear another hat—I'm on the education authorizing committee—and you are trying to make this change by putting on two sentences on our Appropriations bill. I think that's the wrong approach. This is an authorizing measure. I would think that both Senator Enzi and Senator Kennedy—Chair and ranking member of the HELP Committee, and others of us on the authorizing committee—would want to have something to say about how we extend the No Child Left Behind Act into high school as an authorizing measure, rather than putting it on an appropriations bill.

So, two questions, Madame Secretary. This High School Initiative—should we put that money back into the grade schools, put it into the elementary schools now, rather than trying to extend the law. Second, shouldn't this be done in an authorizing measure?

Secretary SPELLINGS. Thank you, Senator, you've put out some great points that I'm thrilled to be able to respond to.

First, as I said in my opening statement, there is some urgency in high school, no doubt about it. We need to be able to walk and chew gum—as we would say in Texas—and that is attend to, and stay the course, on No Child Left Behind. That’s why we’ve sustained these large growths in reading funds; that’s why we have a \$600 million increase in Title I. But we also need to make sure that we are getting kids out of high school, fully prepared to either be successful in the work place or in college. I think we can, and we must, do both.

Let me speak to the philosophy of this budget, overall, and that is—and this was at play, certainly, in the design and development of No Child Left Behind—and it is that we need to be very clear with States about what our expectations are, and then give them a lot of latitude in results, with respect to resources. That’s why these 45 programs have been proposed for elimination, because the President believes that they do not represent, necessarily, either a critical mass, or have not, in all cases, been an effective use of resources.

So the vision here is to create a new high school program in Title I, be clear with States about what we expect, and if they’re getting great results with vocational education, or TRIO, or GEAR UP, or technology or whatever, there certainly is no impediment to doing that. And I’m confident—having represented local school boards—that when those programs get results for kids, they will. But I think the same people who are talking to you about the need for flexibility in No Child Left Behind, talk to me about how we prescribed a lot of particular, specific programs—with particular grant application processes, deadlines and so forth—and we are too much in their way with respect to managing their dollars. The National Governors Association just this weekend, as I said, met. This was one of the things they have called for. That’s why we believe that the assessment and the measurement and the accountability is so critical, but let’s give them more flexibility with respect to managing resources.

USE OF AUTHORIZING AND APPROPRIATIONS PROCESSES

As to the issue of the authorizing versus appropriations matter, certainly that is something that I have spoken with Senator Enzi and Senator Kennedy about—as you are well aware—we have the Perkins reauthorization before us, the Higher Education Act before us; therefore many opportunities to tackle some of those policy matters, rightfully, on the authorizing side as well. So, thank you for that.

Senator HARKIN. So, we could do this in the authorizing committee, rather than doing it in appropriations?

Secretary SPELLINGS. Well, I think the whole issue of high school is something that people are recognizing—within this body and around the country—needs attending to. Certainly resources, obviously, are a part of that equation, but I think there are some things on the policy side with respect to high school, such as what the expectations are, what the timelines are, and various other things that are going to be at issue here as well. This High School Assessment Initiative—though we’ve called for \$250 million immediately to begin to develop those—we recognize it is more com-

plicated. States are going to use end-of-course exams, some States will use exit exams, some States will use Advanced Placement exams, or other standardized assessments as a proxy for their assessment qualifications. It's going to take time. We don't envision this being fully implemented until 2009, 2010 when the first entering class of No Child Left Behind kids would have made it through the pipeline, if you will. So, there are a lot of things that are at play from a policy point of view, in addition to the resources that are needed here, from this committee.

Senator HARKIN. I still think we're going to have to examine this under authorization, rather than just appropriations.

Let me just ask one question more, and then I'll go over to Senator Kohl. When the President says you're going to spend the taxpayers' dollars, it "ought to be spent wisely, or not spent at all." Of course, that raises the question: Whose wisdom? Ours or yours?

STUDENT LOAN PROGRAMS

But, there is one thing I want to bring to your attention, and that has to do with the student loan program, about spending money. Quite frankly, I think a lot of your proposals make a lot of sense on the student loan program. You're proposing to use the savings to increase Pell Grants—that's good—so I applaud that, I think you're headed in the right direction. But, I just want to bring something else to your attention. Even if we adopt your recommended changes to the student loan programs, your own budget documents, and I refer here to page 371, specifically, of the budget appendix, show that the cost to taxpayers—of each \$100 lent under the Federal Family Education Loans, the FFEL program—it costs \$8.91 in taxpayer subsidies. That's your own budget. On the other hand, your documents show that each \$100 lent under the Direct Loan Program makes a profit of \$2.06 to the taxpayers. In other words, returning \$2.06 to the Treasury. Well, that means a student with total subsidized loans of \$17,000—which is about the average debt of a student finishing a 4-year college right now, we're just taking averages—under the FFEL Program, that costs the Government, taxpayers, \$1,514, to be exact. The same loans to a student in the Direct Loan Program makes a profit of \$360. So, Madame Secretary, given these facts—and the continuing need to find the monies for increasing Pell Grants, and other student aid for disadvantaged students—shouldn't we be doing everything we can to encourage colleges to join the Direct Loan Program?

Secretary SPELLINGS. Well, certainly, Senator, that's obviously an option before them. I think our proposal has attempted to look at the broad range of financial aid services—how we manage it—from Perkins loans at 5 percent interest rates, to a 3 point something or other average rate in Direct Lending and the FFEL Program, and to look at this in a more efficient, effective way—we've had a transformation, if you will, of the financial services industry, elimination of the middle man in some cases, different relationships between universities and students and the Federal department and banks, and others—and we believe that there are efficiencies and savings to be drawn by looking at those programs broadly. To the tune of about \$30 billion over 10 years, I believe, eliminating that short fall once and for all, and applying those efficiencies, those

savings toward student aid. I think we will, maybe, have discussions about how to turn the various dials across the spectrum of financial aid, and how the loan program balances with resources towards grants—our neediest students—that’s why the President has put a high priority on Pell. But, there’s lots of room to talk about it, as you know, we have a laundry list of various proposals which range from, I think, \$6 billion at the high end, we’ve called for variable interest rates, and a whole laundry list of proposals for your consideration.

Senator HARKIN. Madame Secretary, I appreciate that, I just, again, I look at the table. I was quite amazed when you look at the cost—from the Direct Loans, \$2.06 back to the Treasury, \$8.91 in subsidies out after all of those things you just talked about, which is fine, and good, you still have this problem. You still have money not being wisely spent by the Government. We hear all these stories about these lending institutions flying their student, college directors down for vacations and cruises and all kinds of different things, and they wine them and dine them, but it seems to me with this kind of data that we now have, that your Department ought to be forthright in just saying to colleges, “Look, we want to save the taxpayers’ money. We want to spend the money wisely, get in the Direct Loan Program.”

Secretary SPELLINGS. We certainly, obviously, have supported the Direct Loan Program, and will continue to do that, and as institutions around the country see the merit of that we stand ready to assist them. But again, it’s a place where we’ve sort of had a local control attitude about financing higher education, as we all have together.

Senator HARKIN. I don’t mind local control, this is Federal tax dollars. The States, if they want to waste their money that way let them, but we have our obligation on the Federal level.

Secretary SPELLINGS. Right, I appreciate that.

Senator HARKIN. But, I’m glad to hear what you just said, that’s very important. Thanks, Madame Secretary. Senator Kohl.

Senator KOHL. Thank you very much, Senator Harkin, Secretary Spellings.

PROPOSED ELIMINATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FUNDS

The President’s budget eliminates, as you know, funding for Perkins on the grounds that it is ineffective, and that the money would be better used in the K–12 system. I’ve talked to Brent Smith in Wisconsin who is Chair of the Wisconsin Technical College Board, and he raises an important issue that you ought to consider.

The Chair says that he notes today that the average age of a Wisconsin technical college student is 29. These students have moved beyond the K–12 system, so any diversion of Perkins funding to K–12 would be of no help to them, obviously. And these older students face other obstacles besides a lack of academic preparation. Some are returning to school after years in the work force, some are pursuing highly technical degrees, while others are economically disadvantaged; either single parents, dealing with a disability, or learning English for the first time. That’s why Wisconsin technical colleges use their Perkins money so well to help their stu-

dents meet these unique challenges. They've been successful, as the vast majority graduate, and obtain high-skill, high-wage jobs.

Brent Smith and the Wisconsin Technical College System would like to know, without Perkins, how does the Department expect that technical colleges will serve the current generation of adult Americans—most of whom are well beyond their K–12 years—and who need help right now?

Secretary SPELLINGS. Thank you, Senator, for that question. Let me first say that I am a former vocational education student myself, so I do have appreciation for what they do.

Our budget—with respect to the split between the community college funding that they received from Perkins, and the high school level of funding—we have attempted to accommodate that to make them whole within either the Labor Department budget, or in this budget. So, by our math, the funding for vocational education for high schools, and for community colleges, is about the same. We've called for a community college expansion initiative of \$250 million in the Labor Department budget, \$125 million for a Community College Access Grant to support more articulation between high schools and community colleges, and so forth. So, while it's a different kind of allocation of resources, we do believe those funding levels are approximately the same. As I said—I don't know if you were in the room a minute ago—we believe, the President's notion of how we fund high schools and community colleges is that we ought to be clear with folks about what we expect and then allow them to direct resources as they see fit, to a particular goal, with accountability attached. I'm very confident that—in places like Wisconsin where those vocational education programs are getting demonstrable results for students—that they will be supported by local school boards, and State officials. So long as we know what the data shows. But, I think what we've heard over and over again, even as recently as this last weekend, with the National Governors Association, is that for too many kids, high schools are not working. Particularly for those at the low end of the system, if you will.

Senator KOHL. Are you saying that the Perkins money has not been cut?

Secretary SPELLINGS. I'm saying that we've put the Perkins money in a high school title—

Senator KOHL. I know, but as I point out in my question, it doesn't help the person enrolled in the community college, the vocational college, to get advanced training, it doesn't help that person at all, who needs that training, who's out there today, to allocate more money to high schools. That person, as you know, is obviously way beyond high school.

Secretary SPELLINGS. Right.

Senator KOHL. The Perkins money does serve a very important, useful purpose. It's used well to train these people who are beyond high school, to get back into the work force. So, I'm not sure if I understand your answer.

FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Secretary SPELLINGS. Let me clarify. And that's why the President has called for additional resources for community colleges—to serve the type of individual you just mentioned through a \$250 mil-

lion plus-up and a partnership grant between local employers, community colleges, and the private sector, as well as an additional \$125 million for community colleges in this Community College Access grants program. So, while they might not be served through the Perkins program, we do believe we've provided resources to community colleges, to allow them to continue to serve the type of student that you've just spoken about.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FUNDS

Senator KOHL. The Perkins program was \$1.3 billion. Now, you've talked about \$100 or \$200 million. Now, to my way of figuring, that's not a tradeoff.

Secretary SPELLINGS. Under the current Perkins program, as you know, some of the resources are in the K-12 system, and some of the resources are in the postsecondary system, and we have attempted to take the level of resources, approximately, from Perkins, that support high school, and put it in a high school initiative. Likewise, those resources that are serving postsecondary students have been applied to other community college programs to support those type of individuals.

Senator KOHL. I appreciate what you're saying, I think if Brent Smith—who is Chair of the Wisconsin Technical College System—were here, he would be looking at you as quizzically as I am, trying to figure out what it is you're saying that will really help him as the Chair of the Wisconsin Technical College Board, what's going to help him in trying to do his job. I think there is clearly a net minus of money that we're talking about here, of significant proportions. I recognize money is scarce, and we can't do everything we want. But, I think what you're telling me is they won't get the kind of money that they have gotten heretofore. He is saying, as Chair, that they will really, really miss that money, because it is being used very well to help people that are post-high school, educate themselves to get into the work force. That's clearly what he would be saying.

PELL GRANTS

Secretary SPELLINGS. I appreciate that point of view. I do want to mention a couple of other things that are on point for the students you are talking about, and that is the enhancement of Pell—more than half of the students that are in community colleges are Pell recipients—and we've also called for allowing that financial aid to be used year round, and for short-term training for individuals like those you've spoken of, to get the necessary skills to re-enter the work force.

PELL GRANT ELIGIBILITY AND TAX TABLES

Senator KOHL. All right, well, let me talk about Pell for a minute. Last month most of our delegation from Wisconsin wrote the President about an issue involving Pell Grants.

Specifically, the Department of Education is making immediate changes to the tax tables that determine eligibility for Pell Grants, as you know. As many as 5,500 Wisconsin students—who today get Pell Grants—could completely lose them, and thousands more will

see their Pell Grants reduced. While I agree we need to use accurate tax information to determine eligibility, we need to remember that this will affect students who are in school today, and are counting on Pell Grants to remain in school. It would be unfair to change the rules, I think, in the middle of the game, and I think at the very least, we should all agree not to take money away from students who are, today, relying on the Pell Grants that they are getting. So, will you be able to work with us to see to it that Wisconsin—as well as Pell Grant recipients from other States, will not entirely lose their Pell Grant money, in the middle of their college education?

Secretary SPELLINGS. Let me react to that issue, on the tax tables. This Congress required the Department of Education to update these State tax tables that have not been done since, I believe, the late 1980s, or so, so it's been quite a while, and that's why the impact was more severe than it normally would have been, had we updated them more recently than that.

My understanding is that the average award for those students is about \$400 a year, and many of the folks that would be affected are first-time recipients, so they haven't received the aid yet. So, we do obviously struggle with this issue; we need to have the most accurate information available to fund these programs. But the way we've chosen to approach it in this budget is to increase the Pell award, to align this rigorous course of study to the Pell scholars, to allow for short-term training, to allow for year-round aid and so forth. But, I think we've righted the ship on the updated tax table once and for all, and we need to do it more consistently, and keep it current as we go forward, so that it will minimize the unfortunate effect that it had this time.

Senator KOHL. I do appreciate that, but we apparently have a difference of opinion—and we could probably straighten it out if we looked more carefully at the facts—according to my information, as many as 5,500 in Wisconsin who are getting Pell Grants today could lose them—totally, or in part—as a result of this change. Now, you've said that's not so.

Secretary SPELLINGS. I'm not saying it's not so, I'm saying that my understanding is that the average award is quite small, and some number—I'm not sure that those people will have lost aid—I'll just have to look at Wisconsin's particular situation.

Senator KOHL. Yes.

Secretary SPELLINGS. I'd be delighted to do that.

Senator KOHL. Would you do that?

Secretary SPELLINGS. Sure.

Senator KOHL. I would greatly appreciate it.

Secretary SPELLINGS. Sure.

Senator KOHL. I thank you so much. Thank you, Senator Harkin.
[The information follows:]

IMPACT ON WISCONSIN PELL GRANT RECIPIENTS OF REVISED TAX TABLES

Under the revised tax tables, 1,486 students—or 2 percent—of the 72,252 Wisconsin students projected to receive Pell Grants under the previous tables would not receive grants in academic year 2005–2006. Projected Pell Grant awards in Wisconsin would be reduced by \$4.1 million under the revised tax tables. Based on national trends, the average amount lost per student is \$131; awards to the neediest

students, who qualify for the maximum Pell Grant, would be unaffected by the revised tables.

PROGRAM REDUCTIONS AND DEPARTMENTAL STAFFING

Senator HARKIN. Thanks, Senator Kohl. I just have three or four more questions, Madame Secretary.

The budget proposes to eliminate 48 education programs, and create 12 new ones, for a cut of 36 programs. Well, that's a lot of programs that your Department will no longer have to administer. And yet, the reduction in work is not reflected in the number of employees at the Department of Education.

For example, under the President's budget, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education would practically disappear. Seven of the 10 existing programs would be eliminated, for a funding cut of almost 90 percent. From \$2 billion to \$216 million. And yet, the number of full-time employees for this office would drop by just 3 percent. From 121 to 117. I guess, my question is, why do you need practically the same number of employees to do a tiny fraction of the work? Why isn't that also reflected in the budget?

Secretary SPELLINGS. Well, Senator, that's something certainly that we would take a look at. I do think that we would envision having folks with that kind of capability provide technical assistance on the high school side, so while it's not a one-to-one correlation, we certainly would look at the staffing levels that are appropriate to support the new world order.

I do want to mention one thing, and that is, of the 48 programs that we've called for elimination of, about 15 of them are \$5 million or less. And I think we would agree that it's hard to have a program with a national scope for a small amount of money. The remainder of them are about \$40 million or less, so they are typically fairly small programs of a few million dollars, and 15 of the programs are \$5 million or less.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS SKELLY

Mr. SKELLY. Senator, I would just add, on the vocational education programs, many of those get funding that becomes available only in July. The 2005 Appropriations bill that you already passed this year, would provide funding beginning in July, and indeed in October 2005. We still need the staff in that office to obligate that money and make sure that it's well spent, under the existing law.

The reason we had such a small reduction in employees in the 2006 budget, was that most of the work will still go on under the 2005 appropriation. We'll only see the savings from elimination of funding for those programs in 2007 and 2008.

Senator HARKIN. You're saying you have to last for 1 full year that we have the program, when it's a 90 percent cut and we're going to keep on 117 people to administer that, it doesn't sound right.

Mr. SKELLY. Again, it's going to take time to phase out all of the work. Part of the work of these employees is not just obligating the money each year, it's looking at what happens with the grants that were awarded in prior years, it's closing out those grants; there will be some work involved if Congress were to accept the proposal to eliminate the programs and just working all of that out. So, even-

tually there will be a drop in the staff, as these programs are eliminated. It just won't happen starting October 1, 2005 when this fiscal year begins. There will be a lot of work, still, for a good part of fiscal year 2006.

Senator HARKIN. Well, that's a pretty good answer. But it seems to me that there's going to be a period of time where you're going to have a lot of employees, looking back and assessing a program that's no longer in existence. If it's no longer in existence, why assess it? Why have employees looking back, assessing how a program worked, if you no longer have the darn thing?

Secretary SPELLINGS. Senator, that's certainly something that we would work with you on about what the right levels of staffing that are needed to support—

Senator HARKIN. Again, that's why we look at the budgets and we say, "Well, you can do all this, we've got to see some drop in employees, also. Unless this is not a serious proposal." If it's a serious proposal, it ought to be done also with a cut in the employees also.

ELIMINATION OF SMALL PROGRAMS

Now, can I just respond—just a second—to what you said about, a lot of these small programs are \$5 million, or less. I've often said the genius of our American educational system is that we have local control, where you have well springs of ideas and innovation and that type of thing, you don't have a top-down structure where everybody marches to the same tune, that's sort of been the genius of our American educational system—so that experimentation has gone on. But, there has been some experimentation from the Federal side, too. And some of these small programs are just that; they are to test things out. A Senator, a Congressman, or a group gets together and says, "This may be a good approach, let's try it out and see what happens." Then you see if it works, TRIO program being one, of course that's more than \$5 million, obviously, it's a big program, but TRIO program is cut by almost a half. Yet, Trio program goes back—if I'm not mistaken—maybe 1969, 1968, something like that. I first became familiar with that as a Congressman in a rural area of Iowa back in the 1970's. I'd never heard of the TRIO program before. And, so through all these years, I think that it has proven its worth, but it started out as a small kind of a program to test some theories. That you could take kids from families where neither parent had ever gone to college, expose them to college situations, do some summer school training with them, and they would be more apt to pursue a higher education, and that has been proven, we've got data to prove that, going back to 1970. So, when you're cutting some of these small programs—a lot of them I don't even know myself, I mean, they're in there, but—it gets back to this wisdom thing, whose wisdom? Sometimes we put those in there to test things out, it's like the Writing Project that Senator Cochran has been pushing for years. I think that it is a legitimate function for us to try to test these things out and see how they work, and see if they do, and so when some of these are cut, you cut them and you do away with them before we've even seen whether they'll work or not—maybe some will, maybe some won't—it is a testing ground.

Secretary SPELLINGS. A fair point, and I think our question is, then, what's the demarcation between—when have you stopped testing a program, and when have you had a particular kind of model that's set forth for local communities—and I think, as I said again, the President's notion here is, let's be clear about what we expect, let's support measuring that achievement, and using that data to support improvements in the system, but then let's give local school districts the opportunity to double their TRIO Program, or whatever.

TRIO PROGRAMS

Senator HARKIN. Madame Secretary, local communities are not going to double TRIO Programs, because—I don't know, how many students are in TRIO now, 300,000 or 400,000, something like that, nationwide—so you go around the Nation, and there's just a few here, and a few there and a few here, and these are the poorest kids, usually from the poorest families, and you get two or three in a local district and, they have no power, they have no say-so. So, the local jurisdiction, the local school district—being pressed hard as they are right now for money, trying to raise funds for schools, being burdened with higher property taxes all the time—this is not going to be a thing that they're going to want to do, because it's so few. When we look at it from a national view—we say there's 300,000 or 400,000 students out there that need this kind of assistance, that we've had the data to show that these kids are more successful in going on to higher education. So, I really don't think it's right to say that local jurisdictions will pick this up, it would just be so small they won't. That's why we started the program, that's why we've kept it up for 35 years.

Secretary SPELLINGS. But we have, obviously, a lot of kids who are in those sorts of positions and giving resources to school districts to design programs as they see fit—TRIO, GEAR UP, vocational education, technology-based programs, and so forth—those that are getting results for them and their kids is a better way to run the railroad, in the President's view.

PUBLICIZING THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

Senator HARKIN. Well, I guess I disagree with him on that.

Let me ask you on just, a couple, three other things. This has to do with this Armstrong Williams case. Department of Education funds were used to pay political commentator Armstrong Williams to tout the No Child Left Behind Act. Mr. Williams did so without disclosing that he was being paid with taxpayer's dollars. I was glad to see the President made it clear that such an arrangement was unacceptable. So, what have you done since becoming Secretary to make sure this does not happen again, Madame Secretary? Have you made any attempt to recoup the funds paid to Mr. Williams from Ketchum, the PR company that hired him as a subcontractor?

Secretary SPELLINGS. The first part is, we have commissioned an Inspector General's investigation, which is underway. I expect that report very shortly, he's working hard to get to the bottom of all the facts—what we got, what we paid for, what we didn't get, what the expectations were, and so forth—and so I'm awaiting that infor-

mation before I determine a course of action, obviously. Likewise, the Government Accountability Office is conducting two investigations, one of which was on an initial analysis that apparently the Department did on media outlets and so forth, and that's been responded to. Then there's another one that's ongoing, and our General Counsel in the Department is cooperating fully with that, but, we're still in the fact-finding mode. The President has been clear about this, and I have. I don't think it's acceptable for folks who represent themselves as journalists to be paid for punditry and it won't happen again.

Senator HARKIN. The President made it very clear, and I applaud him for that, I just wondered where you are, and you told me you were waiting for the IG's investigation to come in.

OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION ON FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Madame Secretary, I understand that your Department has a number of contracts with public relations and other similar firms. How much do you plan to spend on these types of contracts in fiscal year 2006? I don't find this anywhere in the budget.

I understand you might not have that information with you, and if you could submit an answer for the record, I'd appreciate that.

Secretary SPELLINGS. I'd be glad to do that. I will say that many of the programs—in fact, some of the ones we've talked about today, or this morning—do call for communications efforts and outreach to parents, the higher ed community, and so on. So, I do think it's important that we not throw the baby out with the bath water, particularly with a new law like this where there are options for parents, there are needs for teachers to be educated, and other educators about what the law provides, and so forth. So, the short answer to your question is, I don't know how much money we'll spend on communications. I certainly will find out what we're looking at.

Senator HARKIN. Someplace buried in there, there's some budget allocation in your Department for that, and we just don't have it and we'd like to take a look at that.

Secretary SPELLINGS. We'll look into it.
[The information follows:]

CONTRACTS WITH PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRMS, ADVERTISING AGENCIES, AND THE MEDIA IN FISCAL YEAR 2006

It is premature to identify at this time what will be the Department of Education's acquisition needs several months in the future, when fiscal year 2006 appropriations will be available for obligation. In considering future contracts, be assured that the Department will very carefully take into account the recommendations of the Inspector General and other reviews of the Department's past contracts to ensure compliance with all applicable laws.

GRANTS FOR ENHANCED ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

Senator HARKIN. When we spoke some time ago, I told you—and at a previous hearing, I think on the Authorizing side, Madame Secretary—I said I was going to be like a laser beam on kids with disabilities, and so I'm back to that now with this next question.

It's about the Grants for Enhanced Assessment Instruments program, which is intended to help States improve the quality of their tests. About \$12 million will be available for this program in this

fiscal year, 2005. In the Senate report, we urged the Department, when awarding grants, to give special attention to the needs of students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency. As you know, Madame Secretary, many schools have a difficult time—and we spoke about this—assessing the performance of these two groups. Often these students may have learned what they are supposed to have learned, but they can't demonstrate it because they aren't given the appropriate assessment.

So, our report language asked the Department to put a high priority on grant applications that aim to improve the quality of the State tests for these two groups of students. Unfortunately, the Department seems to be ignoring this language. In your budget justification, it says that \$12 million will focus on the use of technology in designing State tests. There's nothing about students with disabilities, or students with limited English proficiency. So, I would appreciate it if you could take our Senate request into account when you award these grants. Perhaps there's a way to combine the Department's priorities with the Senate's priorities. Again, this is money wisely spent, there's wisdom, perhaps, on both sides here.

For example, technology might be a good way to provide a special accommodation for students with disability. So, if you're going to do the technology, make it applicable to students with disabilities, so I hope you take another look at our report language, and at least update me on how you're going to do that for next year.

Secretary SPELLINGS. I absolutely will, and let me mention a couple of things. You and I did speak about this, and I convened—on the policy side—a group of experts to help us develop technical assistance, and listen to the educators and the advocacy community about where we are with special ed in the implementation of this law. I said—and I know you agree—that without No Child Left Behind I don't think we would be having this conversation, and I'm glad we are.

Senator HARKIN. I applaud that, and that's one of the reasons I supported that, because I said, "Finally, we're going to get the kids with disabilities, and we're not going to leave them behind, either." So, that's why I'm focusing on this.

Secretary SPELLINGS. Schools are starting to attend to them. But, we've got a long way to go with respect to technical assistance on assessment and on curriculum, and I've asked the organization that you recommended to me to participate on this panel of experts, and this is certainly an area of interest that they have identified. I do pledge to take this into consideration as we award these grants, I think that's the kind of application we're going to see from States. And I do think there's a harmony between the technology application and the needs of these kids.

Senator HARKIN. But, when you put out those requests, again, how they're worded gives the States some idea of what they should put in their grant requests, and if there's nothing in there about better assessment for kids with disabilities, "and please when you put in your grant request, we will look favorably upon that kind of thing," you know that, of course.

Secretary SPELLINGS. Right. But as I travel around the country, talking to educators, this is a hot issue. This is something they're

struggling with, and this is the kind of application I expect to get, frankly.

Senator HARKIN. I'm glad you said that, I just hope that that word goes out there to the community out there, too.

[The information follows:]

GRANTS FOR ENHANCED ASSESSMENTS

The Department will give competitive priority to applications for fiscal year 2005 and fiscal year 2006 funds under the Enhanced Assessment Instruments Grants program that propose projects addressing the use of accommodations or alternate assessments to improve the quality of assessments for limited English proficient students and students with disabilities. The notice inviting applications for fiscal year 2005 funds under the program, tentatively scheduled for publication in late spring of 2005, will announce the priority.

U.S. CONSTITUTION INITIATIVE

Senator HARKIN. One last question, I'm asking this question on behalf of Senator Byrd, who could not be here. The fiscal year 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act last December, included language proposed by Senator Byrd that designates September 17 of each year as Constitution Day. The language also required that Federal employees be provided with training and educational materials concerning the U.S. Constitution—both at the time of their orientation as new employees, and on September 17 of each year.

In addition, the new law requires that all educational institutions receiving Federal funds hold an educational program on the Constitution on September 17. The law does not prescribe the exact content of the program, and it does not mandate any particular curriculum. There's no congressional intent to dictate to any educational institutions—public or private—exactly what must be said or done in the program provided by the institutions on this subject. The law simply requires that educational institutions hold a program on the Constitution, on Constitution Day, September 17.

I've been told by Senator Byrd that the Office of Personnel Management is working with the Department of Education on a Constitution initiative, which OPM plans to announce in several months to fulfill the requirements of this new law. Madame Secretary, can you confirm for Senator Byrd that the Department of Education will forward to this subcommittee, by April 1, 2005, its plan and/or guidelines for implementing the law's requirement that certain educational institutions hold a program on the Constitution on September 17.

Secretary SPELLINGS. I certainly will look into that, Senator, I'm not completely familiar with all the particulars that you mentioned, but I will certainly look into it and get back to you and Senator Byrd.

Senator HARKIN. I appreciate that. If you could get back to us, and see if you could do that by April 1, we're already into March. I didn't know if that date was in the law or not.

Secretary SPELLINGS. The 17th is a Saturday, I was just informed, so this year, September 17, Constitution Day is a Saturday, and that particular day kids will not be in school. So I think they're trying to work through issues like that, and run that to ground.

Senator HARKIN. That's one of the things that's supposed to be worked out in the guidelines. Obviously sometimes it will fall on a Saturday or Sunday, so you'll do it on a Friday or Monday, or something like that, I suppose.

Secretary SPELLINGS. Right, right.

Senator HARKIN. I think Senator Byrd just wants to know what your plans are for this.

Secretary SPELLINGS. Right, absolutely, and I will get back to him on that. We do have a working group working on this matter; obviously OPM is on the case also, so I'll report back.

CLOSING REMARKS

Senator HARKIN. Madame Secretary, that's all the questions I have, I don't have any other questions from any other Senators, if there's anything else that you'd like to leave with us here, I'd be glad to make sure we have it in the record, if there's anything else.

Secretary SPELLINGS. I've submitted a statement for the record, Senator. Thank you very much for your hospitality, and I appreciate it.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you, Madame Secretary, for being here and being forthright with your answers to the questions, and I look forward to this further submission to the record of those things that we asked about.

Secretary SPELLINGS. Will do, absolutely.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MARY L. LANDRIEU

Senator HARKIN. We have received the prepared statement of Senator Mary L. Landrieu which will be placed in the record.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR MARY L. LANDRIEU

Thank you very much, Secretary Spellings for giving us your time today. We appreciate your visit to Capitol Hill to help explain some of the budget decisions that were made by the Administration. Also, let me offer you my congratulations and best wishes as you begin your new position as Secretary of the Department of Education.

There is no greater investment we can make in our future than in the education of our children. President John F. Kennedy once said, "Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource." He was right; if we are to succeed, we must make education the forefront of our agenda. We must work to raise academic achievement in our public schools by putting the priority on performance instead of process, delivering results instead of developing rules, and on actively encouraging bold reform instead of passively tolerating failure.

The passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001 reaffirmed Congress' commitment to be a more equal partner, instead of a major impediment, to real education reforms. However, the Administration's budget for fiscal year 2006 has not lived up to this promise and as a result they continue to leave children behind. This year, the Bush budget will create a budget shortfall of almost \$9 billion for Title I funding under NCLB. As you know, Madam Secretary, Title I funding makes it possible for all children, regardless of economic background, to have access to a high quality education. In Louisiana, this shortfall will translate to over \$212 million in funding not getting to local educational agencies in Louisiana and leaving behind 66,656 Title I students in the state.

Investing in our children is critical to the well-being of our country. While investments in education without accountability are a waste of tax-payer dollars, accountability without strategic investments in education is a waste of time. If the promise of No Child Left Behind is to be truly fulfilled, we must not only continue the reforms begun under NCLB, we must fully invest in them. Requiring states to meet

new, higher standards is a move in the right direction, but we must provide states with the resources they need to meet these new standards. Every year since the passage of NCLB, the budget shortfall for education spending offered by this Administration has increased. Making sweeping reforms, while robbing states of the resources they need to implement the reforms, is the way that states become left behind in education. The promise to "Leave No Child Behind" is an empty one unless we are willing to make the critical investments necessary to support our nation's children.

What is almost more disturbing than the Administration's lack of interest in fulfilling the promise it made to American students 4 years ago, is the fact that the Administration continues to make new empty promises. This year, the President has proposed a new high school initiative as part of the education budget. He has proposed that \$1.24 billion be spent on the High School Intervention program. I have no objection to the idea behind this program, and wholeheartedly agree with the President that we must work to improve the education standards in our high schools. I do, however, take issue with fact that this new promise is being made when the old promises have yet to be fulfilled.

Empty promises are not only being made in elementary and secondary schools, Madam Secretary. The President's budget includes \$33 million for Enhanced Pell Grants. This increase in Pell Grant funding is exciting, as we should be increasing opportunities for all students to attend a college or university. However, as the adage goes, you cannot steal from Peter to pay Paul. While there is an increase in Pell Grant funding, there have been significant reductions made to college preparatory programs, such as TRIO. In Louisiana, there are currently fifty-nine TRIO programs, and over 17,700 students are currently participating in them. The merits of TRIO have been widely proven. Students who participate in the Upward Bound TRIO program are four times more likely to earn an undergraduate degree than students from similar backgrounds that do not participate in TRIO. In a state like Louisiana, where poverty continues to serve as a barrier to higher education, it is of the utmost importance that we provide all possible services to our students to encourage their pursuit of a college degree. Yet again, while the President highlights his commitment to higher education by increasing the Pell Grant funding, he fails to mention that that increase is coming at the expense of other higher education programs.

There's a story that I remember hearing when I was a little girl about a church in the suburbs of New Orleans. The church was small and its membership was not particularly high. There was a leaky roof on the church, and for anyone who has been to south Louisiana, you know that during hurricane season, the last thing you want is a leaky roof. The church had started raising money to fix the roof, when the preacher got the idea that in order to attract new members, they should buy a new organ. The organ they had was old and, according to the preacher, didn't do justice to the Sunday hymns. The preacher rallied the congregation around the new organ, and everyone forgot about the leaky roof. A year later, the congregation had raised enough money, and one Sunday afternoon, they all moved the organ in. Now it does not take a meteorologist to tell you, it rains almost everyday during the summer in Louisiana, and sure enough, it rained in that little town, and the church roof leaked, and when the congregation arrived Sunday morning, the new organ was wet and broken.

Madam Secretary, I would suggest that perhaps under your leadership, the Department of Education can finish out what it started before the rain comes and what improvements we've made get lost. Under NCLB we have identified the schools in need of improvements, now let's get about the business of improving them. We have identified the teachers who are under qualified, let's get about the business of getting them qualified. We have promised parents choices, let's get about the business of providing them.

Thank you, Madam Secretary.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

Senator HARKIN. There will be some additional questions which will be submitted for your response in the record.

[The following questions were not asked at the hearing, but were submitted to the Department for response subsequent to the hearing.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER

NEW BUDGET RESOURCES

Question. The Administration's fiscal year 2006 budget proposes to extend No Child Left Behind to the high school level, by requiring States to test high school students in two additional grades. Studies have documented shortcomings in the preparedness of all high school graduates for work or college. However, funds proposed in the budget to support the high school reform initiative are generated through the elimination of GEAR UP, certain TRIO activities, and the vocational and technical education program. The Administration's goal of reforming high schools is important and laudable. However, eliminating popular and effective programs will make it more difficult to generate support for the Administration's reform proposal. Isn't the goal of helping States and local school districts prepare high school students for the 21st Century workforce and college worthy of new resources, even within a tight budget?

Answer. As I mentioned in my opening statement, the first goal of the President's 2006 request is fiscal discipline in terms of total discretionary and non-security spending. Doing our share in achieving that goal means we do not have new resources, overall, in our 2006 budget, and that means we had to make some tough decisions. And we tried to make those decisions not on the basis of popularity or politics, but based on the results produced by the investment of taxpayer dollars.

When we looked at the challenge of reforming our high schools and doing a better job of preparing our students for college and the workforce, we saw little evidence of a meaningful contribution by several current programs. Since we believe our High School Initiative holds greater promise of bringing about real change in the performance of our high schools, it made sense to re-direct funding from other, less-effective activities to the new program. Also, there is considerable flexibility in our High School Intervention proposal, and districts and schools that believe that college preparation and vocational activities are the most appropriate way to meet the needs of their high school students would be free to use funding under the new program to pursue such strategies.

HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

Question. The budget proposes \$250 million to pay for the costs of additional assessments proposed in the Administration's High School Reform initiative. According to GAO's report, Title I: Characteristics of Tests Will Influence Expenses; Information Sharing May Help States Realize Efficiencies (GAO-03-361, May 8, 2003) showed that costs for developing and administering tests could vary greatly. What is the basis for the request of \$250 million to pay for these additional assessments?

Answer. While test development and administration costs can vary widely, ESEA as reauthorized by NCLB already requires States to assess students in reading and mathematics at least once in the high school grades. The President's proposal would require testing high school students in those subjects in only two additional grades.

Under ESEA Section 1111(b)(3)(D) Congress authorized a total of \$2.34 billion over 6 years to assist States in developing the additional assessments required under NCLB. The additional requirement entailed implementation of assessments in reading and mathematics in each grade from 3rd grade to 8th grade (instead of once in each grade span of 3rd through 5th grade and 6th through 8th grade) plus implementation of science assessments once in each grade span of 3rd through 5th grade and 6th through 8th grade and once in high school. The NCLB requirements add up to 11 more assessments than were required prior to enactment of the Act.

The High School Assessments proposal, which calls for assessing students in reading and mathematics at least three times during high school, would require States to implement two new high school assessments in two subjects, for a total of four new assessments. The proposed funding level of \$250 million a year over several years will provide ample resources to implement the additional assessments. If, for instance, the Congress provides 4 years of funding for the high school assessments, that would equate to \$250 million per assessment (that is, \$1 billion divided by four assessments). This is slightly higher than the amount States received for the MCLB-required tests (\$2.34 billion divided by 11 assessments).

COST OF ASSESSMENTS

Question. How much of the estimated cost of the new assessment requirements would this request meet?

Answer. While test development and administration costs can vary widely, the President anticipates that \$250 million a year from fiscal year 2006 through fiscal

year 2009 will cover a significant portion if not all the costs of developing the new assessments.

ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION INITIATIVE

Question. The America Diploma Project recommended that States should not rely exclusively on large-scale assessments, because they “cannot measure everything that high school graduates need to know and be able to do.” How was this recommendation for States considered in the request for assessments specifically or more generally in the Administration’s High School Reform initiative?

Answer. While the American Diploma Project (ADP) did state that “graduation exams cannot measure everything that matters”, it recommended that States “measure what matters and make it count.” Consistent with the ADP recommendation, accountability under the High School Intervention proposal would be based on a range of student outcomes that include assessment scores as only one element of high school accountability. Other elements could include graduation rates, course completion, and enrollment in postsecondary education. The High School Intervention proposal would require States to establish clear, measurable goals and show significant improvements in student outcomes. The role of the expanded assessments would be to produce uniform, objective data for measuring student achievement and holding schools accountable for academic improvement of all high school students.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Question. The fiscal year 2006 budget includes \$51.5 million for the Advanced Placement program, an increase of \$21.7 million over the fiscal year 2005 level. This program helps States and school districts expose students, especially low-income and minority students, to more challenging coursework. Studies have found that a key predictor of success in college is exposure to high school coursework of academic intensity and quality, which is why I supported an increase of \$6.2 million or 11.6 percent for this program in fiscal year 2005. What is the biggest challenge school districts must overcome to expose all of their students to challenging courses that prepare students for work or college, in particular those districts that educate large numbers of low-income students and how will these funds and others in the fiscal year 2006 request help address those challenges?

Answer. School districts, especially those that educate large numbers of low-income students, face several challenges in creating a pipeline that prepares students for Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) coursework and exams. First, districts need to realign their curriculum so that students are taking challenging coursework in elementary and middle school that prepares them for AP and IB-level courses in high school. Second, districts need to identify and recruit under-represented students, such as low-income and minority students, to enroll in the challenging courses. Third, districts need to provide professional development for teachers, to help them gain the content knowledge and pedagogical skills to instruct students in AP and IB courses. Finally, districts often need to find and implement creative solutions to increase capacity for AP and IB coursework in schools with low-income students, such as on-line coursework and partnerships with institutions of higher education. The funds in the fiscal year 2006 request would allow the Department to award grants to State educational agencies (SEA), local educational agencies (LEA), and national nonprofit educational entities to deal with each of these issues.

IMPACT OF THE ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM

Question. This year, the Department must submit a report on the impact of the Advanced Placement program. Do you have anything to share at this moment about the impact of the program?

Answer. The Department will submit a report to Congress on the impact of its Advanced Placement program later this spring. The report will show that, nationwide, the number of students participating in AP and IB is increasing. From 2000 to 2004, the percentage of all high school students who took an AP exam rose from 15.9 percent to 20.9 percent. Also, the percentage of all high school students who scored 3 or above on an AP exam rose from 10.2 percent to 13.2 percent.

As overall participation has risen, participation by minority and low-income students has increased as well, but the access gap continues to persist. For example, students attending smaller schools and higher-poverty schools have less access to AP and IB. Also, black, Native American, and economically disadvantaged students participate in AP courses and exams at a lower rate than the national average.

READING BY THIRD GRADE—READING FIRST PROGRAM

Question. President Bush committed to providing \$5 billion over a 5-year period for the Reading First program, which helps students read at least on grade level by the end of third grade. If Congress approves the \$1.042 billion included in the fiscal year 2006 budget request, this 5-year funding goal will be achieved. Is progress being made toward achieving the President's goal of all students reading on grade level by the end of third grade?

Answer. Reading First is the largest and most focused early reading initiative this country has ever undertaken. Although it is in its early stages of implementation, its impact is being felt across the country. Reading First provides an opportunity for every State to implement reading programs based on scientifically based reading research. Effective early reading instruction can prevent the difficulties that too many of our students, especially disadvantaged students, now face. Through Reading First, States have an arsenal of proven instructional methods, professional development, and proven interventions to increase the proportion of students who read on grade level by the end of the third grade.

While State-level performance data will not be available until the summer of 2005, there are already very encouraging signs from around the country. For example, less than a quarter of students in first grade at Lowell Elementary School in Mesa, Arizona met the school's benchmark on a national reading assessment in 2003. The students, tested again in 2004 while in second grade, fared considerably better, with almost half meeting the benchmark. School officials, teachers, and parents credit the Reading First program as being an instrumental force behind this improvement. Schools around the country report similar outcomes as students in some of our Nation's neediest schools receive the intensive instruction necessary to help close the achievement gap in reading.

CORE COMPONENTS OF READING INSTRUCTION

Question. How have these funds been used to implement scientifically-based reading instruction?

Answer. In order to receive a Reading First subgrant, a local educational agency (LEA) must demonstrate that its core reading curriculum reflects the five essential components of reading instruction, as identified by the April 2000 *Report of the National Reading Panel*. These components are phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension. Reading First also provides professional development to more than 90,000 K-3 teachers, ensuring that all teachers, including special education teachers, have the skills they need to teach reading and monitor student progress effectively in Reading First classrooms. In addition, the progress of students in Reading First classrooms is closely monitored through valid and reliable assessment instruments so that immediate intervention can prevent students from falling behind.

ARTS IN EDUCATION

Question. The budget proposes to eliminate the Arts in Education program, which was funded at \$35.6 million in fiscal year 2005. In a recent study by the Council for Basic Education, a nonprofit organization that advocates for liberal arts subjects, 25 percent of principals reported decreases in the time their schools devote to the arts and 33 percent expect decreases in the next 2 years. These changes have impacted poor minority students the hardest as 36 percent of principals in schools with large percentages of minority students reported reduced instructional time for the arts, while 42 percent anticipate future decreases. According to the report *Champions of Change*, students who participate in the arts outperform those who don't on virtually every measure. In addition, researchers have found that "sustained learning" in music and theater correlate to greater success in math and reading, and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds see the greatest benefits. Isn't it important to maintain a Federal commitment to fund arts education, given different student learning styles and interests and the proven benefits of instruction in the arts?

Answer. The arts play a significant role in education both for their intrinsic value and because of the ways that they can enhance general academic achievement and improve students' social and emotional development. No Child Left Behind includes arts as a core academic subject and holds arts teachers to the same high standards as it does those who teach English, math, science, and history.

There are a variety of opportunities for districts and schools to include the arts in instruction. Districts seeking to implement arts education activities can use the funds they receive through the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program to

carry out professional development activities that improve the knowledge of teacher and principals in core academic subjects, including the arts. Additionally, districts may use their funds under the State Grants for Innovative programs to support programs in the arts. Lastly, the arts can also be an important part of learning and enrichment in programs supported by the 21st Century Community Centers program funds by involving cultural partners in the community, such as arts centers, symphonies, and theaters. The Administration's 2006 budget request would continue strong support for all of those programs.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Question. According to the Education Commission of the States Report to the Nation on the Implementation of No Child Left Behind, "Many states do not have in place the technology infrastructure needed to collect, disaggregate and report data at the school, district and state levels. NCLB doesn't require the development of statewide data systems but, without them, states will have difficulty meeting a number of the law's requirements." Further, the Department's National Education Technology Plan identified Improving Teacher Training as a recommendation and also stated that, "Teachers have more resources available through technology than ever before, but some have not received sufficient training in the effective use of technology to enhance learning." Given these recent findings and recommendations, why does the budget propose eliminating the Education Technology State Grant program, the only remaining Federal source of funds dedicated to addressing these issues?

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Answer. The fiscal year 2006 budget request supports the Administration's policy of eliminating categorical programs that have a narrow or limited effect in order to increase support for high-priority programs. Educational technology needs can be addressed by using other sources of Federal funds. For example, districts may use their funds under the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program to implement professional development programs that train teachers and principals to integrate technology into curricula and instruction in order to improve teaching, learning, and technology literacy.

While developing and operating statewide student data systems are allowable activities with Education Technology State Grant funds, there is little evidence that States use these funds for that purpose. This elimination of the program should not affect States' activities in this area. In order to address the States' need to develop effective longitudinal data systems, the Department has requested continued funding for the Statewide Data Systems program. Continuation of this program will allow States and local educational agencies to use assessment and other data to identify struggling students and track their progress while complying with the requirements of No Child Left Behind.

Question. In Pennsylvania, \$22 million of the \$23 million spent specifically on educational technology is generated by the Education Technology State Grant Program and an independent evaluation conducted by Metiri Group and Penn State University found that many of Pennsylvania LEAs are experiencing significant improvements in teacher skill level and student performance because of the funds available through this program. How will Pennsylvania continue to make the kind of progress identified by the evaluation without these resources, especially given the reduction in or elimination of other sources of Federal funds that may be transferred for use under this program?

Answer. The Administration recognizes that Pennsylvania, like many States across the country, is facing a difficult budget situation. However, the flexibility provisions in No Child Left Behind allow districts to make use of their Federal assistance by permitting them to more efficiently allocate resources to address their particular needs. Pennsylvania districts will thus continue to be able to use Federal assistance for technology purposes.

LEVERAGING EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PARTNERSHIPS

Question. The Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships program has generated significant State need-based aid through matching funds that totals nearly \$1 billion. Why does the fiscal year 2006 budget propose to eliminate the \$65.6 million in funding for the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships program despite the fact that it is the only Federal program designed to expand the amount of need-based student aid provided by States?

Answer. We believe the best way to foster college access and completion is to concentrate resources on Pell Grants, the largest and most need-based Federal grant

program. There is no reason to continue to use scarce resources on LEAP, since Federal assistance is no longer needed to encourage States to provide need-based grant and work-study assistance.

STATE PROGRAMS OF UNDER-GRADUATE NEED-BASED STUDENT GRANTS

Question. While it is true that funds exceed the matching requirement, don't you believe there should be a Federal role in supporting continued and expanded State need-based aid programs that help all students access and complete college?

Answer. When the program was first authorized as the State Student Incentive Grant program in 1972, 28 States had undergraduate need-based grant programs. Now all but two States have need-based student grant programs. The continued existence of the LEAP program has not encouraged the two remaining States to institute State grant programs.

STUDENT AID ADMINISTRATION

Question. What are the specific administrative challenges associated with the current funding structure and how would a single discretionary appropriation address those challenges?

Answer. Funding identical student aid administrative activities from multiple sources creates substantial additional complexity with no additional value for managers or oversight organizations such as Congress, GAO, or Department auditors. A single funding source would result in a process that is both significantly simpler and substantially more transparent.

ADJUNCT TEACHERS AND HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Question. The budget proposes \$40 million for a new program, the Adjunct Teacher Corps. This program would provide grants to place non-certified teaching professionals in the classroom and allow them to teach on a full or part-time basis. How does this new program, which proposes allowing unlicensed or uncertified teachers, fit with Congress' and the Administration's emphasis on highly qualified teachers in every classroom as envisioned under the No Child Left Behind Act?

Answer. The \$40 million request in the 2006 budget for a proposed Adjunct Teacher Corps initiative would provide competitive grants to partnerships of school districts and appropriate public or private institutions to create opportunities for professionals to teach secondary-school courses in the core academic subjects, particularly in mathematics and science.

Grants would be used to: (1) identify, as adjunct teachers, well-qualified individuals outside of the K-12 educational system, including outstanding individuals at the height of their careers in business, government, foundations, and colleges, and (2) facilitate arrangements for them to function in this capacity, for example, by teaching one or more courses at a school site on a part-time basis, teaching full-time in secondary schools while on leave from their jobs, or teaching courses that would be available online or through other distance learning arrangements. In some cases, this initiative would provide opportunities for individuals to substitute teach in hard-to-fill positions.

The intent of the Adjunct Teacher Corps initiative is not to bring more highly qualified teachers into the classroom on a permanent basis, but rather to integrate their knowledge and experience into classroom learning. Although potential participants would typically not be certified or licensed to teach in secondary schools, they often have a wealth of knowledge, skills, and professional experiences and would be able to provide real-world applications for some of the abstract concepts taught in classrooms. Adjunct teachers who are not employees of a school district would not be covered by the NCLB "highly qualified teacher" requirement. On a temporary basis, these teachers would give school districts opportunities to strengthen instruction in secondary schools in the core academic subjects, especially mathematics and science.

EVEN START AND FAMILY LITERACY

Question. The budget request proposes to eliminate the \$225 million Even Start program. This program successfully supports family literacy programs, which are comprised of adult education, parent education, parent-child activities and early childhood education activities. This concept has shown positive results and was strengthened by the reauthorization of the program under No Child Left Behind. The Administration has pointed to national evaluations conducted of the program as it existed prior to the reauthorization as evidence that it is ineffective. Madam

Secretary, why are you proposing to eliminate this program based on evaluations that do not reflect the outcomes being achieved currently?

Answer. Although the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* strengthened some components of Even Start, these changes did not alter the structure or design of the program. Although some local projects may be successful, the overall effectiveness of Even Start remains very questionable. The 2000 Literacy Involves Families Together (LIFT) Act, which authorized Even Start prior to the No Child Left Behind Act, included language encouraging local projects to hire more qualified staff, to use instructional programs that are based on scientifically based research, and to increase the focus on evaluation. However, the changes made through LIFT and later NCLB did not alter the basic elements of the program, and a new evaluation would most likely yield the same results as the first three.

While the premise underlying the Even Start program is attractive, the extent to which family literacy programs can enhance parent literacy and parenting skills is still unknown. The Administration believes that we should redirect the resources now available for Even Start to programs such as Reading First and Early Reading First that are based on a sound, scientifically based approach and are better focused on achieving their goals of improving the literacy skills of young learners.

ADULT EDUCATION

Question. Currently, nearly half of the adults in Pennsylvania have limited literacy skills. Among individuals who are receiving welfare, are incarcerated, or the long term unemployed, 70 percent have limited skills. Based on the overall reduction proposed in the fiscal year 2006 budget, Pennsylvania programs would lose \$14 million, or 75 percent, of Federal funds for adult education and literacy programs. The fiscal year 2006 performance plan for the Department of Education sets performance targets for the percentage of adults with a high school completion goal who earn a diploma or its equivalent at 46 percent in fiscal year 2005 and 47 percent in fiscal year 2006. How does the Department intend to help States make progress toward the Department's performance goals with 65 percent less funding overall?

Answer. As with K-12 education, adult education is funded primarily through State and local resources, and Federal funds are meant to supplement, not supplant, local efforts to provide educational services to high school dropouts, immigrants, and low-literacy adults. According to data collected by the Department, the Federal Government contributed approximately 26 percent of total adult education program funding in 2003. The budget request also recognizes the importance of addressing the English-language needs of our Nation's immigrant population and therefore includes level funding for the English Literacy and Civics Education (EL/Civics) component of the program, which will support States in addressing the educational needs of their limited English proficient (LEP) populations. Pennsylvania is expected to receive approximately \$1.4 million for EL/Civics grants in 2006.

The Department will continue to provide States and local providers with technical assistance, research and implementation support, and curricular guidance for adult education programs. Through these activities, the Department will enhance the effectiveness of local adult education programs and thus help them to successfully attain the performance goals set by the Department.

MATH AND SCIENCE PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

Question. The fiscal year 2006 budget proposes to reduce funding to States for math and science partnerships in order to provide a set-aside of \$120 million for direct grants to school districts for math programs for secondary students. States are currently using their funds to run competitions that in some cases give a priority to applicants that seek to improve math achievement of middle and high school students. If States are designing their competitions with a priority to address mathematics achievement of secondary students, why should Congress reduce funds for States that best know how to address the educational needs of their school systems?

Answer. For fiscal year 2006, the Administration is requesting \$269 million for the Mathematics and Science Partnerships program, a \$90.4 million increase over the 2005 appropriation. Of the total amount, \$120 million would be used for direct grants to LEAs to accelerate the mathematics achievement of secondary-school students and \$149 million would be awarded to States by formula. The amount provided through formula grants would be a reduction of \$29.6 million from the 2005 level.

American students' poor performance on national and international mathematics assessments, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the 2003 Program for International Student Assessment, provides a compelling rationale for

an intensive, targeted initiative to strengthen the mathematics skills of our middle- and high-school students, especially low-achieving students. The direct competitive grants requested in the budget would focus on ensuring that States and school districts provide professional development that is strongly grounded in research and that helps mathematics teachers become highly qualified. The Administration believes that it is critical to target funds directly to high-quality secondary-school mathematics projects, thus justifying the decrease in formula grants, which would not, as the program is structured, generate the type of intensive focus in secondary-school mathematics achievement that is clearly needed. The remaining funds for the formula grants would allow partnerships to conduct other important activities to improve student achievement, including activities that focus on science and elementary-school mathematics.

Question. Why would a direct grant program out of Washington, D.C. be more effective at improving mathematics achievement than a State-based approach that is consistent with the authorization for this program?

Answer. The competitive grants would support projects that have significant potential to accelerate the mathematics learning of all secondary students, but especially low-achieving students. This initiative would focus on ensuring that States and LEAs implement professional development projects for mathematics teachers that are strongly grounded in research and that help teachers to improve their instruction in mathematics.

The Administration believes that it is critical to fund efforts specifically to accelerate mathematics learning at the secondary level by helping secondary students master challenging curricula and by increasing the learning of students who have fallen behind in mathematics. Research indicates that many students who drop out of school lack basic skills in mathematics, and our Nation needs to support these students so that they can catch up to their peers and stay in school.

CIVIC EDUCATION

Question. Funding for the Education for Democracy Act—supporting both domestic and international civic education programs—was eliminated in your budget and that program has successfully helped American students understand and appreciate our fundamental values and principles. This funding also supports a school violence prevention program that has had results in rural and urban settings throughout the country. The international exchange program has been very successful in helping emerging democracies establish an education for democracy program in their schools, so students would begin to understand basic concepts such as the rule of law, the protection of minority rights, and respect for diverse religions and races. The democracy curriculum created from the international exchange program is the only curriculum used in schools throughout Bosnia by all three ethnic groups, the Serbs, the Bosnians, and the Croats. This unique international program is having similar success in more than 60 countries including Russia, Indonesia, and nine countries in the Middle East. Madam Secretary, can you comment on why a program that is consistent with the Administration's desire to advance the ideals of democracy was eliminated from your budget this year?

Answer. The request for this program is consistent with the Administration's intent to increase resources for higher priority programs by eliminating small categorical programs that have limited impact, and for which there is little or no reliable evidence of effectiveness. Less than 5 percent of funds (approximately \$1.5 million in fiscal year 2005) available through the Civic Education program support activities specifically related to school violence prevention. The Administration believes that a more effective approach to addressing school violence is to invest in Safe Schools/Healthy Students grants—which would receive \$88.5 million under the 2006 request—to create safe, disciplined, and drug-free learning environments.

Likewise, only a tiny fraction of funds designated for the Cooperative Education Exchange support summer workshops and other activities related to democracy in Bosnia. But, since the Dayton Accords of 1995, the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development have played a key role in promoting democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, providing hundreds of millions in support and critical expertise in everything from revitalizing the infrastructure to promoting democratic reforms of education and the media. Further, through the cooperative efforts of American and European Union governments, in 2003 a common curriculum was adopted by all education ministers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It may have once been true that the Civic Education Project Citizen curriculum was "the only curriculum used in schools throughout Bosnia by all three ethnic groups;" however, it is our understanding that the adoption of a common curriculum in 2003 marked the end of rigid ethnic and religious separation in schools, and that Serbs, Bosnians,

and Croat students now routinely pursue shared courses of study in mixed schools and classrooms.

While the Civic Education program supports some worthwhile activities, there are no reliable measures of the overall effectiveness of interventions supported using program funds. Studies and evaluations conducted by the Center for Civic Education provide limited information on program performance, but none are sufficiently rigorous to yield reliable information on the overall effectiveness or impact(s) of the various interventions supported through this program. Additionally, because one statutorily designated entity receives approximately 75 percent of all Civic Education funds during any single fiscal year, the program's contribution to the Department's overall mission is marginal.

The Administration does not believe additional funding is necessary for the implementation of activities currently supported through this program. The Center for Civic Education is an established non-profit organization with a broad network of program participants, alumni, volunteers, and financial supporters at the local, State, and national levels. The Center also has a long history of success raising additional support through such vehicles as selling program-related curricular materials, trainings, and workshops, partnering with non-profit groups on core activities, lobbying, and seeking support from foundations.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER SHORTAGE

Question. The shortage of certified special education teachers is reaching very high levels and the issue needs to be addressed in order to ensure that all students are challenged in school and receive the same high level of education. Several statistics illustrate the point: half of new special education teachers leave the classroom within 3 years; 98 percent of school districts report shortages of special education teachers; in 2002 our nation produced only 213 doctorates in special education; and one out of three faculty openings in special education go unfilled—diminishing the capacity of universities to train special education teachers. What does the fiscal year 2006 budget propose to address this critical shortage?

Answer. Recent studies suggest that the on-going special education teacher shortage is affected by a number of factors, including special education teacher turnover rates, changes in the number of children with disabilities served under IDEA and Section 504, teacher training program enrollments and graduation rates, and the extent to which teacher training programs actually prepare teachers for the challenges they will face in the classroom. The fiscal year 2006 budget addresses the problem through multiple IDEA programs, including Grants to States, for which \$11.1 billion is requested, and Personnel Preparation, for which \$90.6 million is requested. SEAs and LEAs have the authority under IDEA to use Grants to States funds for a wide variety of personnel-related activities, including supporting personnel training and professional development and implementing plans to meet personnel shortages. Approximately 90 percent of Personnel Preparation program funds support grants to IHEs for the purpose of improving program curricula and making training and professional development scholarships. Such awards are targeted to improve both the quality and quantity of training for special education teachers and related services personnel. Individuals receiving scholarship assistance through projects funded under program are required to fulfill a 2-year service obligation or repay all or part of the costs of such assistance. This program also currently funds several projects that promote teacher retention through mentoring activities. Repayment obligations and mentoring programs are designed to aid in the retention of beginning special educators, a group that studies have shown to be particularly prone to attrition.

It is worth mentioning that, for many years, one of the primary goals of Federal programs that support special education training has been to alleviate shortages by increasing the supply of special education teachers. However, except in certain isolated areas such as awards to train leadership personnel and personnel serving children with low-incidence disabilities, there is little evidence that these investments have resulted in measurable increases to the overall supply of special education teachers and related services personnel. For this reason, the fiscal year 2006 budget addresses the special education teacher shortage primarily by concentrating scholarship grant support in those areas where States and other investors have limited capacity and incentive to invest (e.g., supporting programs that prepare teachers of children with low-incidence disabilities and leadership personnel).

HIGHLY QUALIFIED SPECIAL EDUCATORS

Question. What is your plan to ensure that all students benefit from having a highly qualified teacher in their classroom?

Answer. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) emphasizes teacher quality as one of the primary factors contributing to improved student achievement. Consistent with this emphasis, and to better equip States for the critical task of ensuring that all teachers of core academic subjects are highly qualified, the Department has dedicated significant resources to such activities as providing on-going technical assistance and developing guidance that clearly articulates how the highly qualified teacher provisions affect all teachers and related personnel, including special educators. As part of an extensive outreach effort on the highly qualified teacher provisions, the Department recently sent a cadre of experts called the Teacher Assistance Corps to each State to clarify the highly qualified requirements, provide technical assistance, and capture promising implementation strategies. Many of these practices are available now through the www.teacherquality.us Web site, and more will be added as the Department continues to visit States as part of its highly qualified teacher monitoring. Any State that requests additional technical assistance on the highly qualified teacher requirements as they apply to special education teachers will receive such help. Through the Teacher-to-Teacher initiative, the Department also supports teacher roundtables, regional workshops, a national Research-to-Practice Summit, and electronic teacher video training modules. The Teacher-to-Teacher Web site, at www.paec.org/teacher2teacher, offers on-demand professional development in the latest research-based practices.

Because the recently reauthorized IDEA incorporates the ESEA definition and standards relating to highly qualified teachers with only slight modifications, the Department plans to continue its current focus on working with SEAs and LEAs towards the goal of ensuring that all students benefit from having a highly qualified teacher in their classroom. In addition to such on-going activities, consistent with this focus on highly qualified teachers, in announcing recent competitions for new Personnel Preparation competitive awards the Secretary emphasizes that the Department is interested in funding training programs that prepare highly qualified special educators. By emphasizing these requirements in new awards to grantees training special education personnel, the Department expects to gain critical insights into the most effective and efficient ways of ensuring that program curricula and professional development requirements are aligned with and support the highly qualified teacher requirements.

STATE SCHOLARS CAPACITY BUILDING

Question. The budget proposes \$12 million in fiscal year 2006 for State Scholars Capacity building. Congress has not provided funds specifically for this purpose previously, but the Department has supported State Scholars Partnerships through funding available under Vocational Education National Programs. With the additional funds requested in fiscal year 2006, subgrants would be made to support State Scholars Partnerships in 26 States. Research has demonstrated that students who complete a rigorous course of study during high school are better prepared to be successful in college and the workforce. Specifically, what are the findings from any evaluation that has been conducted on State Scholar projects?

Answer. Since 1992, the Scholars Initiative has been piloted in local communities within several U.S. states, including Arkansas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. We are seeing some good early results in the States and communities that have launched Scholars initiatives. Enrollment in Algebra I and Geometry at Little Rock high schools, for example, rose 6 and 8 percent, respectively, in the district's first year of participation in Arkansas Scholars. However, only one State, Texas, has implemented the State Scholars Initiative statewide for a long enough period for us to begin to examine long-term outcomes. The percentage of Texas high school students who completed the Scholars' recommended course of study rose from 15 percent in 1999 to 63 percent in 2003 (Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2003). We find this highly encouraging, although we cannot attribute these outcomes solely to Texas State Scholars initiative. While students and parents found the recommendations of the Texas Business and Education Coalition to be compelling, and students then increased their enrollment in challenging academic courses, State policy-makers also began to recognize the importance of providing all students with a rigorous academic education. Accordingly, they phased out lower-level graduation requirements in favor of graduation requirements that aligned with the Scholars academic core.

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE REQUIREMENT OF THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

Question. Reports by The Government Accountability Office, Education Commission of the States and others have documented the challenges school districts face in meeting the public school choice requirement of No Child Left Behind. In re-

sponse to a December 2004 report on the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, the Department identified Parental Information and Resource Centers and grants funded under the Fund for the Improvement of Education as sources of outreach and information to parents on a national level about the school choice option. The response stated further that, "We know that our efforts have led to parents learning about, and taking advantage of, their opportunity to transfer students. Much remains to be done, however." What is the Department doing currently and proposing in the fiscal year 2006 budget to help States and school districts effectively implement this provision of the law?

PARENTAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCE CENTERS

Answer. On the budget side, the need to support local efforts to implement the public school choice requirements of No Child Left Behind has been a key rationale for the consistently large increases President Bush has requested for Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies. With Title I funding up \$4 billion, or 45 percent, over the past 5 years, we believe school districts have sufficient resources to carry out public school choice. And of course we are asking for \$600 million more in 2006.

The bigger challenge has been providing effective technical assistance and guidance to States and school districts. We have published detailed guidance on the public school choice provisions and distributed that guidance widely to key groups, including through presentations and workshops on public school choice at the National Title I Directors Conference, as well as conferences of the Black Alliance for Educational Options, National Alliance of Black School Educators, and National Association of Federal Program Administrators. We plan to continue these efforts at many other conferences during the coming year.

In addition, we have published several "Innovations in Education" guides related to public school choice, including "Creating Strong District School Choice Programs," "Creating Successful Magnet School Programs," and "Successful Charter Schools." The Department has disseminated and presented on these guides widely, and our web site contains information on No Child Left Behind choice options in a variety of formats.

We are currently developing an Interactive Toolkit on Choice that will include tools, templates, and models used by school districts that are successfully implementing public school choice. We also are planning a two-day Train-the-Trainers Conference on Public School Choice intended to expand the number of experts available nationwide to provide technical assistance to districts on public school choice.

NCLB choice options continue to be a key focus of State and local monitoring visits, where we pay special attention to outreach efforts by districts to make parents aware of public school choice. Finally, determining and disseminating the best practices for informing parents about choice options will be a key goal for our new technical assistance centers.

PARENTAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCE CENTERS

Question. Why does the Department propose to terminate funding for the Parental Information and Resource Centers program, just months after identifying them as a resource that has helped parents take advantage of their right to transfer their child to a higher performing public school?

Answer. While the Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs) make a limited contribution to informing parents about choice options under the No Child Left Behind Act, the overall structure of the centers limits their effectiveness. For example, one problem with the PIRCs that has been highlighted by the Administration's Performance Assessment Rating Tool is the multiple purposes served by the program, which prevent the kind of focused, tailored delivery of services that can have a meaningful impact in achieving program goals.

We believe the parental involvement and outreach goals of No Child Left Behind are more effectively met through the existing requirements under Part A of Title I for the some 15,000 participating Title I districts and schools, which include not only parental involvement activities but school improvement-related reporting and outreach specifically intended to help parents take advantage of NCLB choice options. The Department continues to work with States and districts to improve the effectiveness of these Part A-funded activities, through both ongoing technical assistance and on-site monitoring visits. The PIRCs activities largely duplicate such efforts, as well as those of the comprehensive technical assistance centers currently under competition, at a time when we must make tough decisions about the best way to invest scarce resources in the most effective manner possible.

PELL GRANTS

Question. The Administration proposed to add \$5.6 billion to the Pell Grants program in fiscal year 2006, \$867 million of which is discretionary and the remaining \$4.7 billion is mandatory spending proposed in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. The Administration has proposed a very important investment. What will be the impact of the proposal on the typical students receiving a Pell Grant?

Answer. The maximum Pell Grant would increase by \$100 in fiscal year 2006 and by \$500 over the next 5 years. The Administration's budget invests \$19 billion in new funding over the next 10 years to increase grants to low-income students, helping them finance their postsecondary education.

Question. How will you pursue this important investment if the Higher Education Act is not reauthorized this year?

Answer. The Department's comprehensive student aid proposals would best be implemented through the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act; we will work closely with Congress on these important changes.

LOANS FOR SHORT-TERM TRAINING

Question. The fiscal year 2006 budget includes \$10 million for a new loan program to help dislocated, unemployed, or older workers upgrade their skills. These individuals are not eligible for Federal student loans. This program will be jointly administered with the Department of Labor and could help more than 350,000 individuals acquire the skills they need for work. Madam Secretary, I applaud the Department for this important new initiative, since these individuals are not eligible for Federal student loans and many need help to upgrade their skills. If this new program is approved, how quickly could this new program be implemented?

Answer. If this new program is approved, the Department expects to make loans in fiscal year 2006.

Question. How will your Department coordinate with the Department of Labor on this program?

Answer. The two departments will soon be submitting details on this program specifying each agency's roles and responsibilities. The proposal envisions the Departments of Labor and Education as operating partners, each bringing their particular expertise to the process of expanding training opportunities for American workers.

TEACHER INCENTIVE FUND AND TEACHER TRAINING

Question. The budget request proposes to create a new \$500 million Teacher Incentive Fund, which would change the way teachers are paid and allow schools to use funds to recruit teachers to high-need schools. The existing \$2.9 billion Teacher Quality State Grant program allows school districts to use funds for both of these activities. The Administration should be commended for the proposed increase in funding to support our nation's educators. Why have you proposed to create a new \$500 million program that is the same as an existing program?

Answer. The Administration is requesting \$500 million for the Teacher Incentive Fund initiative to allow States and school districts to develop and implement innovative ways to provide financial incentives for teachers who raise student achievement and close the achievement gap in some of our Nation's highest-need schools, to attract highly qualified teachers to those schools, and to redesign teacher compensation systems in order to align pay with performance. This is a different mission from that of the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program, which focuses mostly on enabling teachers to become "highly qualified."

Under No Child Left Behind, all States are working to ensure that, by the end of the 2005-2006 school year, all classes of the core academic subjects are taught by highly qualified teachers. Funds are available under several formula grant programs, including Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, for professional development and other expenses needed to enable States and school districts to achieve that objective. But the Teacher Incentive Fund will take the national commitment to ensuring a continued high-quality teaching force one important step further by providing significant, dedicated Federal support for rewarding teachers for strong performance, encouraging highly qualified teachers to enter classrooms with concentrations of low-income students, and developing and implementing performance-based teacher compensation systems.

TEACHER INCENTIVE FUND

Question. Can you explain why States and school districts need another source of Federal funds for recruiting teachers and reforming teacher pay systems?

Answer. Although States and school districts are authorized to use Title II Improving Teacher Quality State Grants funds to recruit teachers to high-need schools and to reform teacher pay systems, the Department has found that they seldom use Title II funds for those purposes. For example, a Department survey of districts' use of Title II funds in the 2002–2003 school year indicates that most of the funds were being used for professional development (25 percent) and for teacher salaries to reduce class size (58 percent), and the study also found that, of the remaining allowable activities, no single activity accounted for more than 3 percent of all reported Title II school district funds. In addition, recent monitoring visits to States and school districts suggest that States and school districts continue to spend most of their Title II funds on professional development. Based on these findings, it appears that States and school districts are not using their Title II funds to recruit teachers to high-need schools and to reform teacher pay systems, particularly given other competing needs for Title II funds to improve teacher quality.

Because the Administration believes that it is important for States and school districts to continue to conduct their existing Title II activities at current levels to improve teacher quality, the Administration is proposing additional funds, through the Teacher Incentive Fund, for efforts dedicated to rewarding effective teachers, offering incentives for highly qualified teachers to teach in high-need schools, and designing and implementing performance-based compensation systems that change the way school districts pay teachers. The \$500 million requested for the Teacher Incentive Fund will permit many more school districts to implement these types of reforms and provide a major incentive for needed changes in teacher compensation systems nationally.

Question. Why not add the \$500 million to the existing program?

Answer. The Administration believes that, by dedicating \$500 million specifically for teacher incentive efforts, many more States and school districts will develop and implement much-needed reforms in the way teachers are compensated in order to further improve teacher quality. Under the existing program, States are much less likely to implement these reforms.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND AND FLEXIBILITY

Question. While I support the No Child Left Behind Act, I believe there needs to be more state flexibility in the implementation of the Act, because each state has the knowledge of the particular challenges facing its education system, including accounting for students with learning, emotional and English language difficulties. Madam Secretary, you stated in your January 6, 2005 nomination hearing before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee that, “We must stay true to the sound principles of leaving no child behind. But we in the administration must engage with those closest to children to embed these principles in a sensible and workable way.” Will you provide needed flexibility to Pennsylvania and other States?

Answer. I remain committed to my January 6 statement, Mr. Chairman. We are willing to carefully consider requests from States and school districts for additional flexibility in implementing No Child Left Behind, and we will work very hard to try and provide that flexibility. However, we must remain true to the law's core principles. Just to give you a couple of examples, I believe it would be very difficult—impossible really—to eliminate key requirements like annual testing or the use of subgroup accountability to determine adequate yearly progress.

On the other hand, I think you have already seen that we are willing to work with States in areas like the assessment of special education and limited English proficient students, and in ensuring that all teachers are highly qualified. I have met with experts in these areas and am working with senior Department officials to clarify our policies. So in answer to your question, we will provide flexibility wherever we can do so consistent with the law.

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT GAP—FEDERAL TRIO AND GEAR UP PROGRAMS

Question. Last year, I asked Secretary Paige what initiatives the fiscal year 2005 President's Budget supports to reverse the increasing college enrollment gap between low- and high-income students. As part of that response, Secretary Paige wrote that, “The Administration also supports strong academic preparation for post-secondary education and training through the Federal TRIO and GEAR UP programs. The Administration is proposing in fiscal year 2005 to spend \$1.13 billion for these two programs.” Why are TRIO's Talent Search and Upward Bound programs and GEAR UP now proposed for elimination?

Answer. The Administration has not requested funding for Upward Bound, Talent Search, and GEAR UP in the fiscal year 2006 budget because we believe our pro-

posed \$1.2 billion High School Intervention initiative would do a better job of improving high school education and increasing student achievement. Today, just 68 out of 100 9th graders will receive their diplomas on time. Moreover, only 51 percent of African-American students and 52 percent of Hispanic students will graduate from high school, and less than a third of students will leave high school ready to attend 4-year colleges. We believe a targeted and comprehensive approach is necessary to overcome these challenges.

HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION INITIATIVE

The new High School Intervention initiative would require each State to develop a plan for improving high school education and increasing student achievement, especially the achievement of low-income students and students who attend schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress. States would be held accountable for improving the academic performance of at-risk students, narrowing achievement gaps, and reducing dropout rates, but States would have flexibility to provide the full range of services students need to ensure they are academically prepared for the transition to postsecondary education and the workforce. The initiative also would deepen the national knowledge base on what works in improving high schools and high school student achievement by supporting scientifically based research on specific interventions that have promise for improving outcomes.

We believe this High School Intervention initiative would be more effective than our current, disjointed approach that has not served all students well. Replacing Upward Bound, Talent Search, and GEAR UP with a more targeted and comprehensive initiative would help us reach our strategic goals of improving the performance of all high school students and increasing access to postsecondary education. However, in the interest of minimizing the disruption of services to students, funding for the High School Intervention initiative would support existing TRIO and GEAR UP projects that would be eligible for continuation funding in fiscal year 2006.

UPWARD BOUND, TALENT SEARCH AND GEAR UP PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS

Question. What specific evidence leads you to a different conclusion about the importance of these funded activities?

Answer. While we agree that the activities supported by Upward Bound, Talent Search, and GEAR UP are important, the Administration's assessments of these programs have not found evidence that the programs are effective overall in helping disadvantaged students enroll in college. Moreover, we believe the new High School Intervention initiative would incorporate the best elements of these programs to achieve better results.

Evaluation findings demonstrate that Upward Bound projects serve low-income students who have unusually high educational expectations and who would enroll in college regardless of their participation in the program. The high college enrollment rate for these Upward Bound students (65 percent) hides the reality that only 34 percent of the neediest students served by Upward Bound enroll in college. Although the program could have a significant impact if it served more students who truly need help, we do not have evidence to show that our efforts to target more of the neediest students have been successful.

Similarly, we do not have evidence to demonstrate that GEAR UP and Talent Search increase college enrollment rates, even though both programs appear to have some positive effects. Data for GEAR UP and Talent Search show that both programs are meeting their short-term performance goals, evaluation findings for GEAR UP suggest that it has positive effects on middle school course-taking behavior and student and parent knowledge of postsecondary education.

HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION INITIATIVE

The new High School Intervention initiative would provide a more coordinated approach at the State level to ensure that the types of services currently provided under programs like GEAR UP, Talent Search, and Upward Bound are part of a broader effort to provide students with the full range of services they need in order to succeed. The initiative's emphasis on supporting scientifically based research would help ensure that resources are focused on those activities that are shown to have the most positive effects.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MIKE DEWINE

SAFE DRUG-FREE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Question. The recommendation in the President's fiscal year 2006 budget request to "zero out" the State Grants portion of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program will leave most of America's schools and K-12 students with absolutely no substance abuse prevention and intervention services. With drug use finally on the decline, isn't this the wrong time to get rid of the prevention program that provides America's school aged youth with drug prevention programming?

Answer. The Administration proposes to terminate funding for Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) State Grants because of the program's inability to demonstrate effectiveness and the fact that funds are spread too thinly to support quality interventions. For example, SDFSC State Grants provides about 60 percent of local educational agencies (LEAs) with allocations of less than \$10,000, amounts typically too small to mount comprehensive and effective drug prevention and school safety programs.

By comparison, under SDFSC National Programs the Department has greater flexibility to provide large enough awards to support quality interventions. In addition, the National Programs authority is structured to permit grantees and independent evaluators to measure progress, hold projects accountable, and determine which outcomes are most effective. We are requesting \$317.3 million for SDFSC National Programs, an \$82.7 million or 35 percent, increase over 2005.

SAFE DRUG-FREE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES—UNIFORM MANAGEMENT INFORMATION AND REPORTING SYSTEM

Question. To date, the Department has failed to implement the requirements in H.R. 1 (No Child Left Behind Act) for a Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS) under the State Grants portion of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program. This system was intended to collect uniform data and outcome measures for drug use and violence across all States. The poor PART score this program received is largely due to the failure of the Department to collect this required information and is one of the reasons being given for the zeroing out of the program. What do you intend to do to comply with the requirements of H.R. 1 as far as implementation of the UMIRS?

Answer. We have issued non-regulatory guidance to States concerning implementation of the Uniform Management Information Reporting System (UMIRS) requirements contained in Section 4113 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Consistent with NCLB's emphasis on flexibility and discussions with House and Senate staff during reauthorization, the guidance reiterates the data elements that must be included in the UMIRS, as well as the kinds of data sources that must be included as part of the system. It also addresses the issue of which entity within a State is responsible for implementation of the UMIRS, and covers questions about funding for the system, and periodicity of data collection.

We should also clarify that lack of progress on implementation of UMIRS was not a major factor in the ineffective PART rating received by the program. Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities State Grants received this rating because the program is not well designed to accomplish its objectives and because it cannot demonstrate results, among other factors. UMIRS was not really an issue.

TITLE IV INFORMATION COLLECTION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Question. The Department of Education has neglected to implement any of the data collection and reporting requirement reforms that Congress specifically included in Title IV of H.R. 1, including the Uniform Management Information and Reporting System and a minimum data set, to be reported on by all States to the Secretary. States and local education agencies (LEA's) across the Nation have exercised due diligence and are working to document what they think is required by Title IV, but have had to do this without any guidance at all from the Department. How and when do you intend to rectify this situation, especially given that this failure on the Department's part is one of the main reasons this program has not been able to "demonstrate results" and is slated for elimination?

Answer. We have requested information from States concerning implementation of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act State Grants programs as part of the Department's Consolidated Report for NCLB Programs. As you know, ESEA Section 9303 authorizes the creation of the consolidated report and mandates that the report collect information on the performance of the States under "covered

programs.” The consolidated report replaces pre-NCLB individual, program-specific reports.

The first consolidated report covering the SDFSCA State Grants program was due to the Department in June 2004. The Department requested information from the States about the performance measures and targets they established for the SDFSCA State Grants program. In this initial report, covering school year 2002–2003, States provided baseline information for the performance measures that they established for the program. In the next consolidated report, scheduled to be submitted to the Department in April 2005, States will report data for their targets for the 2003–2004 school year.

In addition to information about performance measures and progress toward achieving targets, the Department also asked States to provide information about the number of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions by school type (elementary, middle/junior high, or high school) for alcohol or drug-related offenses, or for fighting or weapons possession.

INFORMATION COLLECTION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

We are very sensitive to the issue of creating burden related to information collection and reporting, and have worked hard to select the smallest possible data set that will permit us to assess the extent to which States are meeting their established targets to prevent youth drug use and violence. We believe that our focus on progress toward identified targets and suspension and expulsion data is consistent with that goal. While this information cannot provide scientific evidence about the effectiveness of the SDFSCA State Grants Program (only research studies that include experimental designs are capable of demonstrating the effectiveness of an intervention), it does provide an important tool for States to use in assessing their progress in addressing youth drug use and violence.

Our experience in administering the SDFSCA State Grants program and other NCLB provisions, including the Unsafe School Choice Option (USCO) requirements, indicates that States need to focus additional attention and resources on improving the quality and consistency of data they collect concerning youth drug use and violence, and to take steps to improve the way in which such data are used to manage youth drug and violence prevention initiatives. Accordingly, in fiscal year 2004, we held a competition for Data Management Improvement Grants to help States develop, enhance, or expand the capacity of States and LEAs (and other State agencies and community-based entities that receive SDFSC State grant funds) to collect, analyze, and use data to improve the management, and report the outcomes, of drug and violence prevention programs. We awarded 11 such grants in fiscal year 2004 and estimate making an additional 7 awards in fiscal year 2005. Among other things, these grants will assist recipients of SDFSC State grant funds to use data to assess needs, establish performance measures, select appropriate interventions, and monitor progress toward established performance measures.

As a complement to these grants, we have awarded a contract to help support the development of a model data set that includes, at a minimum, the UMIRS elements. This technical assistance effort will build on the work done by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Substance Abuse Prevention, as well the activities of other Federal agencies that either collect youth drug use and violence data or use that data in policymaking, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy. We will be working with these Federal agencies and all of the States to develop a model data set that can be adopted by States. The initiative also includes technical assistance services for the States, as well as activities designed to identify and disseminate best practices in this area. We believe that this approach provides the appropriate balance between State flexibility and leadership in this area.

TEACHER INCENTIVE FUND—STATE GRANTS AND COMPETITIVE GRANTS

Question. In the President’s Budget there is a proposal for a \$500 million new Teacher Incentive Fund. It would encourage States to adopt and implement performance-based compensation systems for teachers. Could you describe your idea for this program a bit more; specifically, how do you see States determining who deserves “merit” pay?

Answer. The Teacher Incentive Fund would provide formula grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) to reward effective teachers and to offer incentives for highly qualified teachers to teach in high-need schools. In addition, the Department would make competitive grants to SEAs, local educational agencies (LEAs), and non-

profit organizations to design and implement performance-based compensation systems that change the way school districts pay teachers. The Department would use \$450 million for the formula grants and \$50 million for the competitive grants.

Under the formula component of the initiative, the Department would provide grants to SEAs by a formula. States would use these funds to give monetary awards to: (1) teachers who raise student achievement or make significant progress in closing the achievement gap among groups of students; and (2) highly qualified teachers who agree to teach in high-need schools.

SEAs would develop their own strategies for identifying the teachers who have done the best job at raising achievement or narrowing achievement gaps, or both, and, thus, qualify for a monetary award. A State might give awards directly to individual teachers, or reward all of the teachers in a high-performing school, or both. An SEA could also choose not to offer monetary awards directly to teachers and, instead, make competitive grants to LEAs to provide monetary awards to teachers who are raising student achievement or closing the achievement gap. An SEA would specify in its application to the Department the procedures and criteria it would employ.

States would have similar flexibility in designing programs to attract highly qualified teachers to schools that face the greatest challenges in meeting the objectives of No Child Left Behind and then rewarding those who take positions in those schools. A State might use funds at the State level to create a statewide system providing rewards, or higher salary, to those teachers. The Department's expectation, however, is that SEAs would use most of the money for competitive grants to LEAs that have the best strategies for using the funds to recruit qualified teachers to high-need schools. The States would describe in their applications the procedures and criteria they would use to implement the program, including the State's definition of a "high-need school" (generally a school with a high poverty rate and poor performance on State assessments). All public school teachers who receive a monetary award under this activity would be required to meet the "highly qualified teacher" requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the Department would also encourage States to include additional criteria to ensure that salary increments go to teachers who have demonstrated a high level of performance.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TOM HARKIN

ADEQUACY OF NCLB FUNDING—STUDIES SUPPORTING

Question. The Administration has repeatedly claimed that there is more than enough money available to States to fully implement the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. However, many reports and studies—including those done by the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Ohio Department of Education, and the New Hampshire Association of School Administrators—have found that Federal funding is falling significantly short of the costs of implementing NCLB and providing the remediation efforts to improve student achievement. Can you please provide us with specific studies and analyses you have used to justify your confidence that the funding provided is fully sufficient for States and school districts to meet all the provisions of NCLB?

Answer. No Child Left Behind was met with charges of underfunding almost from the moment it was signed by President Bush, despite the fact that it was accompanied by a \$4.6 billion increase in funding in its first year alone. Many of the early so-called studies of the costs of the new law have been little more than summaries of authorized funding levels, while others were based on assumptions that applied to only one or two States, ignoring that fact that implementation costs vary greatly according to how far along a given State was in its own standards-based reform efforts. Some studies also ignored the fact that many of the requirements of No Child Left Behind—such as annual assessment, determining adequate yearly progress, and school improvement—were not new at all, but expansions or enhancements of the previous law.

What is most striking to me, however, is that 3 years into No Child Left Behind, I have yet to see a comprehensive, convincing study or report documenting the real costs of the law, even for a single State or school district. For example, the National Conference of State Legislatures Task Force on No Child Left Behind recognized that (1) "the federal government has dramatically increased funding to K–12 education since passage of No Child Left Behind;" (2) that while "estimates vary widely," Federal funding "covers the costs" of administrative compliance with NCLB; and (3) a key step to meeting NCLB proficiency goals involves reallocating current re-

sources, and not just increasing the Federal contribution, which is dwarfed by State and local spending on education.

Interestingly, even after a thorough review of existing cost studies, the Task Force did not attempt to provide an authoritative estimate of its own. Rather, it concluded that because each State's experience with NCLB is unique, "Cost estimates must be made on a state-by-state basis."

On the basis of what we know now, I think it is reasonable to conclude that cost is not, at least not yet, a major obstacle to implementing No Child Left Behind. It may well be that in the future States and school districts will be able to provide more reliable and persuasive data on the costs of moving their students toward NCLB proficiency goals. But we have yet to see such data and, in their absence, I believe demands for more money are more of a political than an educational or analytical exercise.

HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

Question. Your proposal to expand NCLB reading and math tests in high schools raises the question of what consequences would be imposed on schools based on those test results. Currently, under NCLB, federally mandated sanctions for failure to make AYP apply only to schools that receive Title I funds. Since less than 10 percent of high schools get Title I funds, are you proposing to expand the scope of Federal consequences for failure to make AYP to all high schools, regardless of whether they get Title I funding?

Answer. No, we are not proposing to expand the current school improvement requirements to non-Title I high schools. As is the case under current law, only high schools receiving Title I funds would be subject to improvement requirements, including the provision of public school choice and supplemental educational services, if they do not make adequate yearly progress.

The expanded assessments would provide a uniform, objective mechanism for measuring student achievement and for holding high schools accountable under the President's High School Intervention initiative. They would also offer information about individual student progress and help educators make informed decisions for helping students advance through high school.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY STATE GRANT PROGRAM

Question. Last October, President Bush signed Public Law 108-364, the Assistive Technology Act. I was the lead co-sponsor in the Senate. This legislation supports services that ensure that people with disabilities will have access to the assistive technology they need—technology that makes independent living possible in many cases. This legislation was one of few bipartisan successes we had last year, being unanimously endorsed by Republicans and Democrats alike in both the House and the Senate. Yet less than 5 months after the President signed the new law, his budget zeroes it out. The reason given in the budget is that "the Department has been unable to identify and document any significant benefits." It is my understanding that the Department has collected data from every State funded under this law, yet not once in 15 years issued the statutorily required report to Congress that would document the impact of these programs. It seems to me like you are punishing people with disabilities who get services from these programs because the Department has failed to do its job. How would you respond?

Answer. The President signed the reauthorization of the AT Act because its goal is consistent with the goals of the New Freedom Initiative, that is, to promote the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of society by expanding education and employment opportunities, promoting increased access into daily community life, and increasing access to assistive and universally designed technologies. The kinds of activities authorized by the bill, particularly the Alternative Financing Program (AFP), have the potential of enabling individuals with disabilities to have more control over their lives and greater participation in schools, work environments, and communities, through increased access to assistive technology. State interest in the AFP is very high; during the last competition we awarded \$35.8 million, but received requests for \$42.3 million. In fiscal year 2005, the Department received just over \$4 million for the AFP and our fiscal year 2006 budget request includes \$15 million.

The design of the AT State grant program, however, is not ideal because it mandates four specific activities that States must carry out. States are unable to focus their efforts on those activities most needed to increase consumer access to, and ownership of, assistive technology within their State. Further, the new State formula grant program permits States to spend up to 40 percent on activities that have not been shown to have direct benefits to individuals with disabilities. Therefore,

we targeted our 2006 request to funding for the AFP rather than the new AT State grant program.

The Department recently sent the required annual report to Congress for the AT State grant program. This report, dated February 2005, provides a compilation of data for fiscal years 2001, 2002, and 2003 that States provided to NIDRR using a web-based data collection instrument. Among other things, the report contains data required by the AT Act on such activities as improving interagency coordination relating to assistive technology, streamlining access to funding for assistive technology, and producing beneficial outcomes for users of assistive technology. In fiscal year 2001, the first year in which States reported data using this web-based system, NIDRR received data from 51 of the 56 grantees, but all 56 States reported for fiscal years 2002 and 2003. This report is also available at <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers>.

EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE REGIONAL LABS

Question. The enactment of two pieces of legislation, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Education Sciences Reform Act, have brought scientifically based research, development, dissemination, and technical assistance to the forefront of K–12 education. Yet for the last 3 years, President Bush has eliminated funding for the important research conducted by regional education laboratories in his budget request. The Administration has indicated in justification documents that the labs “have not consistently provided high quality research and development products or evidence-based training and technical assistance.” Can you cite specific evaluations studies that support this justification?

Answer. Our budget request is based on the fact that we do not have comprehensive, rigorous evaluations of the products and services developed by the regional educational laboratories to warrant further investment beyond the more than \$1.5 billion in Federal funds the program has received since 1966. The most recent Federal evaluation of the program was conducted in 1998 by Decision Information Resources, Inc. Panels of peer reviewers assessed the performance of each laboratory in meeting the duties outlined in their contract, and provided information to guide program improvement for the remainder of the contract period. Although it provided useful feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each laboratory, the findings could not be generalized across laboratories and did not provide an assessment of the performance of the program as a whole.

In June 1993, Maris Vinovskis, an outside analyst brought in by Diane Ravitch, then Assistant Secretary for Education Research and Improvement, examined the quality of research and development at 5 regional educational laboratories, 4 of which are part of the 10 current regional education laboratories. Dr. Vinovskis, currently a professor at the Department of History and Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, focused on many of the issues of concern to education research generally. He found that much of the applied research conducted by the laboratories was based solely upon case studies, limiting the applicability of the findings to school settings generally. Although Dr. Vinovskis praised some of the work conducted by the laboratories, particularly that of the Far West Lab, now WestED, he questioned both the underlying methodology and the practical implications of many of the other laboratory products for classroom use.

Since its creation in 2002, the Institute of Education Sciences has addressed the issues Dr. Vinovskis raised over a decade ago by significantly expanding its support of applied research that uses rigorous scientifically based methods to find solutions to the problems faced by educators and policymakers. As we stated in our budget request, achieving the Department’s strategic goal of transforming education into an evidence based field will require not only more and better research but also new and better ways to use research-based knowledge and translate research to practice. To reach this goal, the Administration is improving the way we foster knowledge utilization by establishing the What Works Clearinghouse, revamping the Education Resources Information Center, and significantly expanding the capacity of the Comprehensive Centers to provide technical assistance that helps schools apply research findings in classrooms. We believe these investments are more tailored to the needs of States, districts, and schools than the regional educational laboratories.

COMPREHENSIVE CENTERS

Question. I am pleased that the Department has requested funds for new comprehensive centers, which will work with States and districts in helping schools implement No Child Left Behind. A new Request for Proposals for the Comprehensive Centers will be released this summer. The statute calls for a center in each of the 10 designated regions and at least 10 additional centers to be structured on a vari-

ety of criteria. Can you tell us what your plans are for structuring the second ten centers; will they be based on population or topic, or a combination thereof?

Answer. The statute calls for a total of not less than 20 new Comprehensive Centers, while requiring that the Department establish at least one center in each of the 10 geographic regions served by the regional educational laboratories. The locations of the other centers will be determined through the competition, which will take into consideration elements identified in the law, including the number of school-aged children, the proportion of disadvantaged students in the various regions, the increased cost burdens of service delivery in sparsely populated areas, and the number of schools identified for improvement under Title I.

The centers other than the required 10 will likely be a combination of additional regional centers in high-need jurisdictions and a few "content" centers with responsibilities across States and across Centers in major priority areas related to NCLB implementation. The Department has not yet made final decisions on this issue.

REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ASSESSMENTS

Question. Specifically, how will the needs assessments conducted by the Regional Advisory Committee process factor into your plans for these new Centers?

Answer. In designing the competition for awards to the new Comprehensive Centers, the Department is required to consider the findings of 10 Regional Advisory Committees (RACs), convened to assess regional needs for technical assistance to support high-quality implementation of No Child Left Behind. The Department established the RACs in November 2004 and expects to receive written reports from each committee by the end of March 2005.

The Department will consider the RAC assessments in drafting the request for proposals establishing priorities for the new centers, which the Department expects to publish in May. Also, the written reports from the RAC needs assessments will be available on the Department's web page so that applicants can use them to as a resource in designing their proposals for new Comprehensive Centers.

ADULT EDUCATION STATE GRANTS

Question. The President's proposed budget calls for large cuts in the Adult Basic and Literacy Education program because it did not demonstrate results under the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). The Department says the program shows modest impacts on adult literacy and skill attainment but data quality problems and the lack of a national evaluation made it difficult to assess the program's effectiveness. How does that assessment justify a 75 percent cut in funding?

Answer. We have requested a reduction in the Adult Education program due to severe budget constraints that the Federal Government now faces and in order to direct funds to a new initiative to strengthen high schools. In addition, the PART review of the program shows that the program does not demonstrate strong program performance outcomes. Currently, the program has failed for three consecutive years to reach performance targets measuring skill attainment of both Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language students.

ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH

Question. Wouldn't it instead point first toward gathering better data and calling for a national evaluation through WIA reauthorization?

Answer. Due to the diversity in age, skill level, learning disability status, and level of English proficiency of the adult education student body, a national evaluation would be extremely cost-intensive and would not likely produce results that could be generalized across States or localities. Adult Education providers also vary considerably and include community-based organizations, local educational agencies, correctional facilities, community colleges, and other entities. However, the Department actively conducts research targeting specific areas of instruction, curriculum, data collection, and program characteristics. For instance, we use Adult Education national leadership funding to address such issues as explicit literacy instruction for adult English as a Second Language participants and the use of technology to support adult education programs.

ENHANCED ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS GRANTS

Question. Madame Secretary, as we discussed at the hearing, the Senate included report language urging the Department, when awarding enhanced assessments grants, to give special attention to the needs of students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. Do you plan to specify this priority in the request for proposals for this grant application?

Answer. Yes. We have revised the notice inviting applications to give competitive priority to projects that will address the use of accommodations or alternate assessments in assessing limited English proficient students and students with disabilities.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE

NATIVE HAWAIIAN EDUCATION

Question. On the subject of Native Hawaiian Education, there were reports that the Native Hawaiian Education Council was not getting information from the Department of Education. Is your department now working with the Native Hawaiian Education Council and providing them with information?

Answer. The Department has been working to improve communications with the Council. Department officials met with a number of Council members on February 15, 2005 to discuss ways to improve communication between the Council and the Department. The meeting also addressed ways to improve the Council's effectiveness and its technical assistance activities. We will continue to communicate with the Council and assist its members in fulfilling their duties.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Question. Charter schools are an important addition to Hawaii's education system. How do you feel about charter schools, and are there additional funding opportunities for charter schools?

Answer. Charter schools are an important reform, and a key element of the Administration's efforts to expand school choice for students and parents. This is reflected in the strong support for charter school programs contained in the 2006 budget request. This request would support planning, development, and initial implementation activities for approximately 1,200 charter schools, as well as enhanced dissemination activities by schools with a demonstrated history of success. Further, a portion of the funds are available to States for subgrants to assist charter schools with their facilities financing. This program component, the Charter Schools Per-Pupil Facilities Aid program, complements an additional source of funding for charter schools, the Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities, which provides assistance to help charter schools meet their facility needs. Additionally, many charter schools are eligible for Federal funds under both discretionary and formula grant programs, such as the Teaching American History and Rural Education Achievement programs.

PERKINS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND PERKINS LOAN PROGRAMS

Question. In the President's budget he plans to cut Perkins vocational education and loan programs. Is there some alternative proposal for these programs?

Answer. The President's fiscal year 2006 budget does not request funding for Vocational Education programs because those programs have not demonstrated effectiveness and in order to direct funds to a new initiative to strengthen high schools. The President believes that a targeted initiative will be more effective than current programs in meeting the major need for reform and improvement of American high school education. The new program would give States and districts more flexibility in designing and implementing services and activities to improve high school education and raise achievement, particularly the achievement of students most at risk of failure. States and school districts would be able to use funds for vocational education, tech-prep programs, and other purposes, depending on State and local needs and priorities. The Department would use part of the money to conduct carefully designed research in order to identify the most effective strategies for raising high school achievement and eliminating achievement gaps.

The President's budget requests \$1.24 billion for the new high school intervention program and \$250 million to ensure that students are assessed in reading/language arts and mathematics at least three times during high school. The 2006 budget also includes more than \$400 million for related programs to strengthen high school achievement, including \$200 million to expand the use of research-based interventions for secondary school students who read below grade level and thus are at greater risk for dropping out of school, \$120 million to accelerate the mathematics achievement of secondary school students through research-based professional development for math teachers, \$52 million to increase the availability of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs in high-poverty schools, \$12 million to encourage students to take more rigorous courses through the State

Scholars program, and \$33 million in enhanced Pell Grants for State Scholars as they pursue higher education.

The budget request also includes a \$125 million Community College Access grants initiative, which would support expansion of “dual-enrollment” programs under which high school students take postsecondary courses and receive both secondary and postsecondary credit. It would also help ensure that students completing such courses can continue and succeed in 4-year colleges and universities.

FUTURE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Question. In your opinion what is the future for vocational education?

Answer. Vocational education is predominantly funded with State and local dollars and will continue without a Federal categorical aid program. Secondary vocational education will thrive if the field responds promptly and aggressively to demands from the business community and postsecondary education that it provide students with a more rigorous academic education, particularly in mathematics and science. All of our youth, regardless of their post-graduation plans, need a rigorous academic foundation. As the American Diploma Project documented in its research, “[s]uccessful preparation for both postsecondary education and employment requires learning the same rigorous English and mathematics content and skills. No longer do students planning to go to work after high school need a different and less rigorous curriculum than those planning to go to college.” If the field fails to respond to this new imperative, policy-makers, business leaders, postsecondary educators, and parents and students will increasingly question the value and relevance of secondary vocational education.

Question. Will it become part of the President’s Higher Education Act?

Answer. Eligible recipients of grants, loans, and college work-study assistance under HEA student aid programs have long been eligible to use that assistance to pursue vocational degrees and certificates. The President’s proposals for HEA reauthorization would allow that type of assistance to continue.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR HERB KOHL

FUNDING FOR NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Question. I supported No Child Left Behind because it guaranteed that flexibility and accountability would come with more Federal funding to make it work. Instead, funding levels have fallen billions short of what was authorized. These cuts cause real hardship. To make ends meet, schools are being forced to cut staff and important programs like summer school, class size reduction, arts and foreign languages.

Last year, Secretary Paige suggested that funding has no connection to student achievement. He seemed to believe that schools receive plenty of money to meet these requirements—even though superintendents, school boards, state legislatures and teachers consistently say otherwise. If we want this law to work—a goal which most of us share—don’t you think it’s time that the Administration become more responsive to these funding concerns; isn’t it time to provide the funding that was authorized?

Answer. As I stated earlier in response to a question from Senator Harkin, I believe there is little evidence for the claim that lack of funding is the central obstacle to effective implementation of No Child Left Behind. With national spending on elementary and secondary education roughly doubling over the past decade, from about \$260 billion to more than \$500 billion, it’s hard to make the case that we’re not spending enough on education. I realize that circumstances vary from State to State and district to district, and that many areas are dealing with tight budgets, but from a national perspective, as I said, I don’t think funding is the primary problem.

On the issue of authorization levels, the Members of this Subcommittee know as well as I do that these are just targets—wish-lists, really—established by the authorizing committees when they pass new legislation. They rarely are accompanied by any careful analysis of what it actually costs to make a program work as intended, and the situation is the same with No Child Left Behind. And in the absence of any reliable data on the actual or prospective costs of No Child Left Behind, merely pointing to authorization levels is not a very persuasive argument for higher funding levels, particularly at a time of fiscal constraint at the Federal level.

The Administration, just like the Appropriations Committees, has had to make hard-nosed judgments about how much we can afford for NCLB and other programs in light of tight fiscal constraints. Last year, for example, the Administration asked for substantially more funding for both Title I and IDEA—the two programs most

frequently identified by critics as being underfunded—than the appropriators provided in their final 2005 appropriations act.

SPECIAL EDUCATION FULL FUNDING

Question. Many of us here have worked hard every year to increase funding for Special Education. Year after year, school districts in Wisconsin tell me that this is one of their top concerns. They think it's wrong that the Federal Government continues to ignore its commitment to pay 40 percent of the costs as authorized in the original IDEA law. Just last December, the President signed the IDEA Reauthorization into law with an authorized funding level of \$12.4 billion for 2005. Just days later, he signed the Omnibus Appropriations bill which only provided \$10.6 billion. This year, the President's budget only proposes \$11.1 billion for fiscal year 2006—still \$3.5 billion short of what is authorized for 2006. This trend begs the question: does the Administration plan to fully fund IDEA and do you have a plan to get there?

Answer. The Administration is committed to assisting States and school districts with meeting the costs of special education. This President has requested record-level increases for special education since he entered office.

The 2006 President's budget request for \$11.1 billion includes an increase of \$508 million over the 2005 level. It would maintain the Federal contribution at its highest level—19 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure. If enacted, the request would result in an increase of \$4.8 billion or 75 percent since 2001.

The President has opposed mandatory full funding for special education because of the importance of taking into account competing budget priorities during the formulation of the budget each year. In the current fiscal environment, there are limited resources for Federal discretionary programs not related to national defense or homeland security. In this environment, the 4.8 percent increase requested for the Special Education Grants to States program is significant.

E-RATE

Question. E-rate is a vital program that provides classrooms with the technology they need to enhance teaching and learning. E-rate grants give students more opportunities to develop the skills they need to compete in the 21st Century. This past year, Wisconsin received over \$24 million from this program. However, as you know, e-rate grants were in jeopardy last year because of new rulings related to the Antideficiency Act. Congress was able to fix the problem last year and e-rate grants have resumed. But that was just a one-year fix and we need to pass legislation to fix it permanently in order to fully cover all pending applications for E-rate. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to meet this goal. Can we count on your support for the E-rate program?

Answer. I understand that the Administration has not yet taken a policy position on legislative initiatives regarding the E-rate. That said, the financial management responsibilities required by the Antideficiency Act are designed to protect taxpayers and beneficiaries of U.S. Government programs by ensuring that spending agreements do not exceed available resources. The PART review by OMB and recent reports from GAO have identified fiscal and managerial problems with the program. The FCC has taken some steps to address these problems, including collaborating with our Department on more accurate measurement of E-rate effectiveness.

READING FIRST GRANTS

Question. I supported No Child Left Behind because I believed in the combination of more funding, more flexibility, and more accountability for results. However, many believe that the flexibility piece has not lived up to its promise and that certain No Child Left Behind regulations are overly proscriptive. One example that has been brought to my attention is the Reading First grant program. Last October, the Madison School District decided to pass on an additional \$2 million in Reading First grants because new Federal guidelines would have required a substantial change in a curriculum that had already been successful with 80 percent of students. Can you explain why schools with successful programs are being forced to change in order to qualify for Federal funds?

Answer. One of the advantages of the Reading First program is that local education agencies (LEAs) retain considerable flexibility in the selection of a reading program. Schools are permitted to implement the core reading curriculum of their choosing, so long as it addresses the five critical factors, identified by the 2000 *Report of the National Reading Panel*, upon which the Reading First program is based: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Although the reading program used by Madison Metropolitan Public Schools (MMPS) proved

successful with many of its students, the Wisconsin Superintendent of Public Instruction awarded a Reading First subgrant due to a gap of 2 to 4 years in reading levels between third graders in five elementary schools.

A Federal review of the MMSD curriculum, undertaken as a part of Reading First monitoring for the 2004–2005 school year, revealed that the MMSD program failed to address all of the required elements of a scientifically based reading program. The district worked with technical assistance providers to address these gaps through the addition of supplementary materials, lesson plans, and exercises but ultimately decided to continue its own reading curriculum.

Question. Why were new Federal guidelines issued?

Answer. The Department issued non-regulatory guidance for the Reading First program in April 2002. States and local educational agencies have used this guidance as a resource to guide successful implementation of Reading First. We have not issued any additional guidance since that time.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR PATTY MURRAY

D.C. VOUCHER PROGRAM

Question. Secretary Spellings you are more than aware of the tight budget this country is facing. Education is facing a cut for the first time in decade. The President has proposed elimination of 48 programs including some very popular programs. I understand that the determination for which programs were eliminated comes from the evaluations of the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) administered by OMB. And that evaluation includes which programs are ineffective so that funds can be redirected to effective programs. As an appropriator, I agree that the government should only be funding programs that are effective and serving their intended purpose.

However the President has continued to fund in his budget a program that is not serving its intended purpose—the D.C. voucher program. As I understand it, only about 75 students out of roughly 1,350 students receiving vouchers come from schools labeled in need of improvement—the highest priority of students in the original legislation. That is less than 6 percent of the participating students. Further, over 200 students receiving vouchers were already attending private schools. According to the Washington Post, this number includes a student who is an 8th grader at Sidwell-Friends who had been attending the school since 5th grade. Clearly those students are just being subsidized by taxpayers, not being provided increased “choice” as proponents would argue.

In such tight budget times, how can you justify continuing a program that is clearly not serving the intended population?

Answer. On the contrary, I believe that the program is serving the students who Congress intended it to serve and that, as the program matures, it will be even more successful in providing educational opportunities to low-income students attending schools identified for improvement.

All of the students receiving scholarships this year met the statutory eligibility requirements; they are from families with incomes of less than 185 percent of the poverty level, or roughly \$35,000 for a family of four [correct?]. Raising a family on that income is certainly not an easy task. While some of these families were already paying private school tuition, you can imagine the kinds of sacrifices they were making to provide their children with that opportunity. While we believed it was appropriate to limit the number of scholarships going to students already attending private schools, and we did so, we also did not feel that it would be fair to penalize families who had been making such a sacrifice.

The Department also faithfully implemented the requirement to give priority to students enrolled in D.C. public schools identified for improvement under No Child Left Behind. However, only 15 schools were in NCLB “needs improvement” status last year, and seven of the schools, enrolling the great majority of those students, were high schools. D.C. private high schools had only a small number of slots they could make available to scholarship recipients during the first year of the program, in part because Congress was very late in passing the fiscal year 2004 appropriations act and, thus, the program was slow in getting underway. (Most D.C. private high schools accept applications and make enrollment decisions in the fall and early winter. Because of the late Congressional appropriations process and then the time needed to select an organization to administer the program and then select scholarship recipients, the program could not link recipients with schools until late spring.

Further, the great majority of students who applied for scholarships were in elementary and middle schools, in part because there are just more students in those

grades and in part because upper-grade high school students who are nearing the end of their high school careers are typically less interested in changing schools. For these reasons, the number of students receiving scholarships who came from schools in need of improvement was, I think, understandable given the circumstances.

I am very confident that the number of students from those schools who participate in the program will rise very significantly during the next school year. For one thing, a total of 68 D.C. schools have now been identified for improvement, including many elementary schools. Secondly, our grantee, the Washington Scholarship Fund, has more time this year to recruit students from those schools and to recruit private schools to accept those students.

Further, of the 15 schools identified for improvement last year, seven were high schools. High-school students are less likely than elementary- and middle-school students to want to change schools. In addition, because of the late passage of the appropriations bills and the need to select competitively a grantee to administer the program, it was not until March 2004 that the Washington Scholarship Foundation (WSF) was selected to operate the program and begin to solicit applications from parents on behalf of students. This is well past the time when many of the area's private high schools require students to apply for the following school year. As a result, few private high schools had places remaining for D.C. Choice participants.

I feel confident that, with more time for the WSF to publicize the program and to assist parents in completing applications and more schools (particularly elementary schools) identified for improvement, the program will be even more successful in providing low-income parents of students who attend low-performing schools with expanded options for their children's education.

D.C. VOUCHER PROGRAM EVALUATION

Question. What evaluations has OMB done on the D.C. voucher programs and can you make that information available?

Answer. The D.C. Choice initiative has not been reviewed using the PART instrument. The program is in its first year of operation so it is too early to determine its effectiveness or undergo a PART review. However, the Department has moved ahead with the required evaluation of the program.

Question. Part of the law also says that you must do evaluations of the students receiving the vouchers as compared to students in D.C. public schools and compared to students who applied for and did not receive vouchers. What is the status of the evaluations required in the original statute?

Answer. The evaluation of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program has been underway since spring 2004, when the Department's Institute of Education Sciences awarded a contract to a team of researchers from Westat, Georgetown University, and Chesapeake Associates. The evaluators collected information on program applicants in spring 2004, conducted lotteries to fairly allocate scholarships and placements at the grade levels and schools where there were more applicants than space available, and drafted a report examining the extent and characteristics of student and school participants in the program's first year. In the next few months the evaluators will be collecting data on academic achievement, on other student outcomes, and on parent satisfaction for the first group of applicants. The evaluators will, at the same time, be collecting applicant information, conducting lotteries, and beginning a descriptive analysis of the spring 2005 applicants.

Question. When can Congress expect to see the results of the analysis?

Answer. The evaluators are finalizing their first year report and it should be available to Congress this spring. While the focus of the evaluation is on examining the effectiveness of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, no impact information is available at this point because the initial group of program participants—those who applied in spring 2004 to receive scholarships for the 2004–2005 school year—have only recently matriculated at their new schools. Instead, this report examines the extent of student and school interest in the program and the characteristics of those participating. The report provides an important foundation for the later examination of program impacts.

HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION/PREPAREDNESS

Question. Secretary Spellings, as you and I have discussed before, I have always seen the Department of Education as a resource for schools, other education agencies, parents, and students. However, in the administration of this program, I understand that the Department sent an email to the Washington Scholarship Fund asking them to alter one of their Frequently Asked Questions on whether or not a school affiliated with the voucher program can still apply its own admissions standards. The following email was sent to WSF from the Department: “the House Ed

Committee has been reluctant to put this answer in writing. Many members (of Congress) are unaware that the schools can pick the students . . . I am not sure how to fix the answer but if this document is made public, it may damage their vote count." Clearly the Department was concerned that the reality that vouchers provide choices to schools not students and their families would become better known.

How does providing incomplete information to families on the program increase a parent's "choice" about where their child can attend school?

Answer. After Congress enacted the D.C. School Choice Incentive program, the Department moved quickly and aggressively to provide parents with complete information on the choices that would be available to eligible students. We did nothing to prevent parents of eligible students from receiving that information.

The e-mail message included in the recent People for the American Way report fails entirely to present a full or balanced picture on the actions taken by the Department and its grantee, the Washington Scholarship Fund (WSF), during this period. The e-mail concerns the language WSF would include in an informational package mailed to private schools about participation in the program. Although the Department and WSF discussed different options for explaining policies regarding schools' admissions criteria, the package that WSF mailed to the schools asks the question, "Can a school apply its own admissions criteria?" answers "Yes," and then explains how a school may test eligible students to determine whether they are admissible and, if so, how they should be placed in grades or classes within the school. The Department made no attempt to prevent this information from reaching both the schools and the parents.

EFFECTS OF PROPOSED HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Question. Secretary Spellings, you and I have previously discussed our mutual interest in improving our Nation's high schools and I hope we can continue that conversation. As you know, I have my own bill on high school reform called the Pathways For All Students to Succeed Act that I will be reintroducing this Congress. My bill focuses on reading and writing skills, academic counseling including creating graduation plans with students and their families, accurate calculations and data collection on high school graduation rates, and funding to turn around low performing schools using best practices.

The President's budget eliminates the Perkins program, GEAR UP, and part of the TRIO program and effectively creates a block grant and would require more testing at the high school level. You and the President have said that the idea would be to allow States to determine how to spend that block grant—if they determine career and technical education to be most needed to fund that, if it's GEAR UP, fund that. The problem with that theory is that all of these programs are needed along with new ways and investment to improve our high schools.

Considering that the President is proposing a high school block grant to States, how does he think that will improve problems in high schools such as high dropout rates amongst poor and minority students or a lack of academic preparedness for postsecondary education?

Answer. It sounds like your bill would support a number of potentially useful strategies to improving the performance of our secondary schools, and I believe that States and school districts would be able to support many of them under the President's High School Intervention proposal. Where I would have to disagree is with your assertion that "all of these programs are needed," including the grab bag of currently authorized programs, to improve our high schools. The problem with categorical programs like Perkins, TRIO, and GEAR UP is that they only support specific educational strategies, and thus if those strategies don't meet the needs of your school or district, those programs can't help you. Under the President's more flexible proposal, districts and schools choose the best strategy for meeting the educational needs of their students, and the High School Intervention initiative helps pay for it. This broader flexibility would be accompanied by much stronger accountability for results than is found in the current programs. We think that's a better way to get the results we need in our high schools.

DISADVANTAGED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Question. One of my constituents, Bill Gates, spoke to the National Governor's Association High School Summit. As you know, the Gates Foundation is doing critical work with our Nation's high schools. He talked about our Nation's high schools as a question of morals and values and I couldn't agree more. The Federal role in education has traditionally been to ensure that disadvantaged students are receiving an equal education but it is exactly those students, poor and minority students, who

are dropping out at the highest rates. What is the Department of Education doing at the high school level to target improving education for those students?

Answer. The President's High School Initiative, including \$1.24 billion for High School Intervention and \$250 million for High School Assessments, is specifically targeted at the students you describe, particularly those students most at risk of dropping out, who tend to be poor and minority. In particular, the combination of individual education plans based on 8th-grade assessment data and more regular assessment throughout high school would help principals and teachers focus on the students with the greatest need for assistance.

In addition, our 2006 budget includes proposals like the expansion of the Striving Readers program, which target students who are falling behind and at risk of dropping out.

HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION PROGRAM AND STRIVING READERS

Question. As the public conversation about education focuses on high school reform, it's important to recognize that improving the literacy skills of our Nation's youth is the key to really improving the success of our high schools in preparing students for the 21st century. If our Nation's high school students do not have adequate literacy skills, they will not be able to graduate prepared for college and the workplace no matter what other supports and programs are put in place. Such interventions need to take place in 9th grade before students drop out or become disengaged in their academic future. The President has requested \$200 million to expand the Striving Readers program to support interventions to improve the skills of struggling adolescent readers.

How does the Administration plan to engage the education policy and literacy communities in this initiative to ensure that this money is spent efficiently on high-quality interventions that not only help struggling adolescent readers, but complement and support real high school reform?

Answer. Department staff have met with several organizations to solicit their suggestions on implementing the Striving Readers program. For example, staff met with representatives of the National Association of School of School Boards of Education and the Alliance for Excellent Education, which published the recent Reading Next report on adolescent literacy. In addition, the Department has received input from developers of adolescent literacy programs. The Department plans future outreach efforts in planning and promoting the Striving Readers program.

HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION

Question. Only one-in-three 18 year olds is even minimally prepared for college and the picture is bleaker for poor and minority students. High school students—especially those most at risk of dropping out of school—need sound advice, strong support and an advocate to ensure they are getting all the support and services they need to take rigorous courses and have a plan in place for graduation and life after high school. Every student must have a clear graduation plan that assesses their needs and identifies coursework, additional learning opportunities and other supports to make their goals a reality. The President's budget includes \$1.24 billion for a High School Intervention which would require districts to "ensure that targeted high schools develop and implement individual performance plans for entering students based on 8th-grade assessment data." My bill, the PASS Act contains a similar proposal.

Would this plan be a mandatory activity for recipients, and would the money be required to be used not just for identifying needs, but providing supports and interventions?

Answer. Under the Administration's High School Intervention proposal, each grantee would be responsible for developing and implementing individual performance plans for entering students. Schools would use those plans to select interventions and strategies with the greatest potential for improving the achievement of their students. In addition to developing those plans, districts would use the funds to implement specific interventions designed to strengthen instruction and improve the academic achievement of students, particularly those students at the greatest risk of failing to meet challenging State academic standards and dropping out of high school. The High School Intervention proposal would provide districts with the flexibility to use their funds to meet their specific needs without having to apply for several discrete grants.

SPECIAL ALLOWANCE ON LOANS FUNDED FROM TAX-EXEMPT SECURITIES

Question. In its fiscal year 2005 budget, the Administration proposed eliminating a 9.5 percent guarantee on all new student loans. But in this year's budget, the Ad-

ministration simply says it proposes to make the Taxpayer—Teacher Protection Act's provisions permanent. But the Taxpayer—Teacher Protection Act still leaves a \$100 million a year 9.5 percent loan loophole. That remaining loophole allows the holders of 9.5 percent loans to “recycle” loan payments from students and the Government back into new loans that some lenders claim are also entitled to a 9.5 percent rate of return.

Do you support shutting down completely and permanently the 9.5 percent loan loophole once and for all so that “no new loans have a 9.5 percent guaranteed rate of return?”

Answer. The Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act prohibits lenders from using refunding and transferring to increase student loan volume receiving the 9.5 percent guaranteed yield, but allows lenders to continue to recycle repayments of existing 9.5 percent loans into new 9.5 percent loans. Those new restrictions are in effect through December 2005; the Administration's proposal would make them permanent.

In adopting the Taxpayer-Teacher Act, Congress and the Administration balanced the needs of current bondholders for a stable and predictable revenue stream against the need to minimize unnecessary subsidy payments. Existing bonds, used for recycling, are maturing and will be retired in the near future.

Question. Washington State has seen many brave men and women deployed to serve in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq over the last 3 years. Unfortunately too many have returned as amputees, necessitating a difficult and uncertain recovery process. I was very disheartened to learn that the Department of Education, through the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), has decided not to support training grants for students in prosthetics or orthotics. There are a very limited number of prosthetics and orthotists across the country who can build the artificial limbs and braces that our returning war veterans will need to return to a productive lifestyle. Less Government support to these students will mean fewer practitioners and more difficulty for our newly injured veterans to secure the quality devices they so desperately need and deserve.

Given the significant and growing needs of our returning veterans for these prosthetic or orthotic devices, why did the RSA discontinue these critically needed training grants?

REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION'S TRAINING PROGRAM

Answer. The purpose of the Rehabilitation Services Administration's (RSA) Training program is to ensure that skilled personnel are available to serve the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities assisted through the vocational rehabilitation (VR), supported employment, and independent living programs. The Training program provides grants for Long-Term Training, In-Service Training, Continuing Education, Experimental and Innovative Training, Short-Term Training, and Training of Interpreter for individuals who are Deaf and Individuals who are Deaf-Blind.

In fiscal year 2005, the Training program received an appropriation of \$38.8 million, of which \$18.6 million (48 percent) will be directed toward the Long-Term Training (LTT) program. Under the LTT program, grants (averaging \$100,000 annually for 5 years) are competitively awarded to institutions of higher education. Seventy-five percent of these grant funds must be used for direct scholarship support. RSA may support as many as 31 academic fields under the LTT program but, as required by the authorizing statute, directs funding toward the personnel fields with the greatest training needs and/or personnel shortages. As the cost of tuition has increased over time, the impact of the support provided has been reduced. Specifically, over the past 12 years college tuition has more than tripled while level funding (and rescissions since 2003) for the Training program have required RSA to reduce the number of LTT fields supported.

Our primary partners for delivery of rehabilitation services to people with disabilities are the State VR agencies. They are faced with an incredible staffing shortage. A study in progress, being conducted by the American Institutes of Research, has reported that it is likely that the supply of graduates of rehabilitation counseling programs may meet less than half of the number needed to replace retiring counselors in State VR agencies.

To help develop a larger recruiting pool, RSA has focused the LTT program on counselor programs. In 1998, RSA funded LTT program grants in 17 areas. In 2005, it will fund 11, and may fund fewer in the future. RSA is very aware of the need for Prosthetists and Orthotists and many other rehabilitation professionals. However, given the Training program's level of resources, the reduced buying power of its scholarship dollars, and the tremendous demand for counselors in State VR

agencies, RSA will continue to focus the LTT program on personnel fields that directly link to the provision of VR counseling.

Question. Will the Department of Education reinstitute these training grants to support those students studying to be the next generation of providers of artificial limbs and braces?

Answer. As discussed earlier, the tremendous shortage of VR counselors that the State agencies face make changes in the number of fields supported under the LTT program not feasible. RSA must continue to target the grants under the LTT program to the largest professional field—VR counselors.

VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL EDUCATION—POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS ATTAINMENT AND COMPLETION TARGETS

Question. According to Sec. 113(b)(3)(A)(i) of Perkins, the State eligible agency, with input from eligible recipients, shall establish the level of performance for each of the core indicators, and the State eligible agency may express the level in “a percentage or numerical form, so as to be objective, quantifiable, and measurable . . .”

The Washington State eligible agency, with the support of the State community and technical college system, has expressed the State’s targets for the core indicators for postsecondary student attainment and completion as numerical targets (e.g., the number of students completing postsecondary career and technical education). The State has chosen to express the targets numerically because the State’s goal is to increase the number of trained workers in order to meet employer demand. The Office of Vocational and Adult Education has rejected the choice of the State, and refused to accept any target not expressed as a percentage.

Why has the Department of Education ignored the discretion that Congress clearly granted State eligible agencies when Washington State is fully and demonstrably committed to improving the performance of its vocational and technical education programs and to meeting the skill needs of State employers?

Answer. As you indicate, eligible agencies are free under the law to express their performance levels in a percentage or numerical form. Regardless of how eligible agencies choose to express their performance levels, however, the Department has asked each eligible agency, in guidance that we issued after providing an opportunity for public comment, to define both a numerator (number of individuals achieving an outcome) and a denominator (number of individuals seeking to achieve an outcome) in submitting their proposed performance levels to us for review.

We cannot fulfill the requirements of the Perkins statute without this information. Section 113(b)(3)(A)(i)(II) of Perkins mandates that each proposed performance level “require the State to continually make progress toward improving the performance of vocational and technical education students.” We cannot determine whether a State has satisfied this requirement if an eligible agency only provides numbers or percentages. Though the number of individuals who achieve an outcome may increase from year to year, this may not indicate that the performance of vocational and technical education students has improved. It may instead be the result of an increase in population. Similarly, an increase in the percentage of individuals achieving an outcome may or may not reflect improvement in the performance of vocational and technical education students; changing the definitions of the numerator and denominator could also cause it.

In reaching agreement with eligible agencies on their performance levels, the Department also is required by the Perkins Act to consider “how the levels of performance involved compare with the State adjusted levels of performance established for other States taking into account factors including the characteristics of participants when the participants entered the program and the services or instruction to be provided.” (See section 113(b)(3)(A)(vi) of the Act). It would be inequitable for the Department to consider only the number of individuals achieving an outcome in making comparisons across States and determining appropriate performance levels. Given the significant differences in the sizes of their populations, Rhode Island, Washington State, and California, for example, should not be expected to reach performance levels that require same numbers of individuals to achieve certain outcomes.

For these reasons, we have given each eligible agency the flexibility to express its performance levels however it chooses, but asked all agencies to define both a numerator and a denominator in their submission of proposed performance levels. We cannot implement the law the Congress has enacted without this information.

Washington is the only State that has expressed periodic misgivings about providing all of the information that we have sought from States to evaluate their proposed performance levels consistent with the law’s requirements. However, the Washington State eligible agency, the Washington State Workforce Training and

Education Coordinating Board, has acknowledged recently that it is inappropriate and misleading to measure performance, either at the secondary or postsecondary level, simply on the basis of the number of students who achieve an outcome. In February 2005, the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board issued a report on behalf of itself and agencies in Florida, Michigan, Montana, Oregon, and Texas that made recommendations to States on how best to measure performance in education and training programs. Integrated Performance Information for Workforce Development: A Blueprint for States recommends that States express performance levels as percentages, with clearly defined numerators and denominators.

IMMIGRANT LITERACY

Question. According to the Aspen Institute, immigrants supplied half of our workforce growth in the 1990s and will account for all of our net workforce growth over the next 20 years. More immigrants arrived in the 1990s—13 million—than in any other decade in U.S. history. Demographers and employers are warning Members of Congress about a severe worker shortage in the United States in the next decade. They have told me we must increase our investments in these newly arriving workers with literacy training and other support services. If we do not, we run the very real risk of losing our worldwide economic competitiveness.

The President's proposed budget cuts to Adult Basic and English Literacy, coupled with his efforts to reduce funding for workforce programs, do just the opposite.

What steps is the Department of Education taking to provide the kinds of resources needed to ensure that the employers and the new immigrant workers in Washington State will have ready access to a literate and well-trained workforce?

Answer. The Department agrees that the health and success of our workforce require emphasis on English language education, particularly in those areas most affected by increased immigration. The Department continues to address actively the language and education needs of immigrant students, at the elementary and secondary levels as well as at the adult level. The request includes level funding at \$68.6 million for English Literacy and Civics Education (EL/Civics) grants, which serve a vital purpose in States with large numbers of non-English-speaking immigrants. According to the Educational Testing Service study, "A Human Capital Concern: The Literacy Proficiency of U.S. Immigrants," the average literacy level of immigrants is far below that of U.S. adults. The report also found that immigrants with higher literacy proficiencies have improved labor market outcomes and were less likely to be poor and in need of Government support. This population comprises approximately 40 percent of those served by Adult Education State grants, including EL/Civics grants. Unlike regular Adult Education State grants, which rely upon decennial U.S. Census data, EL/Civics grants utilize a formula based on a combination of 10-year Census averages and recent population data and are, therefore, more responsive to fluctuations in immigration patterns.

According to a 2005 report by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 54 percent of LEP students in the United States are foreign born. ESEA Title III, Part A authorizes Language Acquisition State grants to serve limited English proficient (LEP) and immigrant students at the elementary and secondary level. The President's fiscal year 2006 budget request for Title III includes \$627 million for that program. In fiscal year 2004, Washington State's allocation under Language Acquisition State Grants was \$9,607,031, and preliminary estimates for 2005 and 2006 indicate that the State will receive increases in both years (assuming enactment of the President's budget request for 2006). This program is similarly responsive to fluctuations in immigrant populations and requires States to reserve at least 15 percent of their funding each year to increase grants to districts that have experienced a significant increase in the percentage or number of recent immigrant students over the preceding 2 years. Through both the EL/Civics program and the Title III program, Washington and other States have numerous options for addressing the literacy needs of LEP adults and youth.

TEACHER QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Question. Funding for Title II of the Higher Education Act—Teacher Quality—is the only dedicated source of Federal support to reform and strengthen teacher preparation available to higher education institutions. Grants awarded under this program enable partnerships between Schools of Education, Arts and Sciences Departments at colleges and universities and local schools to work together to achieve the requirement that all students be taught by highly qualified teachers, as mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act.

Given the well-documented shortages of highly qualified teachers in certain disciplines and in rural and hard to serve urban communities, why has the Administration eliminated all funding for Title II of HEA in their fiscal year 2006 budget proposal to the Congress?

Answer. The Administration understands that the quality of the teacher is one of the most significant determinants of student learning and, as such, the Department of Education's budget supports major efforts to meet the President's goal of placing a qualified teacher in every classroom in America in order to ensure that no child is left behind. Spending on programs that are designed to improve teacher quality was more than \$3 billion in fiscal year 2005 and the Administration's budget request increases this amount to more than \$3.6 billion in fiscal year 2006. Included in this request is \$500 million for a major new initiative designed to improve teacher quality. The Teacher Incentive Fund would reward teachers whose students make the most achievement gains, provide incentives for teachers to teach in the most challenging schools, and encourage States and LEAs to adopt performance-based pay plans. These measures will do even more to ensure that effective teachers are available to teach our children. Even with proposed program eliminations, spending on teacher quality would increase substantially in fiscal year 2006 under the Administration's budget request.

In reviewing the portfolio of programs within the Department dedicated to achieving the goal of improving teacher quality, the Administration concluded that providing additional funds to the Teacher Quality Enhancement program would not be the most effective use of funds. State and local entities may already use funds they receive under a number of other Department programs, including the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program and the Transition to Teaching program, to carry out the kinds of activities supported through the Teacher Quality Enhancement program.

IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY STATE GRANTS

For example, the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program focuses on preparing, training, and recruiting high-quality teachers. Under that program States may use funds to reform teacher and principal certification and licensing requirements, support alternative routes to State certification, support teacher and principal recruitment and retention initiatives, and initiate innovative strategies to improve teacher quality.

Additionally, under that program States are required to award subgrants on a competitive basis to partnerships that are structured similarly to the partnerships mandated under the Teacher Quality Enhancement program and consisting of at least one institution of higher education, one high-need local educational agency, and one other entity. Partnerships may receive funds to support new teacher and principal recruitment and retention initiatives as well as to support a broad range of innovative initiatives to improve teacher quality, including signing bonuses and other financial incentives, teacher and principal mentoring, reforming tenure systems, merit pay, teacher testing, and pay differentiation initiatives.

TRANSITION TO TEACHING PROGRAM

The Transition to Teaching program is also intended to help mitigate the shortage of qualified licensed or certified teachers in many of our Nation's schools by, among other things, encouraging the development and expansion of alternative routes to certification. The program provides funds to States, local educational authorities, and partnerships to support efforts to recruit, train, and place high-quality teachers in high need schools and school districts.

TEACHER QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

In light of the serious programmatic deficiencies identified through the PART process when the Teacher Quality Enhancement program was assessed in 2003, the Administration has concluded that the resources previously used to support this program should be shifted to higher-priority programs and initiatives that have greater potential to be effective in improving teacher quality. The Administration's budget request for programs in the Department designed to improve the quality of teachers demonstrates its commitment to ensuring that all American students have access to the highest quality teachers.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

Question. As part of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, Congress expanded the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program (ESSCP) to include secondary

school activities. However, due to the program's statutory funding trigger, secondary schools will not benefit unless total funding exceeds \$40 million, with the base amount reserved for elementary schools. Providing \$75 million for the ESSCP will trigger the statutory requirement to support secondary school counselors, while maintaining funding for elementary school counselors.

The Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program is intended to provide schools with the necessary resources so that school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, child and adolescent psychiatrists, and other qualified psychologists can work together to establish a comprehensive counseling program to improve academic achievement, provide career/education planning and facilitate personal/social development.

Why did you decide to no longer fund the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program? It seems contradictory to one of the strongest messages from the President's fiscal year 2006 budget proposal, i.e., the need for high school reform.

Answer. The budget request to eliminate funding for the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling program is part of an overall budget strategy to discontinue programs that duplicate other programs that may be carried out with flexible State formula grant funds, or that involve activities that are better or more appropriately supported through State, local, or private resources. Specifically, the 2006 budget proposes termination of 48 programs in order to free up almost \$4.3 billion (based on 2005 levels) for reallocation to higher-priority activities within the Department, including high school reform. Under the Administration's \$1.24 billion High School Intervention initiative, school districts will be able to include student counseling services as part of comprehensive strategies they adopt to raise high school achievement and eliminate gaps in achievement among subgroups of students.

The 2006 President's budget request also reflects the Nation's priorities to improve our homeland defenses, strengthen the armed forces, and promote economic opportunity. In order to ensure sustained economic prosperity, the President believes that it is imperative that spending be restrained and that the Nation's budget deficit be cut in half by 2009. The 2006 request would put us on track toward achieving that goal.

SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES

Question. Why would you eliminate the one program that supports the school personnel in secondary schools (as well as elementary schools) who promote academic achievement, career planning and personal/social development which is so desperately needed by high school students?

Answer. School counseling has, for many decades, been supported almost entirely with State and local funds. The very small amount of money appropriated for the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling program is unlikely to have more than a minimal impact on the availability of counseling services nationally. As stated in the answer to the previous question, under the Administration's \$1.24 billion High School Intervention initiative, school districts may include student counseling services as part of comprehensive strategies they adopt to raise high school achievement and eliminate gaps in achievement among subgroups of students.

In addition, if school districts choose to do so, they may support counseling programs with the funds they receive under the State Grants for Innovative Programs authority, which allows them to implement programs that best meet their needs. Furthermore, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides school districts with additional flexibility to meet their own priorities by consolidating a sizable portion of their Federal funds from their allocations under certain State formula grant programs and using those funds under any other of these authorized programs. A school district that seeks to implement a school counseling program in some or all of its schools may use funds from those programs to do so.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARY L. LANDRIEU

EDUCATION PROGRAMS PROPOSED FOR BUDGET CUTS

Question. Can you please provide justification beyond that given in the Department of Education fiscal year 2006 Budget Summary for the cuts made to the following programs:

Educational Technology State Grants

Answer. Schools and districts have made great gains in educational technology in recent years. In 2003, 93 percent of schools reported that they had access to the

Internet in instructional rooms; just 2 years prior, only 77 percent of schools offered this access. While many schools continue to have technology-related needs, particularly in training teachers to integrate technology into instruction, those needs can be met with resources available through other Federal programs. For example, activities to support technology-based professional development as well as school-based reform efforts that include technology are allowable under the State Grants for Innovative Programs and the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program. Also, under the State and Local Transferability Act, most LEAs may transfer up to 50 percent of their formula allocation under certain State formula grant programs to their allocations under any of the other authorized programs or to Part A of Title I. Therefore, an LEA that wants to implement technology programs may do so under the authorities granted through the individual programs or may transfer funds from, or to, its State Grants for Innovative Programs or Improving Teacher Quality State Grants allocation, without having to go through a separate grant application process.

Arts in Education

Answer. The request to eliminate funding for the Arts in Education program supports the Administration's policy of increasing resources for high-priority programs by eliminating categorical programs that have narrow or limited effect. These categorical programs siphon off Federal resources that could be used by State and local educational agencies to improve the academic performance of all students. However, activities in the arts are allowable under larger State formula programs such as those mentioned above; by exercising the transferability authority, districts may choose to continue successful arts programs to fit the unique need of their students.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities State Grants

Answer. The Administration proposes to terminate funding for Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) State Grants because of the program's inability to demonstrate effectiveness and the fact that funds are spread too thinly to support quality interventions. For example, SDFSC State Grants provides about 60 percent of local educational agencies (LEAs) with allocations of less than \$10,000, amounts typically too small to mount comprehensive and effective drug prevention and school safety programs.

By comparison, under SDFSC National Programs the Department has greater flexibility to provide large enough awards to support quality interventions. In addition, the National Programs authority is structured to permit grantees and independent evaluators to measure progress, hold projects accountable, and determine which outcomes are most effective. We are requesting \$317.3 million for SDFSC National Programs, an \$82.7 million, or 35 percent, increase over 2005.

Alcohol Abuse Reduction program

Answer. No funding is requested for the Alcohol Abuse Reduction program, because it is duplicative of other Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) programs. Local educational agencies (LEAs) that receive Safe Schools/Healthy Students grants or the proposed research-based grant assistance under SDFSC National Programs may use those funds to support similar activities. LEAs may also use their ESEA Title V (State Grants for Innovative Programs) funds as well as funds they may transfer to ESEA Title V from their ESEA Title II Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program) allocation, to support alcohol abuse prevention.

Elementary and Secondary School Counseling

Answer. The budget request to eliminate funding for the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling program is part of an overall budget strategy to discontinue programs that duplicate other programs that may be carried out with flexible State formula grant funds, or that involve activities that are better or more appropriately supported through State, local, or private resources. Specifically, the 2006 budget proposes termination of 48 programs in order to free up almost \$4.3 billion (based on 2005 levels) for reallocation to higher-priority activities within the Department.

The 2006 President's budget request also reflects the Nation's priorities to improve our homeland defenses, strengthen the armed forces, and promote economic opportunity. In order to ensure sustained economic prosperity, the President believes that it is imperative that spending be restrained and that the Nation's budget deficit be cut in half by 2009. The 2006 request would put us on track toward achieving that goal.

School counseling has, for many decades, been supported almost entirely with State and local funds. The very small amount of money appropriated for the Ele-

mentary and Secondary School Counseling program is unlikely to have more than a minimal impact on the availability of counseling services nationally. Under the Administration's \$1.24 billion High School Intervention initiative, school districts may include student counseling services as part of comprehensive strategies they adopt to raise high school achievement and eliminate gaps in achievement among subgroups of students.

In addition, if school districts choose to do so, they may support counseling programs with the funds they receive under the State Grants for Innovative Programs authority, which allows them to implement programs that best meet their needs. Furthermore, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides school districts with additional flexibility to meet their own priorities by consolidating a sizable portion of their Federal funds from their allocations under certain State formula grant programs and using those funds under any other of these authorized programs. A school district that seeks to implement a school counseling program in some or all of its schools may use funds from those programs to do so.

Carl Perkins Vocational and Technical Education

Answer. The President's fiscal year 2006 budget does not request funding for Vocational Education because of severe budget constraints that the Federal Government now faces and to eliminate programs that have shown little evidence of effectiveness in order to fund a new initiative to strengthen high schools. Despite decades of Federal investment, the Vocational Education program has produced little evidence of improved academic outcomes for students. The most recent National Assessment of Vocational Education found no evidence that high school vocational courses contribute to academic achievement or postsecondary enrollment, and the "Program Assessment Rating Tool" (PART) review rated the program as ineffective. On the most recent NAEP assessments, less than 10 percent of vocational students scored at or above proficiency in mathematics (2000) and only 29 percent scored at or above proficiency in reading (1998).

A 2002 Public Agenda survey showed that 73 percent of employers rate the writing skills of recent high school graduates as fair or poor, while 63 percent express dissatisfaction with graduates' math skills. All high school students need a solid academic preparation, whether they plan to enter the world of work immediately after graduation or pursue postsecondary education. The High School Intervention program proposed in the budget to replace Vocational Education would give States and districts more flexibility to improve high school education and raise achievement, particularly the achievement of students most at risk of failure. States and school districts would be able to use funds for vocational education, tech-prep programs, and other purposes, depending on State and local needs and priorities. The Administration believes that a targeted initiative will be more effective than current programs in meeting the major need for reform and improvement of American high school education.

The budget also includes a Community College Access grants initiative to support expansion of "dual-enrollment" programs under which high school students take postsecondary courses and receive both secondary and postsecondary credit. This initiative would also help ensure that students completing such courses can continue and succeed in 4-year colleges and universities.

Federal TRIO Programs

Answer. The President's fiscal year 2006 budget does not include funding for TRIO's Upward Bound and Talent Search programs because we believe our proposed \$1.2 billion High School Intervention initiative would do a better job of improving high school education and increasing student achievement. Today, just 68 out of 100 9th graders will receive their diplomas on time. Moreover, only 51 percent of African-American students and 52 percent of Hispanic students will graduate from high school. Less than a third of students will leave high school ready to attend 4-year colleges. We believe a targeted and comprehensive approach is necessary to overcome these challenges.

The new High School Intervention initiative would require each State to develop a plan for improving high school education and increasing student achievement, especially the achievement of low-income students and students who attend schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress. States would be held accountable for improving the academic performance of at-risk students, narrowing achievement gaps, and reducing dropout rates, but States would have flexibility to provide the full range of services students need to ensure they are academically prepared for the transition to postsecondary education and the workforce. The initiative also would deepen the national knowledge base on what works in improving high schools and

high school student achievement by supporting scientifically based research on specific interventions that have promise for improving outcomes.

We believe this High School Intervention initiative would be more effective than our current, disjointed approach that has not served all students well. Upward Bound has been found to serve low-income students who have unusually high educational expectations and who would enroll in college regardless of their participation in the program. The high college enrollment rate for these Upward Bound students (65 percent) hides the reality that only 34 percent of the neediest students served by Upward Bound enroll in college. Although the program could have a significant impact if it served more students who truly need help, we do not have evidence to show that our efforts to target more of the neediest students have been successful. And the Administration's assessment of Talent Search did not find evidence that it is effective in helping disadvantaged students enroll in college.

Replacing Upward Bound and Talent Search with the new High School Intervention initiative would help us reach our strategic goals of improving the performance of all high school students and increasing access to postsecondary education. The more comprehensive approach would give States the flexibility to incorporate the best elements of these programs to achieve better results. However, in the interest of minimizing the disruption of services to students, funding for the High School Intervention initiative would support existing Upward Bound and Talent Search projects that would be eligible for continuation funding in fiscal year 2006.

GEAR UP

Answer. The President's fiscal year 2006 budget proposes to cut funding for GEAR UP for the same reasons—the new High School Intervention initiative would be a more targeted and comprehensive approach to improving high school education and increasing the achievement of all students. Although the Administration's assessment of GEAR UP found positive early results, there are no data regarding the program's effects on high school outcomes and college enrollment. The High School Intervention initiative would require States to focus on results, and it would provide support for rigorous, scientifically based research to determine the best methods for helping all students prepare for and succeed in college. In fiscal year 2006, continuing GEAR UP projects would be funded under the new initiative. In future years, the types of services currently provided under programs like TRIO and GEAR UP may be continued by States as part of their coordinated plans for improving high school education and increasing student achievement.

PER PUPIL EDUCATION COSTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Question. Every year when the budget comes out, there seems to always be an uproar from some of us on Capitol Hill that not enough funding was dedicated to the Department of Education. I appreciate that during this period of record high budget deficits, fiscal responsibility is a necessity. It also occurs to me, however, that regardless of how "tight" the budget is, there is a bottom dollar amount that it costs to educate a child. In your opinion, what is that amount for an elementary school student, a junior high school student, and a high school student? In asking this, I am asking for your expert opinion as the Secretary of the Department of Education and am referring to the total amount it costs to provide a public school student with the most basic education, regardless of funding source (i.e. Federal, State, or local government). Also, this question does not refer to how much is currently being spent per student, but how much do you believe is the bottom dollar amount that we should be spending per student.

Answer. It is not possible to develop such a number for several reasons. The most fundamental reason is that what constitutes an appropriate education differs from State to State. As each State develops its own system of standards, it implicitly creates a different system of education needed to meet those standards with different costs. Additionally, differences in children mean differences in costs. The resources necessary to educate a third-grader who is blind are different from that necessary to educate a third-grader whose parents have just immigrated from a foreign nation.

Goods and labor market conditions also affect costs. Fuel costs are higher in some States, making bus transportation more expensive. In some school districts, distances are great, similarly raising transportation costs. Economies of scale make education cheaper in some locales. A district that can take bids from several speech-language pathologists for services likely will have lower costs than a district with only one or two from which to choose. For all of these reasons, it is simply not possible to develop a meaningful measure of minimum costs necessary to educate a child at any age.

READING BY THIRD GRADE

Question. Numerous studies, including those funded by the Department of Education, show that parents' low literacy affects their children's performance in school. The single most significant predictor of children's literacy is their mother's literacy level. Children of parents who have less than a high school education tend to do poorest on reading tests, while children of high school graduates do much better. These differences in test scores have held constant since 1971, and the same differences show up in the scores of 3rd, 8th, and 11th graders. We also know that the more literate parents are, the more they support and participate in their children's education. With the President's proposed cuts to Adult Basic and Literacy Education funding, how will parents with low literacy levels or limited English skills help their children achieve at the levels established by No Child Left Behind?

Answer. The Department agrees that parents play a vital role in determining the success of a child's education. The parental involvement requirements under Part A of Title I, Title III, and other NCLB programs, encourage parents to become full partners in their child's education. NCLB provisions not only require schools to reach out to parents, through parental involvement activities, but also to provide information on school performance, school choice options, supplemental educational services, and other key elements of Title I to all parents and in a language and form that parents can understand.

In addition, the Department remains committed to addressing the needs of immigrant and limited English proficient (LEP) students and their parents. The fiscal year 2006 request includes level funding at \$68.6 million for English Literacy and Civics Education grants, which serve a vital purpose in States with large numbers of non-English-speaking immigrants.

IMMIGRANT EDUCATION

Question. According to the Aspen Institute, immigrants supplied half of our workforce growth in the 1990s and will account for all of our net workforce growth over the next 20 years. More immigrants arrived in the 1990s—13 million—than in any other decade in U.S. history. In light of these statistics, based on the 2000 Census and Bureau of Labor Statistics projections, the President's proposed budget cuts to Adult Basic and English Literacy programs do not make sense. Doesn't it appear that English as a Second Language funding for adults is more important than ever before?

Answer. The Department agrees that there is a considerable need to address the needs of the immigrant population, both at the elementary and secondary levels as well as at the adult level. This is reflected in current budget request, which includes level funding at \$68.6 million for English Literacy and Civics Education grants to support States with large numbers of non-English-speaking immigrants. Unlike regular Adult Education State grants, which rely upon decennial U.S. Census data, English Literacy and Civics Education grants are based on a combination of 10-year Census averages and recent population data and are, therefore, more responsive to fluctuations in immigration patterns. English Literacy and Civics Education grants will enable limited-English-proficient (LEP) immigrants to attain the language skills that are central both to their integration into society and to their success as members of the workforce.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD

ROBERT C. BYRD SCHOLARSHIPS

Question. President Bush's fiscal year 2006 budget submission proposes to eliminate funding for the National Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship program. The scholarship program, which was established by Congress in 1986, makes awards to students in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, and is the only merit-based form of Federal financial aid. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the program has made available a total of 336,525 1-year scholarships. The President's budget justification states that the National Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship program duplicates State, local, and private efforts. Madam Secretary, I recognize that the President's budget includes an increase in funding for Pell Grants, and that is welcome. But does the Bush Administration believe that we should not recognize and reward academic excellence, solely because some States, localities, and private institutions also recognize academic excellence?

Answer. While the Administration agrees that it is important to reward academic excellence, the Administration believes that it is critical to focus such merit-based

assistance on students with the highest financial need in order to target Federal assistance where it can be most effective. As a result, the Administration has requested \$33 million for the Enhanced Pell Grants for State Scholars program. This program would provide up to an additional \$1,000 in Pell Grants to students who complete a rigorous State Scholars curriculum in high school.

The National Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship program was assessed using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) for fiscal year 2006 and received a rating of "Results Not Demonstrated." The PART assessment identified several major design deficiencies that limit the program's effectiveness or efficiency. The PART assessment found the Byrd Honors Scholarship program to be duplicative of programs at the State, local and institutional level, noting that numerous non-Federal programs provide merit-based aid for outstanding students entering or continuing postsecondary education. All other Department scholarship programs are need-based, supporting those students who have a demonstrated financial need. This approach is central to one of the Department's strategic plan goals, which calls for the agency to increase access to quality postsecondary education especially to students with high financial need. The PART assessment noted that there is no evidence to suggest that scholarship recipients would otherwise be unable to attend college and that this program may subsidize activities that would have occurred without the program.

In response to these findings, the Administration determined that the resources previously used to support this program should be shifted to higher priority programs that target funds more effectively. The Administration's budget request for other Federal student financial assistance programs demonstrates its commitment to ensuring that all Americans have access to and financial assistance for lifelong learning.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator HARKIN. Thank you very much, Madame Secretary.

The subcommittee will stand in recess to reconvene at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 15 in room SD-124. At that time we will hear testimony from the Honorable Elaine Chao, Secretary, Department of Labor.

[Whereupon, at 10:38 a.m., Wednesday, March 2, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene at 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, March 15.]