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National Education Standards

Will they restrict local schools' flexibility?

Two trends are sweeping through U.S. public schools — standards-based reform and the push for accountability. The premise is that academic achievement can be improved by establishing rigorous statewide education standards and then by developing parallel curriculums and tests. Moreover, the Clinton administration wants voluntary national standards and tests established, so that parents, educators and policy-makers can know whether their states are doing a good job. When Congress moves to reauthorize education and testing measures this year, it will examine how reform and accountability can coexist with yet another trend in education — giving local schools more flexibility.

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Cover: Teacher Carmen Billings helps fourth-graders critique their stories during language arts at Stanton Elementary School in Stanton, Ky. (CQ/Scott J. Ferrell)

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National Education Standards

BY KATHY KOCH

THE ISSUES

Education shock therapy arrived in Virginia in January. That's when a staggering 98 percent of the public schools that administered the commonwealth's new achievement test learned they had failed to meet the cutoff requirement — passage by at least 70 percent of the students.

Residents across the state may have been shocked, but not Del. James H. Dillard II, R-Fairfax, co-chairman of the House Education Committee. When state legislators adopted tough, new academic standards in 1995, he says, "We knew there were going to be awful scores" on the first so-called high-stakes performance tests that followed.

The schools that flunked must reach the 70 percent cutoff within eight years or lose accreditation. If the scores do not go up soon, Dillard says, things are "going to hit the fan." [1]

Virginia's new tests and education standards reflect the twin trends that are sweeping American education: standards-based reform and the push for accountability. The premise behind the new reforms is that academic achievement can be improved by first establishing rigorous statewide education standards — blueprints setting out what children should know in each grade and what teachers are expected to teach. After adopting higher standards, states are expected to develop curriculums and tests aligned with the standards. The results of those tests are then supposed to tell parents, educators and policy-makers whether students are learning the new curriculum.

Many states are also imposing accountability through "high-stakes" testing. If testing reveals that schools don't meet the new standards, students aren't allowed to graduate, teachers forfeit salary increases and schools lose their accreditation.

But critics say that the way Virginia and several other states are implementing high-stakes testing as a means of speeding up reforms is profoundly unfair and doomed to fail. The testing is being done before educators have rewritten their curriculums to incorporate their new standards, retrained teachers in how to teach the new courses or helped low-performing students catch up. In effect, they say, it is putting the cart before the horse.

"It's time to call time-out in the pell-mell push for education accountability," Hugh B. Price, president of the National Urban League, wrote recently in *Education Week*. "Fairness dictates that the standards movement proceed sensibly, not recklessly." [2]

However, Heritage Foundation education specialist Nina Shokraii Rees says, "Having a good strong test in early years will give parents the information about where kids are, and where the problems are."

Accountability and standards-based reform grew out of the consistently poor results by U.S. students on national and international tests and persistent complaints from employers and colleges that high schools are graduating, in essence, functional illiterates.

Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton have supported curriculum-standardization efforts, including voluntary national standards and tests to be used as benchmarks by which to judge the state efforts.

Both liberals and conservatives stymied the Bush and Clinton proposals in Congress, although polls consistently show that Americans overwhelmingly favor national standards and tests. Conservatives feared national standards would result in federal control of education, jettisoning the nation's long tradition of 15,000 local districts choosing their own curriculums and tests. In particular, conservative Christian groups feared standards would be too politically correct and pedagogically innovative.

The left, led by the black and Latino congressional caucuses, feared poor results on national tests would be used to cut funding to children in already under-funded, low-performing schools, and would be unfair to disabled and non-English-speaking students.

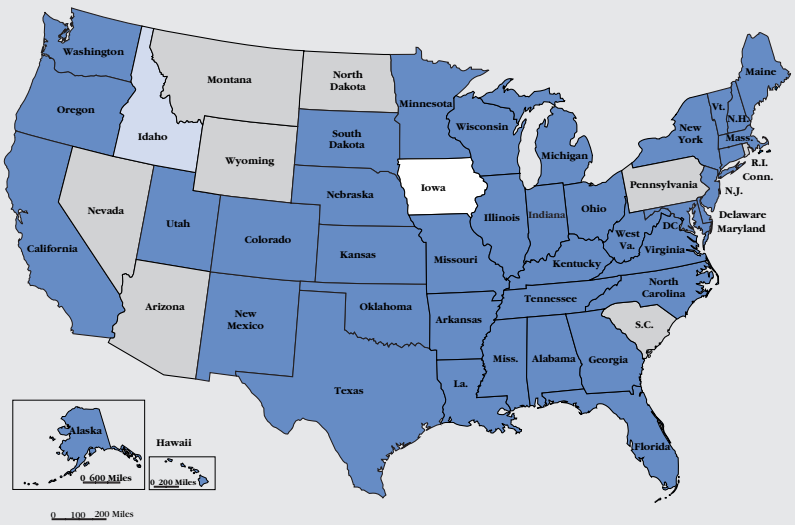
But many feel nationwide standards are still needed. "National standards are [still] very, very important," Rees says, as long as the federal government does not set them. "We ought to be able to measure our kids against a high national bar. Right now, when you move from Texas to Alabama, or even from San Antonio to Houston, you don't take the same tests or study the same curriculum."

After Congress thwarted the Bush and Clinton proposals, employers turned to the state capitols. "The business community was saying, 'We want some sense made out of this disorganized, poorly performing public school system,' " recalls John F. Jennings, director of the Center on Education Policy. " 'If the feds are the problem, let's get the feds out of the equation.' "

The states and the business community thus became the drivers of education reform. "The states took the reins in raising standards and putting

Setting Standards

Forty states now have standards in all four core subjects — English, math, science and social studies. Eight others have adopted standards in at least one subject. Idaho's standards are under development. Only Iowa has no official education standards.



* *All Iowa districts base their curriculums on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.*

Source: Education Week, *1999*

accountability in place," says Matt Gandal, director of standards and assessments for Achieve, a nonprofit consortium of governors and corporate officials established in 1996 as a clearinghouse for information on state standards. "The leadership has not come from the school districts or from Washington, although having the president pushing for it has helped."

Clinton's Goals 2000 legislation in 1994 gave states money to develop statewide standards. And the 1994 revisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) required schools receiving federal funds under the law's $8 billion Title I program to adopt rigorous state standards and tests for all students. Title I was designed to help "even out" funding between wealthy and poor school districts. In some of the poorest districts, Title I funds comprise 30 percent of funding.

The 1994 law represented a sea change in education policy. Instead of "tracking" poor and disadvantaged kids into lower-expectation classes, it called for all youngsters to be taught the same high-level curriculums — and to get extra help to meet those standards. By requiring new tests based on the higher standards, the law ushered in a new era in academic testing in American schools. It meant that students would no longer just be compared with their fellow students — which often gave parents a false sense of academic achievement, since an "A" in one school might be the same as a "C" in another school. Instead, the new standards-based tests give a more realistic picture of how much of the new curriculum students are actually learning.

"The ESEA program gave states a real boost to adopt standards for Title I kids," says Monty Neill, executive director of the National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest). "The states decided if they were doing it for Title I students they might as well do it for everyone."

Today, all but one of the 50 states — Iowa — have hammered out or are developing their own education standards, often after grueling, politicized legislative debates that echoed those heard in Washington. Most states are also rewriting their curriculums to match the new standards and developing tests to measure whether children are meeting them.

"For the first time in American history, states are moving to statewide curriculums," says Jennings "And they will hold students and teachers accountable for reaching those curriculums. That's what this whole movement is about."

Advocates say that states that are farthest along in their reform efforts are seeing some of the fastest-rising test scores in the country. In North Carolina and Texas, for instance, students have shown dramatic improvement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), considered the nation's report card. Moreover, inner-city areas, including Chicago and Philadelphia, have shown improvements as well. (*See story, p. 412.*)

"There's definitely momentum in

some very high-poverty cities," says Kati Haycock, president of the Education Trust, a nonprofit organization promoting high academic achievement, especially among disadvantaged and minority students.

Nevertheless, obstacles and challenges remain. Some complain that curriculum standardization and centralization are on a collision course with the concurrent trend in American education to grant individual schools more flexibility. "The states are really chipping away at local control," says Lawrence Feinberg, assistant director for reporting and analysis at the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), which sets policy for the NAEP.

In recent years, congressional Republicans have favored bundling federal education programs into block grants to eliminate red tape and give states and school districts more freedom to innovate. The recently passed ed-flex legislation was one such measure.

Already 27 states are implementing new achievement tests, which are much more difficult than the old-style "minimum competency tests" still required by many states for graduation. The new tests typically require biology, earth science, algebra and geometry, a higher level of writing skills and some U.S. and world history. But only 13 states so far have aligned their new tests to what is being taught in the classroom under the new standards.

However, proponents of high-stakes testing say it has to come first because the education establishment simply won't make the changes necessary without a sword hanging over their heads.

But critics complain that imposing higher standards without equalizing education funding further guarantees failure for poor children in failing schools. "It's not just a matter of kicking people in the butts," says Jennings.

Others say that while it's better to have 49 separate curriculums instead of 15,000, the nation still doesn't have a clear, consistent way to compare individual schools, states and students to one another. "What we have is 49 individual states, each busily reinventing the wheel," write two former state education commissioners. "We have a standards-based movement, national in scope, with no agreed-upon standards to guide its development." [3]

Meanwhile a group of 10 states announced May 5 that they are voluntarily adopting a rigorous eighth-grade math test, the first time states will be able to compare their students' math achievement across state lines. The project "will tie teaching and testing in America to the standards students are expected to reach in the highest performing countries in the world," said IBM CEO and Achieve Co-chairman Louis V. Gerstner Jr.

Clinton's 1997 proposal for voluntary national tests is expected to crop up again this session as Congress debates the ESEA reauthorization and Goals 2000. And, in his Jan. 19 State of the Union message, Clinton added a few new twists to his education-reform proposals — including a controversial recommendation that schools receiving federal aid end social promotion and improve teacher quality. The proposals prompted renewed debate over whether the president is trying to expand the government's role in education.

As educators and lawmakers try to improve education performance, these are some of the questions being asked:

Are national standards and tests still necessary?

President Clinton's proposal for national standards and tests is simple, says Education Department senior adviser Mike Cohen. "The idea has always been to have some kind of national consensus on testing so parents can know whether their kids are really measuring up," he says.

But Republicans and Democrats alike attacked that "simple" idea and eventually shelved it in favor of letting the states develop their own standards and tests.

Conservatives say the proposal is an attempt to seize control of the nation's curriculum by mandating "federal" standards and tests developed by the Department of Education. "There are many types of measurements for schools," says Randy Tate, executive director of the Christian Coalition. "But a nationalized test administered by the federal government, which will lead to a national curriculum, is not the answer."

In actuality, the standards were never to be developed by the government. The Bush administration had contracted with academic groups to develop them. In addition, while the Department of Education initially oversaw the test-writing contract, Congress later ordered the independent NAGB to supervise it.

"The idea of 'federal' standards was so controversial because we've got a constitutional tradition in this country regarding state responsibility for education," says Milton Goldberg, executive vice president for education reform at the National Alliance of Business. "Plus, we have 15,000 local school districts that always had authority over curriculum."

Conservatives distrust what the federal government might do if they administered a national test, says Rees at the Heritage Foundation. "They might change or dumb-down the test or ask questions that some family groups might not like," she says.

Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of Great City Schools, argues that the idea of "federal" standards written in Washington being uniformly applied across the country "has been dead for some years now." In-

stead, there are currently 49 home-grown state versions, he said, some more rigorous than others.

"We need national standards as the basis on which to judge all those state standards," says Christopher T. Cross, president of The Council for Basic Education. "I would like to think we could do it at the national level, but, politically, I'm more realistic. I'd rather move the ball forward the way we are doing it than lose the game altogether."

Others insist Clinton's proposal could be revived during this year's debate over reauthorization of NAGB or the ESEA. "States need to know that they have set the bar high enough compared with other states and countries," says Gandal. "The desire for that kind of information is growing in the states, from the policy-maker level down to the parent level."

"National standards could be a benchmark for the states," says Cohen. "And that's where the notion of a national test came into play."

Diane Ravitch, a fellow at the Brookings Institution, insists the country still needs "clear, explicit national standards, but it will take a longer time getting there than all of us would like."

Complicating matters is the fact that many states have not yet aligned their tests with their new standards, so they are not testing students based on what is being taught under the new curriculums. Instead, states are relying on a plethora of existing achievement and proficiency tests. "Right now, it's impossible to compare those scores," says Gandal. "You cannot tell what 'proficient' on the Texas tests means in New York. As these tests are being given and the results are coming out, there's more and more recognition of how valuable that kind of cross-state comparison can be."

A national test also would help parents understand the gap that often exists between some states' achievement on state proficiency tests and the NAEP, says Cohen. "That gap tells you that some states are not setting very high standards," he says.

But Brown University education Professor Theodore R. Sizer, founder of the Coalition of Essential Schools, argues that just because there are discrepancies between state assessments and the NAEP does not mean the state tests are too easy. "Maybe the two tests aren't comparable," he says. "This is an oversimplification of a complicated problem."

Sizer says many in his group, which is dedicated to developing autonomous, innovative schools, "have deep misgivings" about national standards and national testing. High school education is about culture, he points out. "For one group to say, 'This is the culture and everybody is going to study it,' is a very scary thing, particularly in a country as diverse as ours."

He also decries national testing. "To try to nail down the quality of a school after a few hours of paper and pencil tests seems to me pretty hard to defend," he says. "Some children just don't perform well on multiple-choice tests." Those children are best tested through alternative methods, such as interrogation or having them write essays, he says.

So how can parents in North Carolina know if their children are getting as good an education as children are in New York? "You can't do these cross-state comparisons," Sizer says. "Parents should look at their children's work, go sit in classes, network. Find out what kids in other states are learning at a particular grade level." While Sizer says "all kinds of professional organizations" can help parents do that, he admits that it isn't easy, because "the public school system is very self-protective, and the motivation is to keep it murky."

Tate agrees that ensuring quality education is largely the duty of parents, not national standards or tests. "Parents must ensure that homework gets done, and that teachers have been rigorously tested before they become teachers."

Tate also argues that the kind of cross-district comparative information Clinton says a national test would provide is readily available from real estate agents. "If you've ever gone house-hunting, you know which are the good schools, which are safe, which excel," he says.

Goldberg says that perhaps the best way to get "national" standards is exactly what has happened — state consensus-building and benchmarking among the states. "Over time, a consensus will emerge about what represents quality standards," he says. "If those end up being so-called 'national' standards, so be it. But they will be 'interstate,' not 'federal' standards."

Are education standards and tests fair to minorities and the educationally disadvantaged?

Many experts say that determining whether a test is "fair" goes far beyond what is on the test. "It's not a question of whether the tests are fair but of how they are administered," says Cross. "If you give kids plenty of lead time, and provide extra help or time for students who need it, then they are fair."

Goldberg agrees. "The standards are neutral," he says. "What's unfair is what we are doing or not doing to help youngsters achieve the standards." The solution is not to change or lower the standards for some kids, he says. "The answer is differentiating the treatment, instruction and resources for those kids. You find out what works. And if it takes more money, spend more money."

"There's one set of folks who say, just put the standards in place and everything else will fall into line," says

Haycock. "There's another side, including many in the civil rights community, who say that until you can guarantee poor kids have exactly the same supports that rich kids have, you cannot put these standards into place.

"We argue somewhere in the middle — that, in truth, these kids already are paying huge consequences for not being educated to the same standards as other kids. So to delay raising standards and moving in this direction is criminal." However, the equity changes must be sought simultaneously, she says.

"Unfortunately, in my experience, educators don't make the changes until kids are threatened with consequences," she says. "In a perfect world, we'd say make all the system changes first and then hold the kids accountable. But the kids are already being held accountable.

"Some people argue the standards are too high," Haycock continues. "But it is very important that minority and poor kids be held to the same high standards as other kids. There is no excuse for lowering the bar for them. By the same token, is it fair to put into place tomorrow a test that assumes Algebra 2, without making sure the kids in those classes have had Algebra 2 and that their teachers know how to teach it?"

Neill complains that adopting standards and implementing more rigorous tests before changing the curriculum and ensuring that teachers can teach it "is profoundly unfair to students in the inner cities," where many teachers never majored or minored in the subjects they teach.

"States certainly are not allocating the resources" to provide such inputs first, he says. So far, only 20 states are offering intervention for students having difficulty meeting the standards, according to the American Federation of Teachers.[4] "They're saying, 'It is not a question of money.' But that is demonstrably not true in some cases. For instance, sometimes you have tests based on the presumption that students have done a lot of lab work, yet you have schools with no labs. You can't buy a lab with no money."

But Rees says the testing should be done first and then decisions can be made about where investments are needed, based on the results of the tests. "You've got to start somewhere," she says.

"To say that we shouldn't test because we don't know what to do if the students fail is kind of ludicrous," she adds. "We should find out how well the students are doing and then work through the legislatures or the federal government or private sources to make sure those kids do better on those tests in the future.

"Having the information and knowing what's going on is helpful to envision what to do next," she says. "Then we need to invest in better teachers — teachers who have majored or minored in the subjects they are teaching and who have good qualifications and experience. In my opinion having a good teacher is the key thing you need to worry about."

Many critics fear that without major financial investments, poor students will be hit by a double whammy. First, they will be tested without first being given the same benefits as rich kids, and then poor test results will be used to cut funding to their schools.

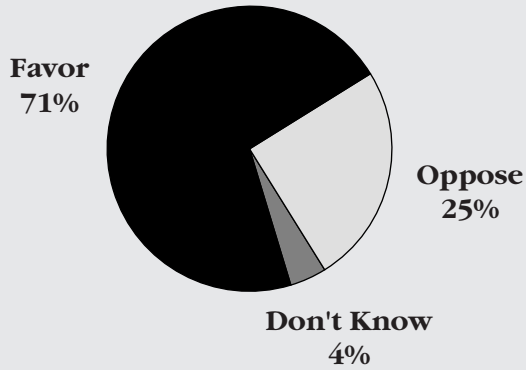
"Testing in this country has a very long history of being used for discriminatory practices," says Casserly, "such as for tracking and sorting students of color, for placing white students in advanced courses and black and Hispanic students in special education courses in which they are taught to lower standards."

Because of these concerns, most city schools are wary of the new round of high-stakes testing sweeping the country. "Unless we provide all kids in the country with the same opportunity for success to meet the standards, then high-stakes testing is unfair," says Casserly.

Americans Favor Voluntary Testing Program

Nearly three-quarters of the Americans polled favored President Clinton's voluntary testing program to measure public school performance.

Do you favor a voluntary national testing program for fourth- and eighth-graders?



Source: Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, "Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," Aug. 25, 1998

At the Head of the Education-Reform Class

North Carolina and Texas were among the first states to try standards-based reform in the early 1990s, and since then they have gone to the head of the education-reform class.

From 1990 to 1997, they posted the largest average gains in the country on seven key National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) tests — a national standardized test that is considered "the nation's report card." In addition, their disadvantaged students are making greater achievement gains than their better-off students.

Surprisingly, the two states did not increase per-pupil spending, teacher/pupil ratios or the number of teachers with advanced degrees — three factors frequently touted as the solution to America's education problems. Both states "rank at or below national averages on these characteristics, and none of the factors changed during the period under study in ways that could explain the gains," says a National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) study of how the two states achieved their dramatic results. [1]

Instead, the NEGP study pointed to strong, long-term support from the business community, consistent bipartisan political support and a willingness to stick with systemic reform on a long-term basis rather than switching to the "reform *du jour*."

Further, both states appear to have successfully combined standards-based education, full-fledged accountability systems and increased local flexibility. For example, they both:

- Adopted clear, statewide education standards for each grade in the early 1990s;
- Developed new, statewide achievement tests based on those new standards and made the test results available to students, parents, teachers, schools and school districts;
- Required all students to meet the same standards — including learning disabled, non-English-speaking and poor children;
- Shifted resources to schools with more disadvantaged students, partially because judicial decisions mandated more equity in state education funding;
- Held schools accountable for improved results by offering rewards and sanctions based on student performance on statewide achievement tests; and
- Gave teachers and administrators more local control and increased flexibility to determine how to meet the standards.

The authors of the NEGP study concluded that the most important aspect of education reform for both states was the establishment of a "fragile, but visible trust in the educational reform agenda" among taxpayers, educators, policy-makers and business leaders.

Kati Haycock, president of the Washington, D.C.-based Education Trust, says that the improving test scores in Texas and North Carolina show that the "gap between minorities and whites and between poor and rich is declining.

"Those states are giving people hope that we can close this gap," she says.

[1] David Grissmer and Ann Flanagan, "Exploring Rapid Achievement Gains in North Carolina and Texas," National Education Goals Panel, November 1998.

Some urban districts volunteered for Clinton's national tests. "But we fought very hard to ensure that the tests used to assess standards-based reform would not be used for high-stakes testing," says Casserly.

"What's not fair is having no standards at all," says Ravitch. "The greatest inequity is when you let everybody do their own thing. Then you have kids in the comfortable suburbs with very well-qualified teachers, who come from homes that are giving them a lot, and the school system does nothing to level the inequities that poor kids start with from the minute they walk into their schools. The best way of leveling the playing field is to make sure that the kids in the inner city are getting the same quality of instruction and aiming for the same kind of achievement as the kids in the suburbs."

"Economists who have studied standards say they have a large egalitarian impact," she adds. "Lack of standards results in the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer."

Besides, she says, the country already has implicit national tests in the NAEP and the Scholastic Assessment Tests (SATs). "They are given from one end of this country to the other. So why don't we spell out for students what kinds of things will be on those tests, so everyone can prepare?"

Standardized tests are culturally biased and unfair to minorities, non-English speakers and learning disabled kids, some critics say. "This whole, one-size-fits-all approach simply doesn't work for lots and lots of kids," says Neill. "Aside from issues of language and special needs, you've got different cultural backgrounds. You've got different kids interested in different things, who learn in different ways and express their knowledge in different ways."

The Latino congressional caucus has been adamant that the president's proposed national reading test be given in Spanish, because it is to be given in the fourth grade, when some youngsters may not have mastered English. The Clinton administration has never supported that, probably

because they know it would galvanize even more conservative opposition to the test. "So they are constantly caught between a rock and a hard place," says Neill, "knowing that anything they do to please the black or Latino caucuses will intensify and expand conservative opposition and vice versa."

"When you have 30-40 languages spoken in some California districts, the issue of what language a test should be given in becomes crucial," says Chris Pipho, senior fellow for the Education Commission of the States. The 1994 ESEA law eventually said children should be tested in the language that best measures what they know and can do.

"The 1994 law called for high standards for all children," says William Taylor, vice chairman of the Citizens Commission on Civil Rights. "It replaced the very unfair old system, in which less was expected of poor children, children of color and children with limited English proficiency."

"Standardized tests are also very difficult for learning-disabled kids," says Neill. Besides, he says, many of the state standards are far too voluminous, and the tests poorly crafted. "On some of these tests, the math problems are written so poorly that the kids can't even figure out what they are being asked to do," he says. "If you stack all the state standards on top of each other you'll be four-to-six-feet-deep in books. There is too much there to rationally expect children to learn unless they stay in school until they are 40."

Do national standards threaten local control of education?

The seemingly simple idea of nationally approved, uniform, world-class academic standards at all grade levels ran smack into America's long tradition of local control of education.

"We are against national standards because it ends up being a de facto national curriculum," says the Christian Coalition's Tate. "It leads to a greater federal role in local education. We want parents to have a greater role, not the federal government."

But Cohen noted that Goals 2000 urged the states to pass their own standards. "The issues of federal control over curriculum are very, very sensitive," says Cohen. "We're not proposing a federal curriculum or anything like that. That's why Goals 2000 was based on the states setting their own standards."

But while Goals 2000 provided money for states to develop voluntary standards, the 1994 amendments to ESEA made standards and tests mandatory for any districts receiving federal money to educate disadvantaged students. Many saw those requirements — coupled with other Clinton efforts to spend federal money on building repairs and to hire 100,000 teachers — as part of a larger scheme to radically expand the federal government's role in education.

Many chafed at Clinton's proposals because the federal government only contributes 6-8 percent of the $325 billion spent on K-12 education in this country each year. "Talk about the tail wagging the dog," said Chester Finn, a former Reagan administration assistant secretary of Education. "Eight percent of the money should not buy 92 percent of the rulemaking authority." [5]

Local school districts also complain that standards-based reform has resulted in centralization of education policy at the state rather than the district level, by taking decisions about curriculums and tests away from local districts.

Both conservative and liberal educators oppose the centralizing trend. "What really upsets me is the notion that folks close to the action cannot set higher standards than a centralized government can," says Sizer. "There are schools with very powerful academic standards that didn't need the state to tell them what those should be."

Tate agrees. "The standards and values instilled in our children should reflect local standards," he says. "They should be set by local school boards, local parents and administrators who have a greater stake in the kids' futures. You will get better textbooks, better curriculum and in the end, a better education."

Tate says of the state centralization trend: "Obviously state oversight is better than federal oversight. But our focus is to get that money out of the capitols and back to the local schools."

Top-down curriculum standardization conflicts with the bottom-up decentralization efforts Tate's group favors. Those include such Republican-sponsored legislation as giving local districts more flexibility to innovate by providing block grants and directing more money to classrooms. Decentralization advocates also favor more small, independent schools, like charter and magnet schools, which have more freedom from regulations.

But Gandal says local-control supporters have already lost the curriculum-setting battle. "It's hard to defend local control when you have kids graduating unprepared," he says.

But the two movements do not have to be in conflict, he says. "You can have nationwide goals of what everyone is supposed to learn, and then let a million flowers bloom in terms of how you get there."

Cross suggests that some teachers, administrators and politicians "just don't want to be held accountable against what people in other cities, states and countries are doing. One way to do that is to jump up and down and yell 'local control.' But parents and business leaders don't believe local control means having a curriculum that is not judged against others," he says. "We did a poll last

fall and found that 73 percent of parents wanted their students to learn at a level equal to the standards of the best in the country."

Besides, Cross contends, local control of curriculum in America is largely a myth: "We already have a de facto national curriculum created by textbook writers and publishers [who market nationwide]. That doesn't represent local control." ■

BACKGROUND

Early Proposals

Academics have been trying to create a national American curriculum since the end of the last century, when a committee of college presidents led by Harvard President Charles Eliot recommended the classics approach to secondary school studies. Studying Greek and Latin "trains the mind," and learning geography "enhances the powers of observation and reasoning," they concluded. [6]

A national test was first proposed during consideration of the original 1965 Title I legislation for ESEA, which earmarked extra federal funds to schools with high concentrations of low-income children. It proposed a federal testing program to ensure the students were learning and achieving. After bitter debate, the funds were approved, but not the testing requirement. Education groups opposed it, claiming it would mean federal control of schools and a national curriculum, says NAEP's Feinberg.

Most experts say the 1983 "A Nation at Risk" report sparked the current standards-based reform movement. Following more than a decade of curriculum experimentation and plummeting SAT scores, the landmark report declared that in some urban areas "basic literacy has become the goal rather than the starting point."

The report prompted some states to institute minimum competency tests for graduates. At least 20 mostly Southern states imposed such tests, which became the precursors of today's "high-stakes tests." But unlike today's tests, the earlier competency tests were extremely easy, often geared to seventh- or eighth-grade achievement levels. Indeed, many were given during middle school years. Ironically, says Achieve, 13 mostly Southern states have decided to impose new high school exit exams but will base them only on the new seventh- and eighth-grade-level curriculums.

But the state competency tests were not enough to raise overall achievement. In 1986, a task force of governors led by Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., who later became Bush's Education secretary, released another influential report, "Time for Results." It called for a "horse trade" between state governments and school districts, exchanging flexibility for local accountability.

In September 1989, Bush — the self-described "education president" — convened an education summit in Charlottesville, Va. Ignoring the traditional Republican reluctance to actively involve Washington in education policy, Bush teamed with the then-president of the National Governors' Association, Bill Clinton, who had been active in education reform in his home state of Arkansas.

At the Charlottesville gathering, the governors laid the groundwork for six national education goals, which later formed the basis for Goals 2000, Clinton's grand plan for education reform. Among other things, the goals called for U.S. students to be the best in the world in science and math by 2000, increasing early childhood school readiness and boosting graduation rates to 90 percent and adult literacy to 100 percent by the year 2000. The goals became the underpinning of the current standards-based reform movement.

In 1991, two conservative groups led the way in advocating national testing. A presidential advisory committee composed of business leaders and educators recommended tests for elementary and secondary students. And an education group chaired by former Gov. Thomas H. Kean, R-N.J., proposed requiring all high-school seniors to take a national examination.

In 1992, the National Council on Education Standards and Testing said that in the absence of well-defined and demanding standards, education in the United States had gravitated toward "de facto national minimum expectations," created primarily by textbook writers. "Consumers of education in this country have settled for far less than they should and for far less than do their counterparts in other developed countries." [7]

Bush included national goals, standards and tests in his America 2000 education program, submitted to Congress in 1991. But he didn't ask Congress for funds to develop the standards. Using Education Department discretionary money, he hired independent academicians to develop them. "All the national standards — which were later so roundly criticized by conservatives — were initially funded by conservative Republicans," says Jennings.

Clinton's Efforts

By 1992, when Bush lost the election to Clinton, 23 states had already begun preparing math and

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Chronology

1960s *Nationwide individual performance tests are proposed.*

1965
During consideration of the original Title I portion of the Education and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), legislators propose a nationwide testing program. The proposal is defeated after education groups claim it would mean federal control of schools.

1969
The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) is approved, but testers are prohibited from giving it to all children or from gathering results on individual students, schools or school districts. Only statewide results are to be obtained, based on random samples of students.

1980s *President Ronald Reagan launches a movement to improve education to compete with other countries.*

1983
The Education Department's National Commission on Excellence in Education publishes "A Nation At Risk."

1986
A National Governors' Association report, "Time for Results," proposes a "horse trade" in which states will give localities funding and flexibility on teaching methods in return for accountability on achievement results.

September 1989
President George Bush convenes an education summit in Charlottesville, Va., with the National Governors' Association, headed by then-Gov. Bill Clinton, D-Ark.

1990s *Governors lead efforts to set voluntary nationwide academic standards. After Republicans take over Congress, efforts to develop national standards shift to the states.*

January-February 1990
Six national education goals announced by President Bush are accepted by U.S. governors.

July 1990
Bipartisan National Education Goals Panel is created to measure education progress.

April 18, 1991
Bush outlines strategy to reinvent American education in his "America 2000" initiative.

September 1991
National Education Goals Panel recommends establishing national standards in the first annual "Goals Report: Building a Nation of Learners."

Jan. 24, 1992
National Council on Education Standards and Testing calls for ambitious state standards.

1992
Twenty-three states begin upgrading their math and science curriculums. Education Department funds development of voluntary national curriculum standards.

March 1994
Congress clears and Clinton signs Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which creates eight national education goals and provides funds to help states develop "voluntary" standards.

October 1994
Congress clears and Clinton signs the reauthorization of ESEA, which requires states receiving federal funds for disadvantaged students to hold them to the same high academic standards as advantaged students.

1995
Urban schools begin focusing on academics rather than the social needs of their students. The change is due to the standards-based reform movement and the 1994 ESEA requirements.

1996
Business leaders and governors at a second education summit focus on getting the states to finish developing high education standards.

Feb. 4, 1997
Clinton proposes that by March 1999 the U.S. should have voluntary testing of fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math.

1997
Congress bans field testing or implementation of the tests in fiscal 1998.

1998
Achievement scores for urban school districts begin increasing faster than non-urban scores. In the omnibus appropriations bills for fiscal 1999, Congress permanently blocks voluntary national tests, unless explicitly authorized by Congress.

Are Education Standards Working?

As Congress gears up to overhaul the legislative framework for standards-based education reform, studies have begun trickling out tentatively indicating that the decade-long effort may just be starting to have an impact on student learning. And some of the biggest improvements appear to be occurring in the nation's poorest schools.

"Our effort to raise academic standards for our children are beginning to pay off," President Clinton said during his March 6 weekly radio address. He was referring to recent reading scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), a national standardized test that is considered "the nation's report card." The 1998 results showed that average reading scores are up for all grade levels tested, although about a third of the nation's students are still not up to "basic" reading levels.

Moreover, two new studies show that urban school achievement test scores are improving, often faster than scores for students in the suburbs, or the nation as a whole. Both studies attribute the improvements to the adoption of more rigorous academic standards.

Some skeptics say, however, that they doubt the new standards are responsible for the improved results because it's too early for the standards to have had an effect. They point to a third study showing how standards-based reform in North Carolina and Texas — when combined with increased accountability and more local flexibility — have produced dramatic achievement improvements. (*See story, p. 408.*)

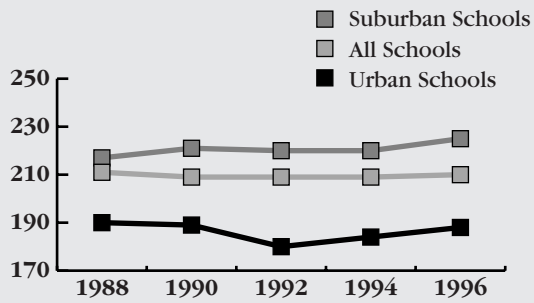
A report by the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) concluded that standards-based education reforms initiated by the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) are responsible for the progress in urban schools.

In the first-ever study of the impact on urban schools of the $8 million Title I portion of ESEA — designed to raise academic achievement among disadvantaged students — students' reading and math scores on standardized tests were found to be improving steadily and substantially, although they still aren't up to the level of students in the suburbs.

Of the 24 urban school districts that provided test data, 88 percent showed increased reading scores among disadvantaged students, and 83 percent showed higher math scores over both two- and three-year periods. "Gains were particularly strong over a three-year period and in fourth grade and in reading," stressed the report. [1]

About 95 percent of the nation's high-poverty schools participate in the Title I program, which covers 11 million students nationwide. As the largest source of federal funds for the nation's schools, Title I is the government's premier weapon for improving academic instruction in inner cities. It was initially designed in 1965 to give remedial support for poor, disabled or non-English-speaking children in

Trends in NAEP Reading Performance



Reading scores have been rising faster in urban rather than suburban schools since 1992.

Source: Department of Education, "Promising Results, Continuing Challenges: Final Report of the National Assessment of Title I," May 5, 1999

Continued from p. 410

science curriculums. That year, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) published the nation's first national standards for math.

When Clinton came into office, he picked up Bush's standards-and-assessments mantel. His 1993 Goals 2000 package gave money to states to develop "voluntary" national content and performance standards and tests to go with them.

"When we proposed Goals 2000, the notion was that states have primary responsibility for setting academic standards and for developing and implementing tests to see whether kids are meeting them," says Cohen. "The idea of national standards has always been something kind of on top of that, to serve as a model, to provide additional information, and it would be voluntary."

However, the administration's proposal for amending ESEA's Title I went further. It required standards and tests for any school receiving Title I money, which is earmarked for educating disadvantaged children.

Clinton's ESEA proposal took off in a new direction. Starting from the premise that all children can learn if given the proper inputs, the proposal said America would no longer tolerate lower academic expectations for poor and disadvantaged children.

reading, math and science. Before 1994 those students were put into remedial classes, where they were held to lower academic standards than the rest of the student body.

But when ESEA was overhauled in 1994, it mandated that any schools receiving Title I funds adopt rigorous academic standards for all children, including the disadvantaged. They were given until the 2000-2001 academic year to write the new standards and develop appropriate tests to determine whether students were learning the new curriculum.

The CGCS survey found that about 90 percent of responding school districts had adopted reading and math standards in at least some grades, and had spent their Title I money on teacher training and reducing class size, new technology, after-school and summer school programs and family literacy. The report also found that parental involvement had increased, which numerous studies show boosts student achievement. The 1994 law had also required schools to use Title l funds to spur parental participation through greater outreach.

The CGCS report concluded that Title I reforms in the nation's poorest schools "are paying off in better student performance," even though implementation "may not be as fast as everyone desires and quality may not yet be as high as everyone may wish."

The second study, by the Department of Education, says the same thing, based on a comparison of 1994 and 1998 NAEP reading scores. [2]

The largest gains were in Title I schools. Ten out of 13 of the nation's largest urban school districts showed improvements over the last three years in the number of students meeting state standards in reading. Scores in the poorest schools went up in both reading and math in four states — Connecticut, Maryland, North Carolina and Texas.

"States that have taken the lead at standards-based reform are getting good results," Education Secretary Richard W. Riley said at a press conference as he announced the results. He said the results show Congress should "stay the course" in reauthorizing ESEA this year. [3]

But a recent Heritage Foundation study by Nina Shokraii Rees challenged Riley's interpretation of the results. The recent improvements cannot be correlated to the 1994 ESEA amendments, Rees argued, because most of the reforms mandated by that law have not yet been implemented. In fact, most Title-I-eligible school principals surveyed for a 1998 Education Department study were unaware of the standards-based reforms required by the 1994 law, she wrote. Indeed, the Education Department study showed that "only 43 percent of principals seem familiar with Title I itself," she said. [4]

Rees also noted that NAEP results have been challenged in some states, including Kentucky, Louisiana and South Carolina, where the number of special-education students exempted from NAEP testing doubled from 1994 to 1998. The Educational Testing Service is reviewing the 1998 NAEP results to see if higher scores in some states resulted from fewer special-ed students taking the test.

The Heritage Foundation recommends that Congress, when it renews ESEA this year, should give states more flexibility in how to use Title I funds and allow parents whose children attend failing schools to receive vouchers worth their children's share of the funds, redeemable at the public or private school of their choice.

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[1] Sharon Lewis, et al., "Reform and Results: An Analysis of Title I in the Great City Schools, 1994-95 to 1997-98," Council of Great City Schools, March 1999.

[2] "Promising Results, Continuing Challenges: The Final Report of the National Assessment of Title I," Department of Education, March 1, 1999.

[3] David J. Hoff and Kathleen Kennedy Manzo, "States Committed to Standards Reforms Reap NAEP Gains," *Education Week*, March 10, 1999.

[4] Nina Shokraii Rees, "A Close Look at Title I, the Federal Program to Aid Poor Children," The Heritage Foundation, April 13, 1999. The Education Department study she quoted was "Status of Education Reform in Public Elementary Schools: Principals Perspective," Office of Educational Research and Improvement and the National Center for Education Statistics, May 1998.

Eventually signed into law in 1994, it gave states until 2000-2001 to adopt higher academic standards and accompanying tests. It also said states should supply extra help to low-performing students to meet the standards.

ESEA drew bipartisan flak. The left feared that the tests would be used for high-stakes purposes and would penalize poor students who had not been provided the same educational opportunities as wealthier children in the suburbs. They wanted educational improvements first and tests later.

The right attacked Goals 2000 as a federal power grab, and latched onto it as a campaign issue in the historic 1994 midterm elections that ushered in the Republican takeover of Congress. "Conservatives hated Clinton and tried to demonize Goals 2000 and national testing to energize people to vote," says Jennings, author of *Why National Standards and Tests?*, a history of the legislative battles over national standards and tests.

"The religious right claimed Goals 2000 would do everything from allow children to be taken away from their parents to allowing officers to confiscate people's guns," remembers Jennings. "They used it like they used abortion — to get people stirred up."

Standards Bashed

The Goals 2000 debate also fell victim to timing. It coincided with the release of several of the national standards Bush had commissioned earlier, meant as benchmarks for the states. They were roundly attacked, mostly for being too politically correct, promoting too much environmentalism and multiculturalism and not enough core curriculum.

For instance, the math standards promoted critical thinking and allowed students in all grades to use calculators, something traditionalists oppose. The English standards did not promote the classics and leaned toward "whole language" rather than phonics instruction, critics said.

Ravitch, who pioneered the push for national standards in the Bush administration, says the final standards created such a furor because they were developed by academicians without citizen input. "Plus, the groups writing them saw this as a wonderful opportunity to revolutionize the field. It created huge problems."

The history standards came under heavy attack. In fact, Lynn Cheney — who as head of the National Endowment for the Humanities under Bush had funded development of the history standards — attacked the final product after she retired. "She said there was too much multiculturalism, too much women's stuff, not enough good old 'Who is George Washington?' stuff," says Neill. The Senate voted 99-1 to condemn them.

The English standards encountered almost universal condemnation. "They were written in such gobbledygook jargon," says Ravitch. "They were not standards. It was 'constructionism,' — in which the student constructs his own knowledge."

As the national standards were being bashed in Washington, the states were quietly developing their own versions. By May 1994 — a month after Goals 2000 became law and before any federal funds had been released to finance development of state standards — 42 states had already developed or were developing content standards, and 30 were developing or had already adopted performance standards.

In 1996 business leaders and governors met again, this time at an education summit chaired by IBM's Gerstner. "Frustrated that Republicans had worked to block the national standards, the business community said, 'Wait a minute. This isn't Clinton. This is us,'" Jennings recalls.

Consequently, the summit focused on keeping the states on the standards bandwagon. The governors got the message. All of the states except Iowa are now implementing standards and developing tests aligned to them.

Education Politics

From the moment the Republicans came into power, they tried to repeal Goals 2000. From 1995 to 1998, whenever education-funding bills came before Congress, conservatives tried to kill the program or block national testing.

In 1995, the House passed a bill to eliminate Goals 2000, but it stalled in the Senate. [8] A year later, conservatives eliminated the National Education Standards and Improvement Council, a Goals 2000 panel that critics had said was tantamount to a National School Board. [9]

In his Feb. 4, 1997, State of the Union message, Clinton proposed that by March 1999 the United States should institute a voluntary national program testing fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math. After a bitter debate, Congress eventually banned field testing or implementation of the tests in fiscal 1998, and got Clinton to agree that the NAGB would oversee development of the tests rather than the Department of Education.

Conservatives argued the test would lead to federal control of education and to a national curriculum. Civil rights and Hispanic groups argued the tests would stigmatize poor and non-English-speaking children stuck in underfunded schools without providing extra resources to help them pass the test. "Equal opportunity in testing cannot be achieved given unequal education opportunity," said Rep. Rubén Hinojosa, D-Texas, as he joined virtually every Republican and most members of the black and Hispanic caucuses in voting 295-125 to ban the tests in 1998. [10]

Last October's omnibus appropriations bill for fiscal 1999 permanently blocked pilot testing, field testing, implementation, administration or distribution of national tests, unless explicitly authorized by Congress. But the measure did not kill the tests altogether. It asked the NABG to report to Congress on what the purpose and intended use of the national tests would be, and what was meant by the word "voluntary." NAGB is expected to send Congress that report this June. [11]

During congressional elections in 1996 and 1998, the Christian right went after incumbents, including conservative Republicans who had not succeeded in halting national testing and repealing Goals 2000. They even targeted conservative Pennsylvania Rep. Bill Goodling. As Republican chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee Goodling had blocked national tests in 1997 and again in 1998, but Christian conservatives said he was not activist enough on the two issues.

Meanwhile, in 1994 and 1995 urban schools had begun to change for the better, says Casserly. "Teaching

had not been one of the top five priorities of urban schools," he says, "but by 1995 it became the top priority and nothing else even came close to touching it." Part of that change was due to the standards-based reform movement and part to the 1994 Title I requirements, he says.

As a result, urban districts have been making greater gains in achievement test scores than suburban districts have, he points out. (*See graph, p. 412.*)

In addition, over the last 10 years, most states and the federal government have withheld additional funds from urban districts until they showed that they could use the money they had more effectively, he says. "Urban school districts have been working smarter and more efficiently, squeezing out results from the limited dollars that they have," he says.

Mostly they've raised standards and required more teacher training. "They are not making these gains because of large infusions of cash," says Casserly. "But my big fear is that over the long run, if their lack of resources is allowed to continue, there will come a point when these districts have squeezed out about as much achievement gain as they can with the limited dollars they have. They are going to hit a wall." ■

CURRENT SITUATION

State Standards

Although the standards-based reform movement is gaining momentum, its pace isn't fast enough for some. "It's clearly moving, and clearly real," says Casserly. "It's just taking longer than we originally thought it would."

The slow pace of reforms confirmed his initial doubts about turning the job over to the states. "There was clearly enough political pressure in each of the states to ensure the standards didn't move as fast as people wanted, weren't as high as people wanted and the assessments weren't as stringent as originally envisioned," he says.

Nearly all the states are operating under Department of Education waivers because they missed the 1997-1998 deadline, imposed by ESEA, for having both content and performance standards. Moreover, most are not expected to meet the 2000-2001 deadline for aligning their achievement tests with their standards.

According to a study by *Education Week* and the Pew Charitable Trusts, 40 states now have standards in all four core subjects (English, math, science and social studies), and eight others have adopted standards in at least one subject. Only Iowa and Idaho, which is working on its third draft, have no official state standards. Some states are on the second or third revisions of their standards.

But critics say some standards are too vague, too broad and too long. Students would have to double the amount of time they spend in class to cover all the material, say critics like FairTest's Neill. For example, he says, the average person would need a degree in geography to meet just one of Virginia's 15 standards for 10th-grade geography. It requires students to be able to "analyze the regional development of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean in terms of physical, economic and cultural characteristics and historical evolution from 1000 AD to the present."

The Test-First Approach

Forty-eight states now require students to take statewide, standardized tests, but only about a dozen of the states have tests that reflect the curriculum changes required by the new standards. Some states have not even written their new standards-based curriculums yet.

"The country has gotten rather test-crazy at the moment," says Casserly. "Testing is being used to drive education reform. Rather than raising the standards and then revising the curriculum, training the teachers and putting the resources in place first, we've decided to test first," he says. "Then when the results are too low, everyone suddenly says, 'Gee, we have to do something.' "

To make matters worse, according to a recent FairTest study, two-thirds of the state achievement tests are of such poor quality they "impede, rather than enhance genuine education reform." Too many are based on multiple-choice questions or are norm-referenced, in which student performance is compared with other students rather than to a set of performance criteria. A third of the state tests need to be completely overhauled, another third needs major improvements and the rest need either significant or modest improvements, the report said. [12]

Nonetheless, advocates say the test-first approach will force faster implementation of standards, especially if coupled with requirements that are more stringent for teachers and the elimination of social promotion.

High-Stakes Testing

Twenty-seven states now administer high-school exit exams or are planning to implement them soon. In New York, for instance, all students must pass revised Regents exams by 2003 in order to graduate.

In the past, New York students could earn either the prestigious Regents diploma or a local diploma requiring easier exams.

Some states have tied student performance on such tests to teacher salary increases and administrator promotions and bonuses. Some say accountability is the next logical step in education reform. Accountability is the "necessary capstone of the entire school reform program," according to Colorado Education Commissioner William J. Moloney. "Standards and assessments are meaningless if there are no consequences." [13]

"This is what the businesspeople and the governors think should happen next," says Jennings. "That's why states have moved to high-stakes exit exams."

However, Taylor is adamant that accountability measures such as high-stakes testing and eliminating social promotion not be confused with standards-based reform, which was designed only to raise standards for all children.

"ESEA says states must design tests to hold schools and school districts accountable for moving kids forward," he insists. "It does not say, suggest, hint or intimate that any of these tests should be used for high-stakes purposes. We fought very hard to make sure they weren't required by ESEA as part of standards-based reform. The high-stakes system, ability grouping and tracking have been going on for years and are based on the notion that some kids can't learn, so you don't offer them as much. It's the very antithesis of standards-based reform."

"Clinton has muddied the waters with his talk about eliminating social promotion," Taylor complains, because some administrators conclude that means instituting high-stakes testing to determine whether kids are ready to move on. "Clinton is responsible for some of this confusion. Some of us are working very hard to get the administration to clarify its position."

The Education Department's Cohen explains that high-stakes testing is, "OK if it's done right. We want to make sure school systems are accountable for giving kids the support they need so they can do well on the tests. We don't want to penalize the kid because his school is failing."

Congress Gears Up

In his State of the Union address last January, Clinton said the federal government "must support what works and stop supporting what does not work." He promised to send Congress a proposal requiring every school district receiving federal aid to take five steps: end social promotion, improve their worst-performing schools, improve teacher quality, issue school report cards and implement discipline codes.

The administration is expected to send its proposal to Congress this month. Congress will have to reconcile the accountability-flexibility conflict. Republicans are expected to push for more flexibility through block grants and measures such as "Dollars to the Classroom," passed by the House in the 105th Congress. That bill would have directed 95 percent of federal funds back to the classroom, bypassing federal, state and district red tape. Congress also recently passed the "ed-flex" bill, which allows states to bypass certain federal guidelines if they can demonstrate student improvement by using the funds in different ways.

Critics of increased flexibility point to what happened in the 1994 amendments to Title I, which offered schools flexibility to use the money for "schoolwide projects" instead of targeting disadvantaged students. In exchange, states were to adopt the high standards and tests for disadvantaged children. The flexibility provisions went into effect right away, but nearly all of the states are behind schedule in developing their standards and tests.

This year's reauthorization will be the Republican-dominated Congress' first chance to overhaul ESEA. It will also be another chance for it to review the Goals 2000 program, since part of Clinton's ESEA proposal is expected to ask that Goals 2000 be extended and combined with a federal teacher-training program.

Some observers predict that given voters' concern about education, Republicans will be in a pro-education mood with the 2000 elections looming. Senate Budget Committee Chairman Pete V. Domenici, R-N.M., has indicated he wants to increase education funding by 40 percent over the next 10 years.

Congress will also vote on reauthorizing NAGB this year. The Clinton administration has not abandoned its hope that NAGB will be allowed to institute voluntary national tests. "We still think there ought to be voluntary national standards and national tests aligned to them so that individual students can know how well they are doing," says Cohen. ■

OUTLOOK

Standards Seen as Key

Education standards are expected to be at the top of state education agendas for a long time, says Pipho of the Education Commission of the States. Governors "see it as an issue that needs to be dealt with if we are going to get a better education system and keep a viable economy."

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At Issue:

Should there be national education standards?

FORMER REP. LEE H. HAMILTON, D-IND.
Director, The Woodrow Wilson Center

YES

Most industrialized nations have stringent national academic standards and tests for core academic subjects. The United States does not. The United States has created some voluntary national education standards, most notably in math. Some states have used them as guidance for setting their own standards. . . . But the standards and testing vary considerably across the country. . . .

My view is that it probably would be useful to have more national standards of what students should be expected to know at given points along the educational path. Student advancement ought to be more or less the same thing in California or Indiana or Mississippi. It is difficult for me to see how we achieve both equity and excellence in education without high standards. . . .

The standards should be national standards, not standards developed by the federal government. . . . The formulation of the standards should involve not just teachers and educators but members of the public. These standards should be reasonably precise and not too lengthy. They should cover both content and performance, and focus on what students should know so that they are well-prepared for subsequent education and careers. . . .

In addition, whatever is done, I think state and local officials should be free to adopt these standards as they please, as they set concrete, rigorous standards of what students must learn in basic areas such as math, science and English. In addition, teachers and schools must remain free to use their own educational methods and their own judgment on how best to achieve the standards. That's the way it ought to be in a country as large and diverse as ours.

Setting the standards does not by any means resolve all the tough questions, such as whether high standards alone will really increase achievement or whether in the end states and communities will be committed to sanctions such as holding students back. One question that lingers in any discussion of national standards is how to measure whether the students are meeting the standards. Assessment is a very complex topic, posing questions of cost, equity and political control. These questions have not all been worked out. But they should not deter us from proceeding with national standards.

REP. BILL GOODLING, R-PA.

NO

In developing my views on national testing, I have drawn upon my experience as a former teacher, school administrator and parent. For many different reasons, I oppose the administration's proposal for new national tests in reading and math. . . .

Their whole proposal up to this point has been designed only by Washington bureaucrats at the U.S. Department of Education. Congress has had no role and few in the outside community have either. This is nothing short of a recipe for disaster, like every other effort over the years — on the national, state and local levels — to impose "top-down" standards and tests without hearing from the parents, teachers and administrators at the local level who know best.

I believe all these things are symptomatic of a deeper issue, and that is the flawed assumption that somehow another test will improve education. It won't. Standardized tests assess performance; they don't generate it. We should put more money into the classroom, not in another test. We should focus on the real problems — reading readiness, inadequate teacher training and more parental involvement. That's how to improve education.

I am for high standards. However, standards are the prerogative of states. State and local control is a hallmark of American education and it should stay that way. For example, Virginia has some of the highest standards in the nation, and they have been developed by the state at the grass-roots level. In fact, the American Federation of Teachers has even said they are some of the best standards in the land and a good example for other states to follow.

Since 1993, the department has actively pushed its Goals 2000 program, which encourages and provides funds for states to create their own standards and tests. In essence, the administration has backed decentralized reform. Now with this new test proposal it appears to be backing centralized reform. Why the switch? . . .

Let me also note that new national tests could lead to inappropriate and unfair comparisons of schools and students. . . . [And] new national tests could — and I have carefully selected the word "could" — lead to a national curriculum. In developing new assessments, the tendency is to create a new curriculum to match those assessments. But like new national tests, a national curriculum is something Americans don't want and don't need.

States Trying to Raise Teacher Quality . . .

When Massachusetts last year for the first time required prospective teachers to pass an achievement test before receiving a state license, no one was prepared for the results. An alarming 59 percent failed overall, according to a grading standard recommended by 300 educators.

State education officials called the results "painful," given that the test was considered easier than the state's new 10th-grade achievement test.

The state Board of Education eventually lowered the passing score so that "only" 44 percent failed.

The test was given as part of Massachusetts' standards-based education-reform efforts to raise achievement standards for both students and teachers. The tests were taken by seniors or recent graduates of Wheelock College, Simmons College, the Lesley College School of Education and Harvard's School of Education. [1]

"This is a wake-up call to all of us," said William Dandridge, dean of Lesley's School of Education, blaming past "dumbing down" of learning standards for all students, beginning in elementary school.

Massachusetts's experience reflects the dilemma of other states trying to raise academic standards for both students and teachers just as a teacher shortage is looming on the horizon. Now that the states are beginning to hold students and school systems accountable for achieving rigorous, new academic standards, many see improving teacher quality as the next step in education reform. [2]

"As I work with the states, the teacher-quality issue is probably at the top of almost every agenda," says Christopher Cross, president of the Council for Basic Education and a former Bush administration assistant secretary of Education.

A rash of studies in recent years showed that too many teachers — particularly in the nation's poorest schools — are teaching subjects they did not major or minor in; many new teachers are being hired on an emergency basis without being licensed; and education schools are doing a poor job of preparing teachers.

Both President Clinton and Education Secretary Richard W. Riley advocate making teachers pass standards-based performance tests and requiring more certification. In his Jan. 19 State of the Union address, Clinton said that not only should all teachers be required to know the subjects they teach, but "new teachers should be required to pass performance exams."

A month later, at California State University at Long Beach, Riley said, "We can no longer fiddle around the edges of how we recruit, prepare, retain and reward America's teachers. A growing number of school districts are throwing a warm body into a classroom, closing the door, and hoping for the best. This is not the way to reach for high standards."

Moreover, he said, "Many schools, especially in our high-poverty areas, are now using teacher aides as full-time teachers. That's not fair to the students nor to the aides."

Calling for "a sea change in public thinking about the value of teaching," Riley said elevating the teaching progression is more critical now than ever because the country is on the edges of the biggest teacher shortage since World War II. "We need to hire more than 2 million teachers in the next 10 years to meet the demands of the baby-boom echo and the fact that close to a million veteran teachers are on the verge of retiring," he warned. The shortage is most critical for math and science teachers, he said.

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Meanwhile, state standards will "inch toward some uniformity," he predicts. "But as long as we have elements of society that are more interested in killing the public schools, then it will be hard to bring the standards movement into any uniform national view." If the next generation is less argumentative, he says, "Maybe we could quietly point out how uniformly close all the state standards are without somebody yelling that there's some kind of conspiracy."

"Eventually, you will see convergence among the best states about what quality standards are," says the Brookings Institution's Ravitch. "If we ever reach the point of having real national standards, it may be that it won't come from the federal government but from a private organization."

That is what Achieve hopes to accomplish with its new eighth-grade math test. Gerstner believes the test will be more palatable to states because it won't be imposed by the federal government. He is optimistic that more states will adopt the test.

Achieve's project was prompted by what Gerstner called the "bleak" performance of American kids on the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) tests.

"Our governors want to know how they can compare individual schools and students, based on a common yardstick. The only way to do that is if the students all took the same test," says Gandal. "We realized we couldn't wait for politics in Washington to change. We're responding to a desire and appetite for this kind of information among state policy leaders and the public — a thirst that Washington hasn't been able to quench."

"You're seeing the business com-

. . . Even as Teacher Shortage Looms

The ability of the teaching profession to compete for talent has deteriorated as teacher wages compared with those of other college graduates have been falling since 1940. And even though the wages of college graduates have risen dramatically, teachers' wages haven't kept up with the wages of other college graduates.

Chris Pipho, a senior fellow at the Education Commission of the States, points out that hiring more teachers is made even more difficult by the push to weed out bad teachers by imposing higher qualification standards. "The shortage is coming on, and the standards are coming on," Pipho says, "so we will need better-trained teachers than we've ever had, and more of them at the same time."

To improve teacher quality, some states — like Massachusetts — now require new teachers to pass performance assessments to obtain a license. Others offer veteran teachers incentives to become more proficient or board-certified master teachers. Others tie teachers' raises to their performance on the tests.

To give states an added incentive, the Clinton administration wants any state receiving federal Title I funds for low-income schools to phase out "emergency certification" of teachers and to end "out of field" teaching, in which an English teacher, for instance, can suddenly be told to teach science.

"These kinds of teachers are mostly found in the highest poverty schools," says Mike Cohen, a senior education department adviser. "We want to phase out those practices so the kids we are trying to help in Title I will do better."

But some governors, worried about finding enough teachers to meet the burgeoning enrollments, say this may not be the most opportune time to be beefing up licensing requirements. "Can you imagine a governor saying that we have a shortage of physicians so we are going to do away with licensure of doctors for publicly funded hospitals?" asks Cohen. "That may be the way to solve the short-term problem of getting an adult in front of the classroom, but it's not a solution to our long-term problems."

But Kati Haycock, president of the Education Trust, says Clinton's proposal isn't tough enough. "Look carefully at Clinton's proposal and ask yourself if he is really interested in improving teacher quality," she asks. "He's insisting that 95 percent of teachers within five years are either certified or on a path to being certified. That's exactly the situation we have now."

"We'd be the first to applaud if this were a serious effort at improving teacher quality, especially for poor kids," she adds. "There's just not enough energy and not enough muscle behind this proposal. This is not even a decent soundbite."

Meanwhile, her group is preparing to release a new analysis of the state teacher licensure exams "that just leaves you sobbing." The tests for high school teachers require "about a high school level" of competency, she says, and the elementary tests are even easier.

Experts who reviewed the report before publication said, "If this is all we expect teachers to know, why do we even ask them to go to college? And why do any of them actually flunk it?"

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[1] Beth Daley, "One-third fail Mass. teachers test," *The Boston Globe*, June 20, 1998.

[2] For background, see Thomas J. Billiteri, "Teacher Education," *The CQ Researcher*, Oct. 17, 1997, pp. 913-936.

munity bypassing the federal government and developing its own test," Jennings says.

The National Alliance for Business' Goldberg predicts high-stakes testing will become even more popular, but that, "As the stakes increase, you will have more people asking: 'Why have we not achieved more, what is standing in the way?' Then they will start asking: 'How do you align the standards, assessments, teacher training, administrator oversight, parent participation and school board roles so that everybody is marching to the same tune?' "

Businessmen understand that introducing a new product line means retraining the production staff, says Jennings. "So why aren't businesspeople going to the state capitols to lobby for massive teacher-retraining programs?" he asks. He is not optimistic that most states have the political will to provide the needed funding.

Gandal is optimistic that they will. "Now that the states have done all the hard work of putting standards in place, I predict a better understanding of what else has to happen to make standards work. "Otherwise, you set up this unrealistic set of expectations, thinking that simply by setting standards you'll increase achievement. People will start blaming the system, the tests and the standards."

Casserly worries that without more funds to reduce the disparities in education funding between rich and poor school districts, "There's no way urban schools can sustain their recent gains at the levels people want them to. Then the mega-unanswered question is, Will America then step up and say, 'Alright, you clearly can work efficiently and effectively, and

get good results, and you are worth the investment.' "

He, too, is wary. "Some folks are so hostile to providing urban schools with any additional resources that it really puts the schools in a no-win situation," he says.

But Jennifer Marshall, a research analyst at the Family Research Council, maintains that money is not the solution. "Numerous studies linking dramatically increased spending and declining test scores indicate that spending does not drive academic success," she wrote recently. [14]

But Casserly notes that suburban schools are not being held to the same accountability and efficiency standards as suburban schools. Apparently accountability isn't as important if you've got money and you're in the suburbs," he says.

"Will urban schools bear the brunt of accountability with one hand tied behind their backs, while everybody else is let off the hook for not doing what they should to reduce disparities in education funding?" he asks. If states impose high-stakes testing without correcting funding inequities, they'll end up in court, he warns. "There will be serious legal challenges to tests that put the future livelihood of individuals at stake when they haven't been given equal opportunity."

Goldberg agrees that not making necessary additional investments would be shortsighted. "We ought to be prepared to tackle that issue," he says, "because excellence costs, but ignorance costs more."

Besides looking at the money issue, many educators and businessmen predict that education reformers will examine how to better focus American curriculums on fewer subjects. "The business community is absolutely convinced that we need more focus," says Goldberg. "They were startled to hear the TIMSS story."

U.S. curriculums are a "mile wide and an inch deep" compared with other high-achieving countries in Asia and Europe, says William Schmidt, the Michigan State University professor who coordinated the TIMSS study. For instance, U.S. texts are hefty telephone book-sized volumes, while Japanese and European students use 150-page paperbacks.

Unfortunately, Schmidt says, even the latest revised versions of state standards still do not correct this problem. "The mile-wide-and-inch-deep pattern is still very prevalent in the U.S.," he says. "We incorporate just about everything in our standards." ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Achieve Inc., 1280 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 410, Cambridge, Mass. 02138; (617) 496-6300; www.achieve.org. Achieve is a bipartisan, nonprofit organization that helps governors and business leaders get states to implement high academic standards and tests.

American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001; (202) 879-4400; www.aft.org. The 780,000-member AFT, the nation's second-largest teachers' union, has long been a backer of national education standards.

Council For Basic Education, 1319 F. St., N.W., Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20004; (202) 347-4171. www.c-b-e.org. The council works to establish and maintain high academic standards and serves as an information clearinghouse on education issues.

Council of Great City Schools, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 702, Washington, D.C. 20004; (202) 393-2427; www.cgcs.org. The council provides research, legislative and support services for urban school districts.

National Education Goals Panel, 1850 M St. N.W., Suite 270, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 632-0952; www.negp.gov. A congressionally sponsored group of governors, members of Congress and administration officials charged with reporting on progress in meeting national education goals.

Notes

[1] Quoted in Pamela Stallsmith, "Only 2% of Va. Schools Meet New Standards," *The Richmond Times Dispatch*, Jan. 9, 1999.

[2] Quoted in Hugh B. Price, "Establish an 'Academic Bill of Rights,' "*Education Week*, March 17, 1999.

[3] Thomas C. Boysen and Thomas Sobol, "The Next Steps," *Education Week*, March 10, 1999.

[4] "Making Standards Matter 1998: An Annual Fifty-State Report on Efforts to Raise Academic Standards," American Federation of Teachers, 1998.

[5] John Ritter, "School plan intrudes in state matter, opponents say," *USA Today*, Jan. 21, 1999.

[6] E.D. Hirsch, *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (1985), pp. 117-118. (For background, see Charles S. Clark, "Education Standards," *The CQ Researcher*, March 11, 1994, pp. 228-232.)

[7] "Raising standards for American education," National Council on Education Standards and Testing, 1992.

[8] See *1995 CQ Almanac*, p. 11-55.

[9] See *1996 CQ Almanac*, p. 10-7.

[10] See *1997 CQ Almanac*, pp. 9-50—9-53.

[11] See *CQ Weekly*, Oct. 17, 1998, p. 2822.

[12] Monty Neill, "Testing Our Children: A Report Card on State Assessment Systems," The National Center for Fair and Open Testing, September 1997.

[13] Quoted in Lynn Olson, "Shining a Spotlight on Results," Quality Counts '99, *Education Week*, http://www.edweek.org/sreports/qc99/ac/mc/mc-intro.htm.

[14] Jennifer A. Marshall, "Goals 2000: The Case for Repeal," http://www.frc.org:80/insight/is95c1ed.htm.

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Books

Bunzel, John H., ed., *Challenge to American Schools: The Case for Standards and Values*, Oxford University Press, 1985.
This collection of 11 essays by noted American education authorities such as Nathan Glazer, Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn Jr., gives a unique glimpse into the tone of the standards debate after the publication of "A Nation at Risk," but before the 1989 national education summit.

Jennings, John F., (Ed.), *National Issues in Education: The Past is Prologue*, Phi Delta Kappa International, 1993.
In this collection of essays, former Education Secretary Lamar Alexander writes that the Bush administration's plans to develop "world-class standards of achievement in core subject areas" and to encourage voluntary national exams to determine progress in reaching these standards were essential if the nation wants to reach the National Goals for Education set by the governors after the 1989 education summit.

Jennings, John F., *Why National Standards and Tests?*, Sage Publications, 1998.
In this history of the congressional battle over education standards, a former senior staff member of the House Education and Labor Committee explains the horse-trading that shaped current Goals 2000 and Elementary and Secondary Education Act legislation.

Articles

Boysen, Thomas C. and Thomas Sobol, "The Next Steps," *Education Week*, March 10, 1999.
Two former state education commissioners argue that the states are all going in different directions in setting education standards, without any national coordination.

Price, Hugh B. "Establish an 'Academic Bill of Rights,'" *Education Week*, March 17, 1999.
The president of the National Urban League argues that states like Virginia are approaching education reform backwards.

Stallsmith, Pamela, "Only 2% of Va. Schools Meet New Standards," *The Richmond Times Dispatch*, January 9, 1999.
After disastrous results on the pilot test for Virginia's new statewide tests, schools now have eight years before they will lose accreditation if they don't make the cutoff requirement: passage by 70 percent of the students.

Reports and Studies

Grissmer, David, and Ann Flanagan, "Exploring Rapid Achievement Gains in North Carolina and Texas," National Education Goals Panel, November, 1998.
The researchers found that the two states that have made some of the fastest achievement gains in recent years had long-term support from the business community, consistent bipartisan political support and a willingness to stick with systemic reform on a long-term basis rather than switching to the "reform du jour."

Lewis, Sharon, et al., "Reform and Results: An Analysis of Title I in the Great City Schools, 1994-95 to 1997-98," Council of Great City Schools, March 1999.
This analysis by the Council of Great City Schools found that out of the 24 urban school districts that provided test data, 88 percent showed increased reading scores among disadvantaged students and 83 percent showed raised math scores over both two- and three-year periods. The report also found that academic gains in the inner cities has been faster than in the suburbs in recent years.

Marshall, Jennifer A., "Goals 2000: The Case for Repeal," http://www.frc.org:80/insight/is95c1ed.htm.
Marshall, an analyst at the Family Research Council, argues that money is not the solution to America's education problems. "Numerous studies linking dramatically increased spending and declining test scores indicate that spending does not drive academic success," she writes.

Neill, Monty, "Testing Our Children: A Report Card on State Assessment Systems," The National Center for Fair and Open Testing, September 1997.
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A new Department of Education report finds that the greatest academic improvements in recent years have occurred in the nation's poorest schools.

"Raising standards for American education," National Council on Education Standards and Testing, 1992.
This 1992 report from the National Council on Education Standards and Testing says that in the absence of well-defined and demanding standards, U.S. education has gravitated toward "de facto national minimum expectations," created primarily by textbook writers.

The Next Step

Additional information from UMI's Newspaper & Periodical Abstracts™ database

Academic Standards

Chavez, Linda, "National Testing Won't Halt Declining Academic Standards," *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 12, 1997, p. 23.

In the waning days of the 105th Congress, Republicans finally nixed the president's plan for a national test of fourth- and eighth-graders in reading and math. But the victory, spurred by conservative education groups, could come back to haunt Republicans if they don't do a better job of explaining why a national test is a bad idea.

Illescas, Carlos, "Survey Shows Support for Academic Standards," *The Denver Post*, March 11, 1998, p. B12.

A majority of Coloradans want tough academic standards for students, according to a poll taken for CONNECT, a National Science Foundation project to improve math and science education in Colorado. In the survey, 90 percent of adults supported academic standards in reading, writing, math, science, history and geography. An additional 78 percent agreed that setting educational standards and goals is one of the best ways to improve the quality of education.

Schechter, Bill, "The Problems with Education Reform," *The Boston Globe*, May 4, 1998, p. A19.

This spring, students across the state are "sacrificing" 16 hours of valuable classroom instruction on the altar of "reform," an irony the author finds difficult to reconcile. Students will be taking pre-tests of the new Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams that will soon determine if students graduate from high school. The author says that expensive exams will only confirm what education reformers already know, namely, that socioeconomic factors shape patterns of academic achievement.

Strauss, Valerie, "Some District Teachers Become Students of Higher Academic Standards," *The Washington Post*, Feb. 22, 1998, p. B5.

Though the most visible efforts to improve the D.C. school system have focused on repairing buildings, balancing the budget and paring the bureaucracy, about 100 teachers and principals spent yesterday morning learning about the one area of reform that many say is the most critical: adopting new academic standards that improve what and how students are taught.

'Ed-Flex' Legislation

"A Commitment to Students in Need," *The Boston Globe*, March 7, 1999, p. C6.

Ed-flex is the name given to legislation being pushed by the Republican leadership in Congress, most governors and many Democrats, including the White House. It would give all 50 states the increased leeway now enjoyed on a pilot basis by 12 states to spend federal money as state and local officials see fit.

"Ed-Flex Reflex," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 23, 1999, p. A22.

Education is Topic A in the opinion polls that Beltway politicians commission to do their thinking for them, so it's no surprise that there was bipartisan celebration over the recent passage by Congress of the new ed-flex bill.

"Pettiness Stalls Education Reform," *USA Today*, Feb. 5, 1999, p. A14.

An editorial on the ed-flex bill suggests that conservative Republicans want to scoop up as many federal education dollars as possible, put them into a single bucket and turn that bucket over to local superintendents to spend mostly as they wish.

Alvarez, Lizette, "Education Bill Clears, Providing Gain for Republicans as They Seek Policy Victories," *The New York Times*, March 12, 1999, p. A16.

The House and Senate handily approved legislation today to give states and schools more flexibility in how they spend $11 billion in federal money, a vote that gave each party a claim to being in tune with the public's interest in education. But after a week of partisan squabbling in the Senate over amendments, a Democratic measure pushed by President Clinton to authorize the hiring of 100,000 teachers to reduce class sizes failed in a vote along party lines.

Dewar, Helen, and Linda Perlstein, "After Partisan Debate, Education Bill Easily Passes House, Senate," *The Washington Post*, March 12, 1999, p. A6.

The House and Senate yesterday overwhelmingly approved legislation to give states more flexibility in spending federal school money, kicking off a highly politicized debate over education policy that is likely to continue for the rest of the 106th Congress.

Koch, Wendy, "GOP Cheers Ed-Flex Bill as Bipartisan; Dems Not So Sure," *USA Today*, March 12, 1999, p. A6.

Republican leaders are hailing Thursday's passage of a major education bill as proof Congress can produce bipartisan results. But Democrats, who were rebuffed in their effort to provide funds for more teachers, say they aren't ready to agree that a new bipartisan spirit has taken over on Capitol Hill. Ed-flex, which gives schools greater

flexibility in how they spend $10.8 billion in federal aid, also sailed through the Senate on a 98-1 vote.

Kornblut, Anne E., "Education Bill Wins Passage," *The Boston Globe*, March 12, 1999, p. A1.
Claiming victory as the House and Senate approved education legislation they called "important to the country," Republicans yesterday took what they hoped was a leap away from the impeachment issue with passage of a bill that would give schools greater freedom in the way they spend federal funds.

Education Reform

Beck, Joan, "Controlling Education Reform Before It's Too Late," *Chicago Tribune*, March 1, 1998, p. 19.
By the year 2000, U.S. students will be first in the world in science and math — or so Bill Clinton pledged in 1990. In 1994, Clinton reaffirmed those goals, signing into law the Goals 2000 Educate America Act. Well, it's only two years until 2000. And the newest international survey of student achievement in 23 industrial nations shows that American high school seniors lag behind those in all but Cyprus and South Africa in math, are next to last in advanced math and dead last in physics.

Ketchum, William K., and Donald L. Beal, "A Good Start for Education Reform," *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 7, 1998, p. 12.
Controversial since the spring session, education reform and funding legislation was finally passed by the Illinois General Assembly on Dec. 2. A key piece of the measure was ensuring a foundation level spending of $4,225 per student. Significantly, the new funds that will flow into the schools lack the strings attached by state authorities on the use of funding.

Mooney, Brian C., "Education Reform Bandwagon Is Full," *The Boston Globe*, Apr. 15, 1998, p. B2.
The importance of education became one of the lessons of the 1996 Massachusetts Senate race. Former Republican Gov. William F. Weld learned the hard way, losing to Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who stressed education themes at every turn. That is why some 1998 candidates for governor have issued a flurry of position papers earnestly outlining plans to improve public schools. Many of these proposals will add to the multibillion-dollar funding commitment of the 1993 Education Reform Act, even as most candidates are stumping for huge tax cuts.

Otero, Juan, "Education Reform Picks up Momentum," *Nation's Cities Weekly*, Feb. 1, 1999, p. 12.
Education reform is picking up momentum. A broad slate of education initiatives that would hold states and local school districts accountable to the federal government was recently adopted.

Teacher Shortages

Argetsinger, Amy, "Teacher Shortage Stymies Efforts to Cut Class Sizes," *The Washington Post*, Feb. 7, 1999, p. A1.
When Maryland's Democratic Gov. Parris N. Glendening promised to hire 1,100 new teachers, he also warned that school districts must have at least 98 percent of their teachers with full state certification by 2002 or risk losing the new funds. But in counties such as Prince George's, which offers mid-range salaries and where only 87 percent of teachers are fully certified, officials complain they cannot possibly improve their numbers that fast.

Bryant, Salatheia, "Signing Bonuses One Option to Fill Teacher Shortage," *Houston Chronicle*, July 27, 1998, p. A13.
To circumvent the teacher shortage during this past recruiting season, for the first time some school districts started offering a supplement or signing bonus for new teachers. Others already have been offering one-time payments for teachers that range from $1,500 to $3,000. Some districts are offering the bonuses only for teachers in areas where the shortage is most severe such as math, science, foreign language and special education.

Mahoney, John Patrick, "City Schools Working to Solve Teacher Shortage," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Sept. 26, 1998, p. 34.
When city schools opened this year, there were 274 teacher vacancies, most in math, science and special education. In St. Louis schools, the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunches is approximately 85 percent, 20 percent higher than one national average of urban school districts.

Mirick, Adam, "Teacher Shortage Targeted: Education Secretary Wants Changes to Ease Reliance on Under-Qualified Instructors," *Detroit News*, Sept. 16, 1998, p. A5.
Teacher shortages are popping up amid a push to recruit 2.2 million new teachers over the next decade — a problem U.S. Education Secretary Richard W. Riley predicted will worsen as baby boomers retire from classrooms. Riley on Tuesday called for an overhaul of the recruitment, salary, training and certification processes for teachers nationwide.

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