

EDUCATION DAILY

The education community's independent daily news service

Kennedy, Spellings outline disparate visions for NCLB

By Patti Mohr

Staff Writer

Before they can begin serious discussions about reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind Act this year, Education Secretary **Margaret Spellings** and Sen. **Edward Kennedy**, D-Mass., will have to settle significant policy differences over funding, school choice, teacher compensation and state standards.

In separate addresses to the **National School Boards Association's** federal conference on Monday, Spellings and Kennedy outlined competing visions for reforming the law — even as each expressed satisfaction with NCLB's successes: Primarily the law's requirement that every school measure student subgroup performance.

CCSSO releases NCLB recommendations, see p. 2

Spellings highlighted the **Bush administration's** plan to give schools greater flexibility in their use of federal funds, including vocational education funding, and to target resources to schools undergoing restructuring. She also acknowledged NCLB is not perfect, saying, "We can provide and should provide greater flexibility."

Kennedy, meanwhile, said the primary problem with NCLB is that it has burdened schools that need the most help.

"Today, half of all public school districts face funding cuts — at a time when the No Child law is asking them to do even more," he said.

Though he plans to begin the reauthorization process as early as this spring, Kennedy said **Congress** cannot enact new reforms on a "tin cup education budget." He is pushing for a major increase in federal education spending, particularly since schools now face additional testing

(See **NCLB** on page 2)

More money in FY 2007

According to a **House GOP** aide for the **Appropriations Committee**, the continuing resolution to fund the government through the end of fiscal year 2007 is expected to include a substantial increase — \$2.3 billion — for education, health and labor programs. House members are scheduled to consider the CR on Wednesday.

Today's Highlights

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NCLB: 5 Years & Counting

High schools could be next NCLB focus:

In the run-up to this year's planned reauthorization, high schools have emerged as a key to ensuring U.S. students are fully prepared to compete globally in the 21st century **Pages 6-8**

Coming Thursday: *NCLB's requirement that all teachers be highly qualified may have improved teacher credential transparency, but the jury's still out on teacher quality.*

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Conference report

National Association of State Title I Directors

Auditors to take closer look at program supplies

By Sarah Sparks

Staff Writer

LONG BEACH, Calif. — Too many supplies bought for Title I students are getting "lost in the ether," **Education Department** officials say, and the agency is preparing to track them down.

States already must keep inventories and sales documents for "equipment" — big ticket items of \$5,000 or more — but lower-priced purchases count as "supplies" without stringent reporting requirements. Supplies may bring to

(See **AUDITORS** on page 3)

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CCSSO looks to recast federal-state education roles

By Stephen Sawchuk

Staff Writer

Leaders from the **Council of Chief State School Officers** on Monday released their much-anticipated priorities for the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act.

As a whole, they articulate a new vision of federal and state education roles that would change the **Education Department's** focus from ensuring state compliance with the law to overseeing a process to allow states to differentiate their accountability systems and tailor interventions for struggling schools.

CCSSO Executive Director **Gene Wilhoit** said over the past five years, states have progressed in meeting NCLB requirements, such as instituting content standards and annual tests and improving data systems. Now, the states need more opportunities to innovate, he said.

"We have progressed, and now the law must evolve," he said. "It would be a gross mistake to reauthorize [NCLB] as it exists today."

CCSSO's recommendations would overturn NCLB's required "status" accountability model, instead encouraging states to create innovative, tailored systems that could include the use of multiple state and local assessments.

"The simple adoption of any one assessment is not a good public policy, without looking at where the state is and where it is going," Wilhoit said.

Under CCSSO's plan, states would be given wide flexibility to design models that use "educationally sound strategies" for standards-based reform in each state. The plan would require ED to approve the models following a peer review process to ensure they are valid, reliable and continue to hold all students accountable to high standards.

In the past, ED has employed a peer review system for its determinations on the quality of states' assessment systems, state teacher quality plans and growth model pilot applications. But CCSSO President **Elizabeth Burmaster** criticized that process as lacking state input on the peer reviewers or their qualifications, having unclear criteria, and flawed in overall transparency and timeliness.

The organization instead envisions more state involvement in peer review and a greater ED focus on technical assistance and ensuring consistency in standards and outcomes across states.

Several of CCSSO's specific policy recommendations align with those of other organizations, such as using growth models and differentiating accountability determinations and consequences based on which subgroups have missed performance targets.

But overall, the increased flexibility entails more significant rollbacks on core NCLB requirements than other plans. The plan also calls for:

- Doing away with the caps on the 1 and 2 percent flexibility for assessing students with disabilities, in accordance with states' needs and IEP determinations.
- Allowing states to use multiple measures for accountability for immigrant students in ELL programs for less than three years.
- Allowing for multiple measures for teacher quality, including HOUSSSE.
- Allowing locals to create a menu of interventions options for schools, rather than following the strict sequence of choice and tutoring currently required by the law.
- Providing funding for intervention in underperforming school districts; creation of assessments and state data systems; and for research and development.

NCLB (continued from page 1)

requirements and tougher sanctions.

"We will do everything we possibly can to ensure that Uncle Sam does more to fulfill his commitment to schools," Kennedy promised.

Spellings said reauthorizations typically provide opportunities to increase resources.

"I am sure that will be true this time, too," she said.

That was welcome news to NSBA members scheduled to visit Capitol Hill today to ask lawmakers to increase funding next year for Title I and special education by \$2.5 billion each.

Spellings and Kennedy also disagree on key policy proposals. While the administration proposes strengthening parental involvement by expanding the school choice option for students in failing schools, Kennedy would provide funds for community-based parental support centers.



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Mayors need districts to help fight obesity and hunger

By Steve Berlin

Staff Writer

Mayors and health experts from across the country said schools and school districts are critical partners in trying to ensure children's health — particularly when it comes to fighting obesity and alleviating hunger and food security problems.

At the recent convention of the **U.S. Conference of Mayors**, mayors and their delegates stressed better nutrition is one way to guarantee improved health and academic achievement among students.

"Kids who are hungry are not as likely to attend school; they're going to be late for school; they're not going to go to school; they're very at-risk for criminal activity," said the lead presenter, Cincinnati Mayor **Mark Mallory**.

"As mayors we're talking about making our cities and our regions strong and viable," he said. "We have to put our investments into the major asset we have, and that is people."

Based on reports over the last several years, experts view the problem of childhood obesity as cross-cultural, calling it an "epidemic." However, the combined problems of hunger, food security and obesity are particularly acute among low-income families, most often minorities, said **James**

Weill, president of the Washington, D.C.-based **Food Research & Action Center**.

Weill said food security refers to when low-income families, typically at the end of the month, become concerned about having enough money to buy provisions. As a result, cheaper, high-calorie — but often non-nutritious foods — are purchased. The abundance of cheap, high-calorie, low-nutrition foods can lead to obesity.

Cincinnati, for example, made use of available federal funds to expand its summer meals offerings, as well as student participation in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch and Breakfast programs, Mallory said.

He said two-thirds of the district's nearly 37,000 students qualify for the federal lunch and breakfast programs, but many had not signed up for breakfast in particular. When District Superintendent **Rosa Blackwell** opened the breakfast to all students last year, 5,000 additional students enrolled, Mallory said.

Dr. **Lynn Silver**, an assistant commissioner in New York City's health department, said practical solutions, such as selling 1-percent milk instead of whole milk, have helped curb obesity.

"Small changes like this, a small increase in physical activity ... can really make a dent in this epidemic," she said.

AUDITORS (continued from page 1)

mind items such as workbooks, but in reality they can include computers, reading kits and other major purchases.

"Most of what you purchase with Title I is supplies, and there was no accountability for supplies," **Kay Rigling**, ED's Title I lawyer in the **Office of the General Counsel**, told state Title I directors at their annual meeting Saturday. "We want to rethink that."

ED has started to prepare guidance on how states can assure these low-level purchases are "reasonable and necessary" to implementing Title I programs, after the **Office of the Chief Financial Officer** monitors found widespread problems during audits under the Improper Payments Act.

Among them, Rigling noted one Even Start program spent the bulk of its grant on books that program administrators told auditors they sent home with parents, keeping no record of whether they went to eligible children or what happened to the books when the program ended.

"You had stuff and it was going down the rat hole and you didn't know where it was going," said **Sandy Brown**, ED Title I grants expert. "It wasn't even always intentional; it just got lost in the ether."

Under Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), states and districts must ensure that all supplies and equipment are needed for and used only in Title I programs. They must also align with the school's comprehensive plan, if there is one.

For example, some districts bounced programs from school to school to bring in supplies, which is unallowable under the grant. If a district moves a Title I program from one school to another, it cannot leave the program's supplies or equipment behind.

While ED will not dictate the structure of state monitoring, Rigling said officials must put in a system capable of "tracking Title I funds to a level adequate to ensure the funds haven't been used in violation of the statute."

States can, however, create different tracking systems based on the usable life of the supplies, to distinguish paper and pencils from laptops and textbooks for inventory. Moreover, supplies that have depreciated can be used for other programs, as long as they don't entirely disappear.

"That computer you bought for \$4,000, \$6,000 in 1999 that is now virtually worthless, it's still on your inventory and you need some record of what you do with it," Brown said.

Daily Briefing

Capitol Hill Watch

Republicans push Pelosi for more school money

House Republicans are wasting little time in taking the offensive on appropriations in the FY 2007 continuing resolution.

Reps. **Mike Castle**, R-Del., **Chris Shays**, R-Conn., and **Charlie Dent**, R-Pa., sent a letter to House Speaker **Nancy Pelosi**, D-Calif., and **Appropriations Committee** Chairman **David Obey**, D-Wis., calling for 2 percent spending increases for programs under the **Labor, Health and Human Services** and **Education** departments.

The trio wrote the increases would be devoted to "health research, educational priorities like math and science, the **Centers for Disease Control**, after-school care, vocational education, and the **National Institutes of Health**."

The letter references the increases as budgetary adjustments to keep pace with inflation.

Across the Nation

Illinois

Charter association advocates for more funds

The **Illinois Network of Charter Schools** has begun lobbying Gov. **Rod Blagojevich** and members of the state **Legislature** to support the Illinois **State Board of Education's** recent recommendation to increase funds directed to charter schools by \$4.4 million.

The board unveiled the increase as part of its 2008 statewide budget to the delight of charter school supporters across the state. According to INCS, demand for these independently run public schools is on the rise, with more than 10,000 students around the state on enrollment waiting lists for charter schools.

The money would be used as per-pupil grants for new charter schools during a five-year period and would also go toward costs incurred by school districts when starting a charter.

Newsmakers

New higher ed director to replicate program

Angela Lintz has been named the director of higher education programs at the **Level Playing Field Institute**, a San Francisco-based organization that works for fairness in higher education and the workplace.

Lintz will work on the organization's Initiative for Diversity in Education and Leadership program, which provides financial, academic and career development support to under-represented minority students at the **University of California, Berkeley**. Lintz will work to help LPFI replicate the IDEAL program at other universities in California and, eventually, around the country.

She will also work on several other higher education programs, including one that focuses on under-represented graduate students in science, math and engineering.

Prior to her new appointment, Lintz was an assistant

dean for UC Berkeley's International and Area Studies department. She has also worked at **Upward Bound** and the **Early Academic Outreach Program**.

Her predecessor, **Cedric Brown**, left LPFI to take an appointment at the **Mitchell Kapor Foundation**.

Lintz holds an associate's degree from **Tacoma Community College**, a bachelor's degree from **Smith College**, and master's and doctoral degrees from the **University of California, San Diego**.

Study Hall

Students in Boston need better college prep

Students who graduate from **Boston Public Schools** often have difficulty making the academic transition to postsecondary studies, a new report from the **Boston Higher Education Partnership** found.

The study, funded by **The Education Resources Institute**, looked at the practices of high schools and colleges in the Boston area that help students to succeed in their undergraduate years.

BHEP crafted several recommendations based on its findings. The recommendations include:

- Aligning high school exit standards and curricula to hold both K-12 and higher education accountable for student outcomes.
- Developing and expanding opportunities for early exposure to college-level rigor through AP and honors-level courses, and dual-enrollment programs.
- Offering guidance to all students on financial literacy, including how to manage increasing amounts of debt and plan for additional college costs.
- Re-examining specific needs of students enrolled in non-credit remedial courses to minimize their impact on degree completion.
- Expanding programs that build supportive peer networks and create connections to a small community within the college environment.

For more information, visit www.bhep.org.

Resources

High school reform guidance now on the Web

The **National High School Alliance** has launched an online resource for education policymakers and practitioners interested in learning about high school reform.

The Resource Guide for Action is based on the alliance's six core principles and recommended strategies for preparing all adolescents for college, careers and active civic participation. The guide includes:

- Recommended policies and practices that drive high school transformation.
- Indicators designed to collect, organize and review observations about school and district-level practices.
- Resources for practitioners, including case studies, frameworks and toolkits.
- Resources for policymakers, including position

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papers and policy case studies.

- Research on high school reform, including bibliographies and links to relevant studies and articles.

To access the guide, visit www.hsalliance.org.

Funding Alert

ED funds available for certification programs

Scope: The **Education Department** seeks applications to develop and expand alternative routes to full state teacher certification, as well as recruitment and retention of highly qualified mid-career professionals, recent college graduates who have not majored in education, and highly-qualified paraprofessionals as teachers in high-need schools.

Deadline: Feb. 7 for letters; March 26 for applications.

Funds: \$19 million, including: \$350,000 to \$750,000 a year each for five national/regional projects; \$250,000 to \$650,000 a year each for 20 statewide awards; and \$150,000 to \$450,000 a year each for 40 local projects.

Eligibility: State educational agencies; high-need local educational agencies; for-profit or nonprofit organizations, in partnership with a high-need LEA or an SEA; higher education institutions in partnership with a high-need LEA or an SEA; a regional consortium of SEAs; or a consortium of high-need LEAs.

Areas: ED will award extra points for quality applications that meet priorities: 10 points for partnerships or consortia that include a high-need LEA or a high-need SEA; five points for district proposals to streamline teacher hiring systems, timelines, and processes.

Contact: **Thelma Leenhouts**, (202) 260-0223.

E-mail: transitiontoteaching@ed.gov.

Web: www.ed.gov/news/fedregister/announce/index.html.

Early childhood data grants offered

Scope: The **National Institute of Child Health and Human Development** invites proposals for research that will mine data from the large-scale NICHD-funded *Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development* to address research questions about family, child care, school and child development.

Deadline: Feb. 5, Jun. 5, Oct. 5.

Funds: The research project grant (R01) provides varying amounts for up to four or five years.

Eligibility: Domestic and foreign for-profit and nonprofit public and private institutions.

Areas: New analyses of the data sets, from different scientific perspectives, should increase understanding interconnections between how child-rearing, the environment and children's developmental outcomes unfold over time. The NICHD encourages involvement of psychologists, sociologists, economists, statisticians, educators, policy makers and physician scientists.

Web: grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-07-183.html.

Bits & Pieces



■ **Sober Advice:** Rep. **Patrick Kennedy**, D-R.I., said he has gained new insight from mandatory community service required as a result of his 2006 DUI conviction. Kennedy now tutors children in a Washington, D.C., **Boys and Girls Club**. He said he will “strongly advocate” for targeting early intervention funds to at-risk children and their families.

■ **Heavy Duty:** While the **No Child Left Behind Commission** is being particularly cagey about the exact release date of its expected recommendations on reauthorization of the law, commission director **Alex Nock** did note it will take awhile to get through. The final report is more than 200 pages and will weigh-in on key aspects of the law, from teacher quality to growth models.

■ **Moving On:** **Robert Granger**, chairman of the **National Board for Education Sciences**, and **Sonia Chessen**, its executive director, are both stepping down. Chessen has moved to the **Pew Foundation**, and Granger, while he plans to finish his remaining two years on the board, said he has gotten too busy with “a little foundation of my own” — the multi-million-dollar **William T. Grant Foundation**, which he heads.

■ **Edged Out:** **John Ferrandino**, the chief operating officer of the **National Academy Foundation**, told a group of education policy analysts at a recent Washington, D.C., forum his explanation for the country's high dropout rate. He said he thinks the current high school system has the tendency to push out those students who are “smart but have an edge. I hate to say it, but I think it's really true in this country.”

■ **Law Ballin':** **Charles Haynes**, a senior scholar at the **Freedom Forum First Amendment Center**, shared one of his colleague's comments at a recent education policy event in Washington, D.C.: “If you think baseball is our national pastime, forget about it. It's litigation.”

■ **Fast Fact from the NCES:** A *high school graduate* is defined as an individual who has received formal recognition from school authorities, by the granting of a diploma, for completing a prescribed course of study. This definition does not include other high school completers or high school equivalency recipients.

NCLB: 5 Years & Counting

In recognition of the fifth anniversary of the No Child Left Behind Act, an ongoing series will examine the law's goals, impact and future in the march up to reauthorization.

For better or worse, high schools could be next NCLB focus

Past five years have shown just how far behind secondary schools are, experts say

By Kris Kitto

Staff Writer

During the months leading up to the 2001 authorization of the No Child Left Behind Act, when legislative assistants were pouring over drafts of the bill and stakeholders were making policy pitches to lawmakers, a gaping hole was forming where language addressing high schools should have been, ex-staffers and other experts have said.

The law's pending reauthorization, however, provides lawmakers a second chance at plugging that hole. High school reform will emerge as one of the high-priority topics when members of **Congress** make another attempt at ensuring higher academic achievement among America's students, experts predict.

The law's second iteration will be an opportunity for legislators to finalize the debate on how best to calculate a graduation rate, create incentives for improving those rates, and channel federal money to a comprehensive high school reform effort.

High schools — truly secondary

As reauthorization looms, reform advocates say the future of high schools is at stake. Whether the law will accept that challenge or whether policymakers decide to help through different avenues will surely be included in discussions surrounding the future of NCLB, experts say.

"I think it would be a fair critique to say what we did wasn't enough and isn't working as well as we hoped it would work," said **Carmel Martin**, the chief education advisor for Sen. **Edward Kennedy**, D-Mass., who worked on the original law. "This is something that there's a tremendous amount of interest in in Congress."

Conversations about what high schools need to improve weren't happening on the Hill in 2001. The result, then, wasn't surprising: The law **President Bush** signed focused primarily on the progress of elementary schools.

But high schools didn't make a clean escape. A few key members of Congress saw to it that they would have to meet certain accountability standards, too. The law requires testing students once during their four years and submitting graduation rates as a measure of adequate yearly progress.

It wasn't long, though, before high schools started appearing in the national spotlight. In the five years since NCLB's authorization, several serious problems in the country's secondary education system were exposed. The graduation-rate require-

ment forced both a debate on how to calculate such a figure and a hard look at whether states had the necessary data. And at the school level, the mandate showed how well — or poorly — high schools were doing at getting their students to graduation and preparing them for the future.

Mere mentions

Perhaps one of the clearest indications of how high schools would be factored into NCLB's initial drafting came when Bush issued a 28-page, 7,000-word blueprint outlining his vision. In the document, high schools were mentioned twice.

"There were very few people talking about federal high school policies at that time," said **Bethany Little**, the vice president for policy and federal advocacy at the **Alliance for Excellent Education**. During NCLB's inception, Little worked as a legislative assistant, concentrating on education policy, for Sen. **Patty Murray**, D-Wash.

The near exclusion of high schools in the authorization lead-up wasn't necessarily purposeful, experts say. New thinking on high schools was in its infancy, as many of the organizations that now drive high school reform — such as the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** — were just beginning.

"A lot of people still were not really clear on the challenges in high schools and were thinking more about preparing children earlier on in the process," said **Betsy Brand**, the director of the **American Youth Policy Forum** and a former assistant secretary at the **Education Department**.

The other indication of how much attention the law paid to high schools is in funding. Nearly all of NCLB's accountability mechanisms are tied to Title I money, more than 90 percent of which is funneled to elementary schools. As a result, the few high school requirements in the law ring hollow, experts say.

"Here they rested all of this big set of requirements on a funding mechanism that basically doesn't get to high schools," Little said.

Counting heads

Experts say the graduation rate was added into NCLB so schools wouldn't try to push out their lowest performing students to raise their achievement levels. What ensued, however, was attention to the graduation rates themselves.

Though NCLB includes a definition of a graduation rate, the law's implementation revealed that

(See **NCLB** on page 7)

NCLB: 5 Years & Counting

States ranked by graduation rate

The table below, from the **Manhattan Institute's Jay Greene** and **Marcus Winters**, ranks states by their 2002 graduation rates using a calculation Greene developed. The method relies on estimates of the number of students who enter ninth grade, makes adjustments for changes in the student population and divides that number into the number of students who graduate.

| Rank | State | Total graduation rate, in percent |
|------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | New Jersey | 89 |
| 2 | Iowa | 85 |
| 3 | Wisconsin | 85 |
| 4 | North Dakota | 85 |
| 5 | Minnesota | 84 |
| 6 | Nebraska | 83 |
| 7 | Pennsylvania | 80 |
| 8 | Connecticut | 79 |
| 9 | Oklahoma | 79 |
| 10 | Ohio | 78 |
| 11 | New Hampshire | 78 |
| 12 | Utah | 78 |
| 13 | Vermont | 78 |
| 14 | Kansas | 78 |
| 15 | Montana | 78 |
| 16 | Michigan | 78 |
| 17 | Maryland | 77 |
| 18 | South Dakota | 76 |
| 19 | Missouri | 76 |
| 20 | West Virginia | 76 |
| 21 | Massachusetts | 75 |
| 22 | Maine | 75 |
| 23 | Idaho | 75 |
| 24 | Illinois | 74 |
| 25 | Rhode Island | 74 |

| Rank | State | Total graduation rate, in percent |
|------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 26 | Virginia | 74 |
| 27 | Wyoming | 73 |
| 28 | Arkansas | 72 |
| 29 | Colorado | 72 |
| 30 | Indiana | 72 |
| 31 | Washington | 72 |
| 32 | Oregon | 71 |
| 33 | Arizona | 70 |
| 34 | Nevada | 68 |
| 35 | Kentucky | 68 |
| 36 | Texas | 68 |
| 37 | North Carolina | 67 |
| 38 | California | 67 |
| 39 | New Mexico | 65 |
| 40 | New York | 64 |
| 41 | Louisiana | 63 |
| 42 | Hawaii | 63 |
| 43 | Delaware | 63 |
| 44 | Mississippi | 60 |
| 45 | Florida | 59 |
| 46 | Alaska | 59 |
| 47 | Alabama | 58 |
| 48 | Tennessee | 57 |
| 49 | Georgia | 56 |
| 50 | South Carolina | 53 |

Source: Manhattan Institute

NCLB (continued from page 6)

states made their calculations using an assortment of methods — many with data from archaic systems or figures riddled with inaccuracies.

That led to a demand for cleaner, more reliable data, a better way to collect it, and a standardized calculation. Inspired by a **National Governors Association** compact signed in 2005 by all 50 governors, most states are now working towards a longitudinal data system to follow students through their tenure, a change that will allow districts to better track transfers, dropouts and other student movement affecting graduation rates.

But expert-calculated graduation-rate figures also exposed a high national dropout rate — leading many education insiders to zero in on the problems. **Jay Greene** and **Marcus Winters** of the **Manhattan Institute** are widely credited for compiling the most accurate graduation rates during this time. In a 2001 report, they determined that 74 percent of public school students graduate, with only 56 percent of black students and 54 percent of

Latino students reaching that milestone.

The report almost single-handedly inspired a call to action, said **Naomi Housman**, director of **The National High School Alliance** at the **Institute for Educational Leadership**.

“In 2003, it was like suddenly everyone had a meeting about high schools,” she said, acknowledging Greene and Winters’ work as the catalyst. “Those numbers made it really clear that we’re not doing nearly as good a job as we thought we were.”

Education Department’s role

Graduation rates have received little attention from the Education Department, many experts say.

The department has “watered down” the requirements, said **Dan Losen**, a senior education law and policy associate at The Civil Rights Project at **Harvard University**.

States set their own graduation-rate benchmarks, a practice that has led to Losen’s self-described “500-year plan” because it could take

(See **NCLB** on page 8)

NCLB: 5 Years & Counting

The administration's new path for high schools

High school reform figured prominently in the NCLB reauthorization plan jointly released by the **White House** and the **Education Department** in tandem with **President Bush's** State of the Union address.

In *Building on Results: A Blueprint for Strengthening the No Child Left Behind Act*, the president and Education Secretary **Margaret Spellings** outlined a plan that focuses on preparing students for college and the workforce by funneling more money to high schools, increasing academic rigor and reducing the dropout rate.

"When 90 percent of the fastest-growing jobs require postsecondary education or training," the report reads, "it is unacceptable that almost a third of incoming high school students ... do not make it to graduation day on time."

Among the proposal's revisions for high schools:

- States must report school-level, disaggregated graduation rates from a four-year cohort model by 2011-12.
- States must develop academic standards for two years of college- and workforce-preparatory English and math in high schools by 2010-11. States will be required to give assessments on these standards and report them publicly by 2012-13.
- A new Academic Competitiveness Grant program will defray the cost of college for low-income students who complete a rigorous high school course of study.
- An increase of Title I funds will be directed at high schools, with districts required to give high schools at least 90 percent of their proportionate share of the increased funds.
- An Adjunct Teacher Corps, composed of subject-matter experts, will boost instruction in core academic areas in middle schools and high schools.

NCLB (continued from page 7)

that long to reach their goals. The standard for Maryland, for instance, is a 0.1 percent improvement in its graduation rate from year to year. Other states aren't even that ambitious, considering any improvement an indication of adequate yearly progress.

Holly Kuzmich, a deputy chief of staff at ED, said the department has had little oversight of the graduation rates in the past five years because it can't control how states handle them. And ED has little leverage, she said, because of states' decisions to direct almost none of their accountability-contingent Title I money to high schools.

"The law could certainly be stronger on graduation rates," she said, adding that the most commonly used calculation troubles the department. As a supplement, ED releases its own figures, based on data gleaned from the **National Center for Education Statistics**.

"We're moving in the right direction," Kuzmich said, "But we need to pick up the pace."

High schools in reauthorization

According to many experts, the need for federal legislation addressing high schools has grown among policymakers. The question now is: What should such a law look like? So far, the answer is anything but uniform.

In 2005, Bush devised a plan to introduce the extensive NCLB-mandated testing in elementary schools to high schools, but Congress did not even consider any legislation for it. Rep. **George Miller**, D-Calif., the chair of the **House Educa-**

tion and Labor Committee, has expressed his desire to address the needs of high schools but also said replicating the NCLB elementary school accountability measures at the high school level would be a mistake.

"I don't think it makes sense," Miller said at a policy forum last year. "We're not getting the results we want yet" in high schools for them to take on more testing, he added.

As far as graduation rates, many stakeholders agree the upcoming reauthorization will provide legislators another chance to get it right.

AEE's Little said at minimum, the reauthorization needs to include language requiring states to calculate "a common, clearly defined graduation rate that is disaggregated and part of adequate yearly process."

And additionally, the law needs to include a stronger accountability mechanism that ensures states are making significant improvements on their graduation rates, Losen said.

Nothing will change, though, without federal money, according to several experts. With the law's Title I funding having gone almost entirely to elementary schools in the past five years, high schools didn't experience the same fiscal pressure of making improvements or risk losing federal money.

But more funds could be headed to secondary education, possibly through grants like the federal Advanced Placement Incentive Program, which stresses competitiveness at the high school level.

True attention to high schools will require more than that, though, Little said.

"Where the rubber meets the road is whether or not the funding will be there to make it real."