

Roy E. Barnes
Governor, State of Georgia

Nominated by
Louis A. Castenell, Jr.

Dean Louis A. Castenell, Jr.
Biosketch
(Executive Summary)

Dean Louis Castenell has been Dean of the College of Education at the University of Georgia since 1999. From 2001-2002 he was also Interim Associate Provost for Institutional Diversity.

The College of Education has 4,813 graduate and undergraduate students and 344 faculty and staff. The college also offers 90 graduate programs and 18 undergraduate majors through 9 departments. These 9 departments are housed in 3 different buildings on campus.

Dean Castenell organized a Dean's Student Advisory Council to advise the college and participate on appropriate college-wide committees. He also supported a student ambassador program to promote events in the College of Education.

EDUCATION, the College's magazine, won awards for magazine publishing improvement three consecutive years from the Council for Advancement & Support of Education (CASE) for the Southeast. The College's electronic news also won CASE's award in the electronic news letter category for three consecutive years.

At Dean Castenell's initiative, the College of Education has entered into a comprehensive, long-term partnership with the Clarke County School District and the Athens Clarke County community. The goal of the partnership is to combine resources in different ways toward increased academic achievement for all students.

Dean Castenell has received numerous awards. Among the latest are:

- American Council on Education, Board Service Award
- Distinguished Alumnus Award in Higher Education, University of Illinois
- American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education, Chair Award for Leadership
- Pedor Zamora Horizons Award, The University of Georgia for Diversity Leadership

Service to the University includes:

- Appointed UGA representative to the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce

Dean Castenell is married with two children, Louis Calvin, a graduate from UGA Law School, and Elizabeth who is a Senior at UGA.



The University of Georgia

College of Education
Office of the Dean

August 10, 2007

College of Liberal Studies
Received

AUG 13 2007

University of Oklahoma

Dr. Trent Gabert
Chair of the Executive Committee
Brock International Prize in Education
1610 Asp Avenue, Suite 108
Norman, Oklahoma 73072-6405

Dear Dr. Gabert:

I am happy to nominate Governor Roy Barnes as a candidate for the Brock International Prize in Education. Governor Roy Barnes service as governor led to dramatic changes in Georgia and his current involvement in national policies continues to leave an impact on education practices and policies. Please read the article, "Helping No Child Left Behind Make the Grade," The Aspen Idea, because it spells out the process Governor Barnes has been leading over the last couple of years. Also in your packet you will find a collection of articles about his work with the Commission on No Child Left Behind. Furthermore, you will discover highlights of Governor Barnes' decisions (1999-2005) which is having a substantial impact in the field of education. Finally, the entire layout I am providing you is intentionally designed to permit you an opportunity to see the breath and depth of Governor Barnes' contribution to education.

I look forward to seeing you and the other members of our committee for further review and discussion.

Sincerely,

Louis A. Castenell
Dean

Biography

Roy E. Barnes was born on March 11, 1948 to Agnes and W.C. Barnes in Mableton, Georgia. He grew up talking politics and selling merchandise at his family's general store nestled between the highway and the railroad tracks in Cobb County.

Roy did well at Mableton Elementary and South Cobb High School. After graduating from South Cobb in 1966, with honors, he attended the University of Georgia where he majored in history and joined the debate team, coming home during summers and at breaks to work in the family's store.

After college Roy attended UGA law school. The student bar association elected him as its president, and he graduated with honors in 1972. Law degree in hand, he returned home to Cobb County to work in the district attorney's office.

When Roy won a seat to represent his neighbors in the state Senate only two years after finishing law school, he was one of the youngest legislators in the state. Mableton's voters elected Roy to the Senate eight times. After two terms he was named Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and he served as Administration Floor Leader for Governor Joe Frank Harris for seven years. He used his legal talents as Senate Chairman of the Constitutional Revision Committee to rewrite Georgia's Constitution. He also developed an understanding of economic development issues facing the State as a member of the Governor's Growth Strategies Commission.

While establishing himself in the Senate, Roy started a family with his college sweetheart, Marie Dobbs, whom he married in 1970. They have three children - Harlan, Allison Barnes Salter, and Alyssa, a son-in-law John Salter, and a daughter-in-law Amy Crist Barnes. He and Marie also have four grandchildren: Will Barnes, Libby Barnes, Lilly Salter and Ella Salter.

In 1992, after his earlier terms in the Senate and an unsuccessful run for Governor, Roy was elected to the State House of Representatives. As a member of the House, Roy was Vice-chairman of the Judiciary Committee and was a member of the Rules and the Banks and Banking Committees.

In 1998, Roy began his second run for Governor, stressing a message of education and healthcare reform to the people of Georgia. Roy won the

election with 53 percent of the vote. On January 11, 1999, he was sworn in as Georgia's 80th Governor.

Roy had many legislative accomplishments during his term as Governor. In Education, he focused on lowering class size, raising standards by requiring accountability, and passed legislation requiring more discipline in the classroom.

Believing that health care in Georgia must be both affordable and accessible, Roy successfully fought for passage of the bill that guaranteed patients the right to choose their own doctor, and a bill that established a patient's bill of rights and allowed insurance companies to be held liable for denying or delaying much needed care.

As Governor, Roy also demanded that taxes be cut. He completed four years of a property tax cut on homes and family farms. He passed a property Tax Payers Bill of Rights that exposes backdoor tax increases of increasing assessments to public scrutiny. Roy also passed the first ever Sales Tax Holiday for Georgia in an effort to stimulate the economy and provide citizens with immediate tax savings.

Roy honored his campaign promises and made tough decisions to insure hope for jobs, education and healthcare.

After leaving the Governor's office in 2003, Roy spent six month at Atlanta Legal Aid as a full time volunteer. He now practices law in Marietta with his daughter, Allison; son-in-law, John Salter; John R. Bevis and Jennifer Auer Jordan.

In May of 2003, Roy was awarded the Kennedy Library Foundation's *Profile in Courage Award* for his unpopular position in reducing or removing the Confederate Battle Flag from Georgia's state flag.

PERSONAL

Spouse: Marie Dobbs Barnes
Parents: W. C. and Agnes Barnes
Children: Harlan Barnes (31), Allison Barnes Salter (29), and Alyssa Barnes (25).

Grandchildren: William Roy Barnes, Elizabeth Leigh Barnes, Lillian Kelly Salter and Ella Mae Salter

EDUCATION

- South Cobb High School graduate with honors, 1966
- University of Georgia, A.B. Degree, 1969
- University of Georgia Law School, J.D. Degree, 1972, Cum Laude
- President of Georgia Law School Student Bar Association
- Served on Law School Board of Governors
- Varsity College Debate Team, Member
- Blue Key, Member
- Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society
- Named to Who's Who of American Colleges & Universities
- Named Outstanding Senior at University of Georgia Law School

CIVIC AND CHURCH

- First United Methodist Church of Marietta, Member, Former Member of Board of Trustees, & Former Member of Administrative Board
- South Cobb Improvement Association, Founder, Member
- Marietta Kiwanis Club, Member
- Latham Masonic Lodge #12, Member
- Scottish Rite, Member
- Shrine, Member
- Kennestone Foundation Committee, Member

MILITARY

- Served as a Captain, United States Army Military Police, Army Reserves

PROFESSIONAL

- Practicing Attorney, Marietta
- Bar Admittance, November, 1972 all Georgia Courts; Member of United States District Court, Northern District of Georgia; 5th, 11th and D.C. Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals; and Supreme Court of United States.
- American Judicature Society, Member; Former, Board of Directors
- Law School Association, University of Georgia, Board of Directors
- Board of Visitors, Member, University of Georgia Law School
- Fellow of American College of Trial Lawyers
- International Society of Barristers
- Education Commission of the States, Chair
- National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, Chair
- No Child Left Behind Commission, Co-Chair
- Institute for Educational Leadership, Board member

COMMENDATIONS AND AWARDS

- 1974 Outstanding Young Man, South Cobb Jaycees
- 1974 Distinguished Service Award, Marietta Jaycees
- 1975-76 Georgia State Fireman's Association Appreciation Award
- 1976 Five Outstanding Young Men of Georgia
- 1977 Humanitarian Award, Georgia Chiropractic Association
- 1978 Legislator of the Years, Georgia Parks and Recreation
- 1980 Member, Commission on the Future of the South
- 1980 Georgia Hospital Association Appreciation Award
- 1981 Legislative Excellence Award, Council Battered Women
- 1981 Legislative Award, Georgia Psychological Association
- 1981 Appreciation Award, Noonday Baptist Church
- 1981-83 Legislative Service Award, Georgia Municipal Association
- 1982 Distinguished Service Award, Georgia Trial Lawyers
- 1982 Freedom of the Press Award, Georgia Press Association
- 1983 Legislative Conservationist of the Year, Georgia Wildlife Federation
- 1983 Life Member of American Judicature Society
- 1984 Distinguished Service Award, Georgia Medical Association
- 1985 Friend of Children, The Council for Children, Inc.
- 1985 Life Member, National Rifle Association
- 1986 The Friend of Children Award, Georgia Chapter of The American Academy of Pediatrics.
- 1987 Legislator of the Year, North Georgia Council of Girl Scouts
- 1988 Cobb County & Marietta City Community Education Programs, Award for Commitment to Education
- 1988 Georgia Hospital Association Appreciation Award
- 1988 Certificate of Appreciation as An Advocate of Quality Medical Legislation
- 1989 FFA Blue and Gold Award
- 1990 Support of Crime Victims by Georgians for Victims Justice
- 1992 Girls Incorporated, Outstanding Leadership and Support as Honorary Chair of "A Night to Remember"
- 1995 Naomi Henson Community Service Award by Northwest Georgia Minority Public Officials
- 1996 Community Bankers Association, Excellence in Leadership Award
- 1997 Georgia Citizen Action Friend of the Consumer Award
- 1997 Outstanding Services to the Job Training Coordinators Association
- 1997 Honorary Democrat Chattooga County Democratic Association
- 1997 Joe Mack Wilson Peoples Champion Award
- 1999 Selective Service System Meritorious Award

- 1999 University of Georgia Law School Distinguished Service Scroll Award
- 1999 National Association of Minority Contractors Catalyst Award
- 1999 American Public Transit Association Distinguished Service Award
- 1999 National Center for Community Education Outstanding Leadership Award
- 2000 Martin Luther King Commission Distinguished Service Award
- 2000 Atlanta Business League Millennial Catalyst of the Year Award
- 2000 Mercer University honorary Doctor of Law degree
- 2000 Georgia Mental Health Coalition on Managed Care Leadership Award
- 2000 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio Award
- 2000 New Faces of the New Economy Award
- 2001 Mothers Against Drunk Driving Distinguished Service Award
- 2001 Chapel of Four Chaplains West Georgia University Legend of Honor Award
- 2001 Georgia Council on Aging Award
- 2001 Empire Realists Distinguished Service Award
- 2001 Biomedical Partnership Industry Growth Award
- 2001 Education Commission of the States Innovation Award
- 2001 Georgia Association of Broadcasters Georgian of the Year
- 2001 Georgia Urban Forest Council President's Award
- 2001 Morehouse College Liberty Award
- 2001 National Commission against Drunk Driving State Award
- 2001 National Recreation and Parks Association Humanitarian Award
- 2001 United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Appreciation Award
- 2001 Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity Leadership Award
- 2002 National Commission Against Drunk Driving Award
- 2002 Black United Youth of Cobb County Justice Benham Award
- 2002 Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation Public Leadership Award
- 2002 Georgia Coalition of Black Women Prestigious Brotherhood Award
- 2002 Georgia Council on Moral and Civic Concerns Award
- 2002 Georgia Environmental Council Greenspace Champion
- 2002 Georgia Trend Georgian of the Year
- 2002 Latin American Association Companeros Award
- 2002 National Arbor Day Foundation Frederick Law Olmsted Award

- 2002 National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Appreciation Award
- 2002 Georgia Coalition of Black Women Prestigious Brotherhood Award
- 2002 Georgia Council on Civic and Moral Concerns Award
- 2003 Kennedy Profiles in Courage Award
- 2003 National Humanitarian Health Care Award by Patients Advocate Foundation
- 2003 Gate City Bar Association Hall of Fame
- 2003 Atlanta Bar Association Lifetime Achievement Award
- 2004 First Amendment Foundation – Charles Weltner Award
- 2004 American Bar Association, Pro Bono Publico Award
- 2004 Oncology Nursing Society 2004 Public Service Award
- 2006 American Jewish Committee Judge Learned Hand Award
- 2007 Public Citizen Award, University of West Georgia

Helping *No Child Left Behind* Make the Grade

A YEAR AGO, THE INSTITUTE UNDERTOOK an audacious task: forming a national commission to study the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and recommend to Congress improvements to the law before its reauthorization. As two long-time education advocates who are committed to bipartisan solutions, we agreed to serve as co-chairs.

The Institute has long played an active role in fostering enlightened national education policy through its Education and Society Program (see page 13), with activities such as convening a network of urban superintendents, holding briefings for Congressional staff, and issuing reports on key issues.

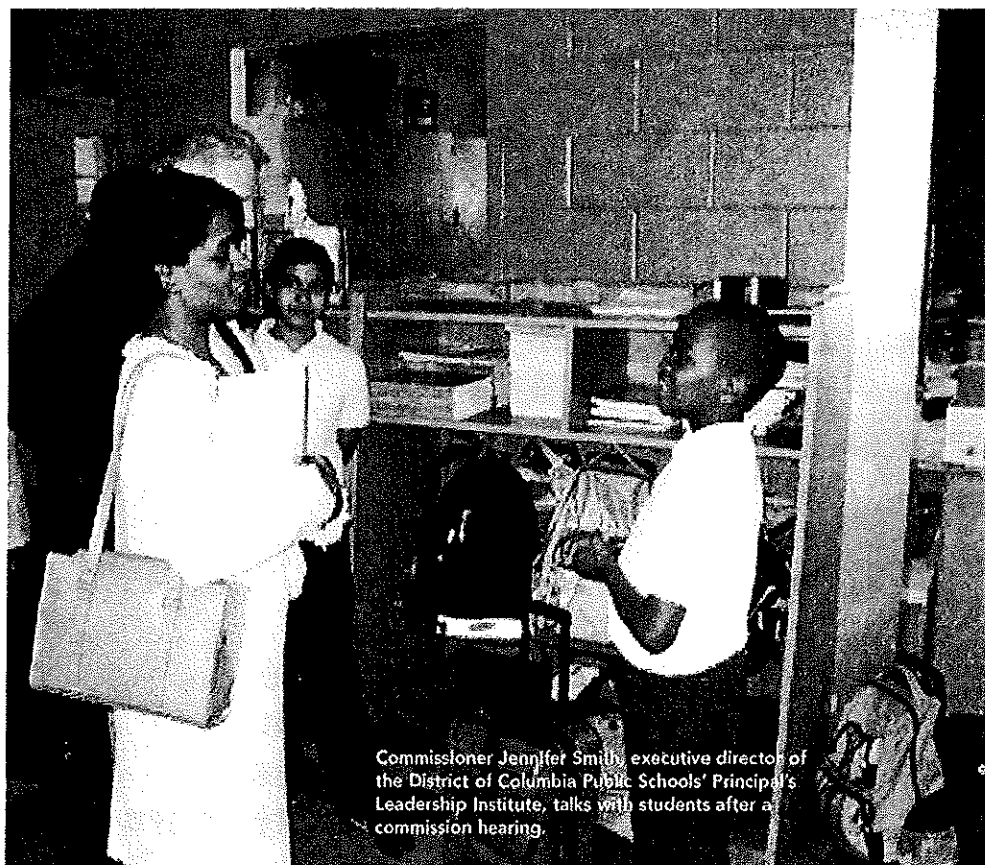
An Institute commission pounded the pavement to learn how the landmark education law might be improved in its second incarnation.

By Secretary Tommy G. Thompson
and Governor Roy E. Barnes



Authors and Commission Co-Chairs Gov. Roy Barnes and Sec. Tommy Thompson field questions as they announce the Commission's recommendations in February.

Valby Ponder



Commissioner Jennifer Smith, executive director of the District of Columbia Public Schools' Principal's Leadership Institute, talks with students after a commission hearing.

We agreed with the Institute's vision to make another significant contribution by forming the Commission on No Child Left Behind to examine the often-heated debate over NCLB, perhaps the most significant federal education law in history. The debate over the law has been highly divisive, with advocates overstating its benefits and critics issuing dire warnings of its alleged dangers. In the face of such heated rhetoric, the idea of gathering a bipartisan commission to evaluate the law's strengths and weaknesses fit with the Institute's mission of bringing together diverse viewpoints for dialogue leading to productive results.

As a governor and former governor at the time, we both supported No Child Left Behind, enacted in 2002, and its requirements for all states to set standards and administer tests to every student in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school, and hold schools accountable for improving student achievement with the goal of ensuring that all students are proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014.

NCLB marked a sea change in federal education policy by requiring a focus on accountability for results rather than simple compliance with regula-

tions. Additionally, the law's requirements for measuring and reporting on the progress of *all* students disaggregated by subgroups, rather than judging school performance based on school-wide averages, has led us as a nation to focus on the importance of the level of academic achievement of "other people's children" in a way that we never have before. This broader focus, beyond our own kids in our own schools, is not just about idealism — though that is admirable — it is critical to our economy and our nation's competitiveness in the world. Our country continues to spend hundreds of millions of dollars for remediation and retraining of high school graduates entering higher education and the workplace, employers continually struggle to fill demanding and highly technical jobs, and students in other nations consistently outperform even our top students on international test comparisons.

Thanks to the leadership and financial support of prominent national foundations — including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Spencer

Foundation — the Commission was able to assemble a diverse panel of 15 leaders, including teachers, principals, and representatives from various levels of K-12 school and school system governance, higher education, civil rights, and business.

Our newly formed Commission went about our tasks in a bipartisan, evidence-based way. We held six formal public hearings in all parts of the country and organized a series of roundtables on topics of interest at the Institute's headquarters in Washington, DC. The Commission heard from more than 100 witnesses, including state officials, superintendents, teachers, parents and their advocates, experts and policymakers at the state and local levels. In addition to the audiences at the hearings, viewers nationwide could watch live webcasts. At each hearing, the Commission opened the floor for comments from audience members, thus providing a forum for concerned parents and other individuals who are not usually included in national education-policy discussions. We invited members of the public to submit comments on the Commission's website, and we received testimony and comments from nearly 10,000 educators, policymakers, and concerned citizens.

The Commission also visited schools and met with principals, teachers, and students to see the effects of the law firsthand and to talk with those who have to live it every day. Cynthia Kuhlman, principal of Centennial Elementary in Atlanta, Georgia, told the Commission of how the law's focus on actionable data, separated by various groups of children, helped her and the school's teachers better address the needs of their students with disabilities. Centennial is a diverse school with a student population that includes kids from homeless shelters as well as the children of Coca-Cola executives and has been considered a successful school by most measures. However, the data available as a result of NCLB made the school's leadership and staff aware of the struggle of their students with disabilities. Armed with this information, school leaders challenged themselves to improve the performance of these students, quickly taking them



Representative George Miller (D-CA), Commission Co-Chair Sec. Tommy G. Thompson, Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Commission Co-chair Governor Roy Barnes, Representative Homer P. "Buck" McKeon (R-CA), and Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA). Kennedy, Miller, Enzi, and McKeon are the chair and ranking minority members of the House and Senate Committees that will lead the reauthorization of NCLB.

from 47 percent proficiency to over 70 percent as a result.

The Commission staff also developed profiles of schools to analyze the effects of NCLB in the classroom and produced white papers on topics such as measuring achievement growth and school accountability for students with disabilities and English-language learners.

After the Commission collected evidence, we began discussing and debating our recommendations, which formed the heart of our work. The Commission went about our deliberations in the same bipartisan, evidence-based spirit with which we had conducted fact-finding. There were charged debates and some disagreements to be sure. However, the Commission was able to adopt all of our recommendations by consensus because of our unifying principle, which was to assure that each proposal would ultimately advance the goal of raising student achievement and closing the achievement gaps.

This dedication to the aims of the law was consistent throughout our deliberations. Although Commission members came to the table from a variety of perspectives, we were united from the outset in our firm commitment to the goals of the law: to harness the power of standards, accountability, and increased student options to ensure that every child becomes proficient in core subjects — and to close the achievement gaps that have left too many students behind.

In February 2007, the Commission issued a 230-page report with 75 recommendations that was immediately hailed

as a powerful, forward-looking document. Articles about the report appeared in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and many other national and local newspapers, and Commission members were eagerly sought for radio and television interviews. An editorial in *The New York Times* praised the Commission for coming up with "a list of 75 specific and much-needed suggestions on how to improve teaching, learning, and student performance, and on what

the states need to do better to help schools meet the law's requirements."

Specifically, the Commission proposed strengthening teacher quality by requiring all teachers and principals to demonstrate that they are effective in the classroom. It recommended improving the fairness and accuracy of accountability measures, and taking stronger steps to broaden options for students and remedies for low-performing schools. And it called for model national standards for

The Aspen Institute Commission on No Child Left Behind

Co-Chairs

Secretary Tommy G. Thompson
Governor Roy E. Barnes

Commissioners

Dr. Craig Barrett, Chairman of the Board, Intel Corporation

Mr. Christopher Edley, Jr., Dean, University of California, Berkeley School of Law

Dr. Eugene Garfey, Dean, School of Education, Arizona State University

Hon. Judith E. Heumann, Former Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Mr. Thomas Y. Hobart, Jr., Former New York State United Teachers President

Ms. Jaymie Reeber Kosa, Middle School Teacher, West Windsor-Plainsboro School District, Princeton, New Jersey

Ms. Andrea Messina, Vice Chairman, Charlotte County Schools, School Board, Florida

Dr. J. Michael Ortiz, President, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, California

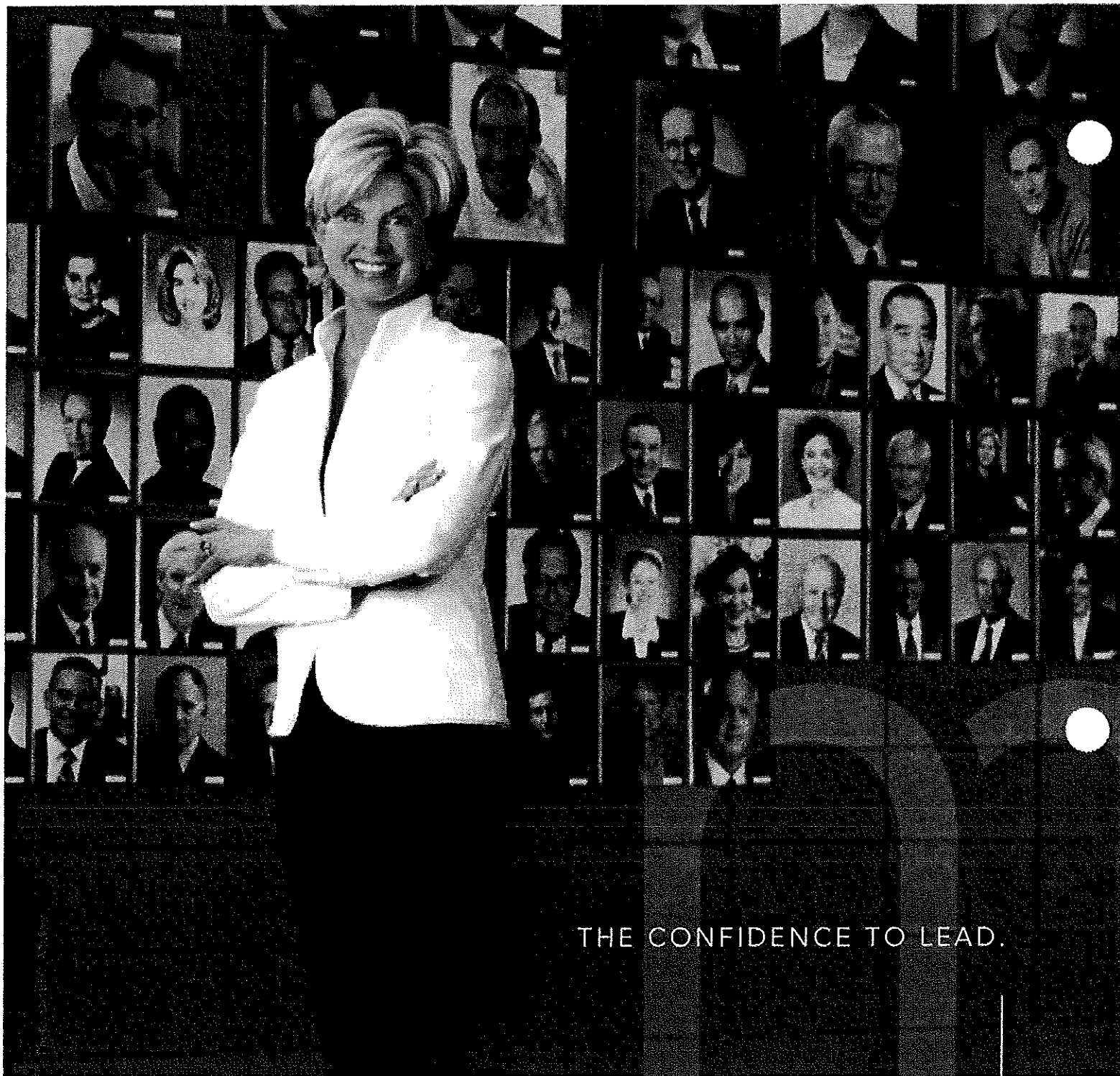
Dr. James L. Pughsley, Director of Consulting, Darden/Carry Partnership for Leaders in Education

Mr. Edward B. Rust, Jr., Chairman and CEO, State Farm Insurance Companies

Dr. Ted Sanders, Executive Chairman Cardean Learning Group and Co-Chair of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future

Ms. Jennifer Smith, Executive Director, Principal's Leadership Institute, District of Columbia Public Schools

Dr. Ed Sontag, Senior Advisor and Acting Deputy Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities



THE CONFIDENCE TO LEAD.

Leadership requires equal measures of experience and vision - understanding and insight gained from the past and the confidence to choose the best of many roads ahead. The distinguished leaders of the Aspen Institute exemplify these remarkable traits. In much the same way in the art of real estate, years of experience and the ability to negotiate complex transactions has established our own Carol Hood as a clear leader and confident guide to the road ahead.

m a s o n

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Past president ABOR
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state adoption or comparison to ensure that the expectations for all students, no matter where they live, are as high as they need to be.

Of course, like any report that makes bold recommendations on a controversial topic, the Commission's report has attracted criticism. But, interestingly, critics have largely addressed the substance of the report and its analysis, based on solid data, of the law's strengths and weaknesses rather than simply advancing ill-informed arguments and anecdotal information. The debate over the reauthorization of the law will be vigorous without a doubt. The Commission will continue to play a critical role to ensure that much needed national discussion is focused on the facts and is productive in accelerating our progress in meeting the goals of NCLB.

The next step, as *The New York Times* suggested in its editorial on the Commission's work, is for Congress to "write some of these important new pro-

The Commission will continue to play a critical role to ensure that much needed national discussion is focused on the facts and is productive in accelerating our progress in meeting the goals of NCLB.

visions into law." Members of Congress have served notice that they are likely to follow that advice. At a press conference unveiling the report, Senator Mike Enzi, Republican of Wyoming, noted, "You put some tough things out there for us. We need to examine them and get them into the practice." And Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, said that "many of the recommendations will see life."

The Commission intends to help make that happen. Through the reauthorization process, the Commission, including all members and staff, will remain intact and active. We will write articles and address education and

civic groups and the general public to elaborate on our proposals and argue for their enactment. Too often in Washington, panels such as the Commission disband soon after releasing their recommendations. Their reports gather dust on shelves and their recommendations are quickly forgotten. Members of the Commission on No Child Left Behind, though, firmly agree that we will work as long as we must to ensure that our plan will, as the subtitle of the report states, truly fulfill our promise to our nation's children. ♦

For more information or the full report of the Commission, visit www.aspeninstitute.org/nclb.



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Bipartisan Panel to Study No Child Left Behind

(USA Today, Greg Toppo, Feb. '06) 6

"After four years of complaints from parents, teachers and administrators about President Bush's No Child Left Behind education reform plan, a bipartisan commission is being created to take a "hard, independent look" at the law's problems and its promises."

Our Opinions: Barnes' Views on Education Welcome

(Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Feb. '06).....8

"Former Gov. Roy Barnes left the spotlight in Georgia after his defeat in 2002, but he has never stopped working behind the scenes on education."

Report: Georgia student tests are too easy; High scores at home don't measure up...

(Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Patti Ghezzi, March '06).....9

"A new national report on trends in student test scores highlights what many teachers and parents have been saying for years: Georgia's curriculum test is too easy."

No Child list to include schools in 20 districts; State superintendent defends...

(Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, Alan J. Borsuk, June '06)..... 11

"Madison - State schools Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster said Friday that the latest list of Wisconsin schools not meeting standards under the federal No Child Left Behind law will be more than twice as long as a year ago and will involve schools from about 20 districts, not just Milwaukee and a handful of other places."

Had Enough Top-Down Reform?

(The Washington Post, Jay Mathews, Feb. '07).....14

"Here comes another helpful report from a five-star, blue-ribbon, highly respected, serious-minded, no-nonsense, ground-breaking, cannot-be-ignored, significant national commission."

(No title)

(Gannett News Service, Ledyard King, Feb. '07).....17

"WASHINGTON _ Student test scores should be used as a factor to determine whether teachers and principals are doing their jobs effectively, a new report from the No Child Left Behind Commission recommends."

Bipartisan commission studying education law calls for stepped-up teacher quality

(Associated Press, Nancy Zuckerbrod, Feb. '07).....20

"A rewritten No Child Left Behind law should measure teacher performance, a private bipartisan panel said Tuesday."

Education: 'No Child' Panel Urges Focus on Teacher, Principal Quality

(National Journal Congress Daily PM, Jessica Brady, Feb. '07).....22

"An independent commission of educators and former elected officials released their recommendations to strengthen the No Child Left Behind law today, including a sharper focus on improving the quality of teachers and principals, new testing in science and requirements that high performing schools to save 10 percent of their space for transfer students from low-performing schools."

No Child Left Behind Panel Unveils Recommendations, Steers Clear of Hot Buttons

(CQ Today, Michael Sandler and Libby George, Feb. '07).....23

"A bipartisan panel evaluating the 2002 education law unveiled more than 70 potential changes Tuesday, providing the opening arguments for a contentious reauthorization debate set to begin this spring."

Commission: No Child Left Behind law needs overhaul

(News 10 Sacramento, Michael Langley and Karen Massie, Feb. '07).....26

"The Commission on No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has released a report recommending Congress make much needed changes in the federal education law."

'No Child' education law gets reviewed

(San Bernardino County Sun, Charlotte Hsu, Feb. '07).....27

"When hundreds of school-board members converged on Washington last month to express concerns to legislators and officials about a federal education law, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings was the only person who seemed reluctant to discuss change, said Lynda Savage, a San Bernardino school-board member in attendance."

What makes a teacher 'effective?'; Recommendations pave the way for national...

(USA Today, Greg Toppo, Feb. '07).....29

"WASHINGTON -- Even at a glance, Zakia Sims seems like a good teacher: Her classroom at William Lloyd Garrison Elementary School is quiet, orderly and inviting, with students' work on the walls and a cardboard display case groaning with books."

Commission Suggests Changes to No Child Left Behind Law

(U.S. News & World Report, Elizabeth Weiss Green, Feb. '07).....33

"A bipartisan commission delivered more than 200 pages of recommendations on improving the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act on Tuesday--the most detailed set of recommendations Congress has received yet on the 2002 law, which comes up for renewal this year."

Our Opinion: How effective are teachers? Under a new proposal of accountability...

(Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Maureen Downey, Feb. '07).....35

"As changes go, it doesn't sound like much. But its implications could be considerable. The federal No Child Left Behind Act, now up for reauthorization, requires that children in poverty-stricken school districts be taught by 'highly qualified' teachers. Now, a commission charged with improving the law says it's even more important that those

teachers be 'highly effective.'"

Education panel reviews standards

(The Washington Times, Amy Fagan, Feb. '07).....38

"A private bipartisan commission yesterday said Congress, as it renews the No Child Left Behind law, should move toward national education standards and tests that states could voluntarily adopt."

'No Child' Commission Presents Ambitious Plan

(The Washington Post, Amit R. Paley, Feb. '07).....40

"A commission proposed a wide-reaching expansion of the No Child Left Behind law yesterday that would for the first time require schools to ensure that all seniors are proficient in reading and math and hold schools accountable for raising test scores in science by 2014."

Tougher standards urged for federal education law

(The New York Times, Diana Jean Schemo, Feb. '07).....42

"No Child Left Behind, the federal education law, should be toughened to judge teachers and principals by their students' test scores, and to block chronically ineffective educators from working in high-poverty schools, a private bipartisan commission recommended on Tuesday."

Hungry for accountability

(The Chattanooga Times Free Press, Edward Lee Pitts and Christina Cooke, Feb. '07)..44

"Chattanooga, TN - Hamilton County Schools Superintendent Jim Scales said Tuesday that while applauding the No Child Left Behind Act for forcing schools to look at achievements of low-income or minority students, many aspects are "problematic" and in need of revision."

Panel offers ideas to fix education law

(Contra Costa Times, Shirley Dang, Feb. '07).....47

"An independent panel urged Congress on Tuesday to make a federal education law tougher on teachers and principals but easier on schools that show progress in raising test scores."

Cheating on tests; Geography should not determine standards of learning

(The Washington Post, editorial, Feb. '07).....50

"EDUCATORS who are successful in turning around troubled schools say the first step is collecting reliable data. A true measure of performance is the only way to identify problems and map improvement."

Other Opinion: Equal time: students, teachers owed smarter law

(Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Reg Weaver, Feb. '07).....51

"On the first day of school, a sixth-grader at a California middle school raised his hand and asked the teacher, 'Is there anything we will be learning this year that we need to remember for longer than the test?'"

Educators: Local control left behind in recommendations

(Athens Banner-Herald, Jeffrey Whitfield, Feb. '07).....53
 "The federal No Child Left Behind law should require high-achieving schools to set aside 10 percent of their seats for students who want to transfer from low-performing schools, a bipartisan commission recommended to Congress."

Panel report is latest Rx for NCLB

(Education Week, David J. Hoff, Feb. '07).....55
 "Now that a high-profile and potentially influential panel has released its detailed proposal for revising the No Child Left Behind Act, the Bush administration and education groups are waiting to hear from the institution that matters most: Congress."

Officials hoping to change No Child Act; Nationally and locally, president's...

(Lakeland Ledger FL, Andrew Dunn, Feb. '07).....59
 "Congress faces yet another political showdown this year that has nothing to do with Iraq. At issue is the federal government's sweeping education reform, No Child Left Behind, which must be reauthorized this year."

Opinion: A good law, No Child Left Behind merits reauthorization

(San Diego Union Tribune, Feb. '07).....65
 "Later this year, Congress has to decide whether to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind law. But, when all is said and done, there is nothing to decide."

'No Child Left Behind' report spotlights Yough

(Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, Mary Pickels, March '03).....67
 "Yough School District administrators who are included in a newly published report on the No Child Left Behind Act said they welcomed the opportunity to voice a small school district's concerns."

Critics say No Child Left Behind report misses real problems

(The New Standard NY, Livia Gershon, March '07).....69
 "This year, Jevon Cochran's English class has been "postponed." Instead of the usual mix of reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary lessons and discussion, Cochran, a junior at Lewis Cass Technical High School in Detroit, said he and his classmates are now drilling for the ACT exam."

'No Child' education act under review

(The Washington Times, Amy Fagan, March '07).....72
 "The battle over renewing President Bush's No Child Left Behind education law this year began in earnest yesterday, as House and Senate lawmakers heard a range of suggested changes -- such as greater leniency and help for struggling schools, new systems to measure teacher effectiveness and even voluntary national standards."

Education law faces renewal amidst reform calls

(Reuters, David Alexander, March '07).....74

“WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A far-reaching education law President George W. Bush hails as one of his signature achievements is being reviewed by Congress this year amid widespread demands for it to be reformed.”

This test should be easy for Congress: No Child Left Behind up for reauthorization

(The Plain Dealer, Scott Stephens, April '07).....76

“No Child Left Behind is being put to the test. The 5-year-old federal education law, which requires all students to be proficient in math and reading by 2014, is up for reauthorization in Congress.”

Senior-itis: Rampant, real, no known cure

(The Plain Dealer, Scott Stephens, May '07).....78

“Educators and policy makers are searching for a cure for a common malady that's highly contagious this time of year. Senior-itis - the tendency of seniors to slack off during their final year of high school - is a uniquely American rite of passage.”

Our public school teachers need support, not meddling

(Gwinett Daily Post GA. Editorial, May '07).....80

“As another school year comes to a close in Georgia, hats off to those heroes who labor in the trenches underpaid, underappreciated and under pressure — our teachers.”

State tests put image ahead of performance

(USA Today/Gannett, Ledyard King, June '07).....82

“WASHINGTON — Almost every fourth-grader in Mississippi knows how to read. In Massachusetts, only half do. So what's Mississippi doing that Massachusetts, the state with the most college graduates, isn't? Setting expectations too low, critics say.”

USA Today

February 14, 2006

Bipartisan panel to study No Child Left Behind

By Greg Toppo

After four years of complaints from parents, teachers and administrators about President Bush's No Child Left Behind education reform plan, a bipartisan commission is being created to take a "hard, independent look" at the law's problems and its promises.

The Commission on No Child Left Behind, to be announced Tuesday, will travel the USA, holding public field hearings and roundtables, culminating in Washington, D.C., in September.

The commission will send recommendations to Congress in advance of NCLB's expected renewal in 2007.

Supported by the Aspen Institute, a Washington, D.C., think tank, the panel will be co-chaired by former Georgia governor Roy Barnes and former Health and Human Services secretary Tommy Thompson.

The law's "ideas and motives were good," Thompson says, "but the way it's implemented right now leaves a lot to be desired."

Passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in 2002, NCLB aims to raise the basic academic skills of public school children. A cornerstone of Bush's domestic agenda, it focuses on closing the "achievement gap" with low-income students. But critics, including the National Education Association, American Association of School Administrators and the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, say it relies too much on testing and punishes schools with even a few students whose skills don't rise steadily year by year.

Those groups and others also say NCLB imposes new requirements, such as expanded testing, without giving schools enough money, and it does little to help schools hire good teachers.

Jack Jennings, president of the Center on Education Policy, a Washington non-profit that extensively has studied NCLB, says its stringent testing requirements for disabled students and English language learners "don't make a lot of sense" to teachers.

NCLB is a "a grab-bag of good provisions and troublesome provisions. I hope that they would find some way of improving the troublesome provisions to save the good intentions of the act."

Now in its fifth year, the law also has been applied unevenly by the federal government, according to a study released today by the Civil Rights Project.

State legislators in Virginia and Utah have recommended repealing NCLB or exempting states from requirements, but Thompson and Barnes say the commission will not consider such proposals.

"Education leaders in the nation agree that it's a good approach," says Barnes.

Thompson, a former Wisconsin governor, says NCLB "caused some rancor out in the hinterlands."

He wants to hear from those on both sides. "It's time for somebody to take a real hard, independent look and make some recommendations."

A list of commission members was not available Monday but is expected to include a teacher, a civil rights leader, a former urban schools administrator and a corporate CEO, among others.

Barnes says the commission won't focus on funding, which is a "purely political" question.

"That is not the scope of this commission. That's a discourse that needs to take place, but not here," he says.

Jennings says funding is important.

Bush has proposed \$3.2 billion in education cuts in his 2007 budget, just as NCLB's testing provisions kick in.

Bush is "signaling that in his view, it's a matter of just demanding (improvement) and not helping to pay for it," Jennings says.

Saying it's "the right time" to study the law, he hopes the commission finds ways to improve it. "If they're perceived as just being a commission to whitewash the problems of the act, they're not going to amount to anything."

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

February 16, 2006

OUR OPINIONS: Barnes' views on education welcome

Former Gov. **Roy Barnes** left the spotlight in Georgia after his defeat in 2002, but he has never stopped working behind the scenes on education.

Now, Barnes and Tommy Thompson, former Wisconsin governor and presidential Cabinet member, will lead a nonpartisan commission charged with evaluating and recommending changes to the controversial **No Child Left Behind** Act. With financing from several sources, including the Gates Foundation, the commission will work under the auspices of the Aspen Institute, a Washington think tank.

The commission will hold public hearings and meetings nationwide on **No Child Left Behind**, President Bush's signature domestic legislation, and make recommendations to Congress before the law's expected renewal in 2007.

"I think it will be a very interesting process, though another nonpaid education job is the last thing I need right now," said Barnes, who maintains a law practice in Marietta.

It's a perfect job for Barnes, who was elected and defeated primarily on his education vision. He won the governorship in 1998 on a promise to shake Georgia schools from their lethargy and lost it four years later after angering teachers with his aggressive agenda and his elimination of tenure.

As a governor, Thompson also focused on education. In 1990, he pushed through the school choice/voucher program that enabled poor Milwaukee families to send their children to the private or public school of their choice.

Though their political parties differ, the two ex-governors recognize the need to reconsider **No Child Left Behind**. The law has been credited with forcing schools to pay attention to historically marginalized students, but it also has been blasted for its emphasis on testing.

Barnes' and Thompson's insights into education will be critical to the commission, but their political skills will be just as important.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

March 3, 2006

Report: Georgia student tests are too easy; High scores at home don't measure up nationally

By PATTI GHEZZI

A new national report on trends in student test scores highlights what many teachers and parents have been saying for years: Georgia's curriculum test is too easy.

Georgia students have a far easier time passing the state test, known as the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT), than the National Assessment of Educational Progress, known as NAEP. The NAEP is given to a sample of students. Every student in first through eighth grades takes the CRCT. The gulf between pass rates on the two tests is included in a report released Thursday by the Washington-based Education Trust, an advocacy group that claims to be nonpartisan.

"Georgia standards are far, far off from NAEP. more so than other states," said Ross Wiener, policy director for the Education Trust, which released the report on state-by-state achievement trends. "Georgia finds itself close to the bottom of the states in terms of the gap between NAEP and the CRCT."

For example, 87 percent of Georgia fourth-graders were considered "proficient" in reading on the state test but only 26 percent were proficient on the national test. Other states such as Alabama and Mississippi had similar gaps. But in South Carolina, only 36 percent were proficient in reading, according to the state test. On the national test, 26 percent were proficient. "South Carolina has more rigorous standards and has stuck with them," Wiener said.

Officials at the Georgia Department of Education acknowledge the gap, and they will take the national scores into account when revamping the state tests, said spokesman Dana Tofig. The state is in the process of revising the curriculum, and will gradually change the state test starting this year to reflect the new "clear and high" expectations of what every student should know before moving onto the next grade, Tofig said.

Georgia officials often speak of high standards for students, but exactly how high the standard is remains a murky area in public education.

The disparity between state and national tests "should send a warning signal to educators, policy-makers and the public," the Education Trust report says.

Georgia officials also will set new cut scores --- the number of correct answers needed to pass each test. For example, in past years, third-graders could miss more than half the questions on the reading test and still pass. That may or may not change. Tofig said.

Former Gov. **Roy Barnes** now co-chairs a commission charged with making recommendations on tweaking the **No Child Left Behind** law, which requires schools to

report test scores of all students broken down by race and other factors and punishes schools that don't meet state goals.

Barnes said cut scores should rise every few years to reflect higher expectations. Cut scores should be set by an independent group free of political ties to take away the smoke and mirrors of setting standards, he said.

The state test has far greater ramifications than the national one. Students in grades three, five and eight must pass the reading portion of the state test to get promoted to the next grade. Students in fifth and eighth grades must also pass math. Results on the state test determine whether schools are sanctioned under **No Child Left Behind**, which does not tell states how high their standard should be. States develop their own curriculum and their own tests. States then determine how many questions students should get right to demonstrate proficiency.

That has led to huge discrepancies in test scores from state to state, making it hard for parents to know whether their kids are learning as much as kids in other states.

For example, in Maine, 29 percent of eighth-graders passed the state math test, and 30 percent passed the national test. In Georgia, 69 percent of eighth-graders passed the state math test, and 23 percent passed the national one.

"The big question looming for **No Child Left Behind** is how long are we going to allow this uneven setting of standards," said Gary Henry, a policy studies professor and testing expert at Georgia State University. "The standard in NAEP is not the standard in the state tests."

Using NAEP results to set a cut score on the state test is not possible, however, Henry said. A curriculum test must be based only on the state's curriculum.

For many Georgia parents, the state test means little because almost everybody passes, said Henry, whose daughter is in third grade. "The CRCTs are not particularly helpful in knowing how well my daughter is doing."

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Wisconsin)

June 10, 2006

No Child list to include schools in 20 districts; State superintendent defends methods for carrying out law

By ALAN J. BORSUK, Staff, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Madison - State schools Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster said Friday that the latest list of Wisconsin schools not meeting standards under the federal **No Child Left Behind** law will be more than twice as long as a year ago and will involve schools from about 20 districts, not just Milwaukee and a handful of other places.

The list of schools that did not meet standards for "adequate yearly progress" under the law is to be released next week.

At a hearing of a privately funded national commission examining how the 4-year-old federal law is being carried out, Burmaster gave a spirited defense of how the state's Department of Public Instruction has carried out the measure, praising its general purposes but criticizing some of its key provisions.

Her remarks were her first in public since a Washington, D.C., think tank, Education Sector, issued a report a week ago saying Wisconsin leads the nation in frustrating the purposes of the federal law because the DPI has done everything it can to minimize its impact. The report says Wisconsin had used several technical steps to keep down the number of schools facing sanctions under the law.

"We have in no way tried to game the system," Burmaster said.

She said the DPI's implementation of the law has been approved by the U.S. Department of Education. She agreed that some of the steps taken by the DPI have kept the list of schools facing extra scrutiny small until now, but she said that has helped build public confidence in the way the system is working.

"There's public credibility in our accountability system," she said. "We've tried to hold the law together."

She said that as the list of schools not meeting the standards for achievement grows, "it's going to be interesting to watch how those communities react."

A year ago, 49 schools in the state were on a list for missing progress standards, a much smaller number than in many other states. All but nine of the 49 were in Milwaukee. Two were in Beloit, two in Madison and one each in Green Bay, Kenosha, Racine, Superior and on the Menominee Indian Reservation. Of the Milwaukee schools, 38 were in the Milwaukee Public Schools system and two were charter schools not connected to MPS.

Although the consequences of being on the list so far have not been severe, school communities often take it as a major blot on their reputation.

Under the federal law, the bar for meeting annual standards climbs from year to year. Many educators think it is inevitable the lists will grow rapidly over time unless the law is changed.

The commission that met Friday in Madison is headed by former Gov. Tommy G. Thompson, a Republican, and former Georgia Gov. **Roy Barnes**, a Democrat, and has a goal of making recommendations on how the law should be changed. The law is scheduled to be reconsidered by Congress in 2007. Other members of the bipartisan commission range from corporate officials to a retired teachers union leader.

Burmaster was one of six witnesses at the commission's Madison hearing, the fourth hearing it has held around the country.

Burmaster told members that she is concerned about the impact of testing third- through eighth-graders, along with 10th-graders, every year, as the federal law requires. She spoke highly of Wisconsin's old system of testing, which involved fourth-, eighth- and 10th-graders and a reading comprehension test for third-graders. She said that in her view, the emphasis on testing is the worst part of the law, and too many schools now are focused on preparing children to take tests.

But she praised the general goals of the federal law, saying, "Closing the achievement gap (between have and have-not students) must be our number one priority."

Concern for students learning English

Another witness was Cheryl Clancy, principal of Kosciuszko Middle School in Milwaukee, a school that has been on the progress list for several years running. She said that the law focused attention in her school on raising student achievement and that scores have gone up, though they remain lower than desired.

But she criticized the law for requiring students who have been learning to speak English for as little as three years to take the tests in English. Nearly half the students at her school are learning English, she said.

Clancy also said she is concerned that the law's provisions sometimes work to impose sanctions on schools where students are making significant progress. She said she would like to see money now made available to students for tutoring and other services outside of school used instead to pay for school sessions in the summer. She said that would have a bigger impact.

After the hearing, Thompson said he hopes the commission, funded by the Aspen Institute, will come up with ways to improve parts of the law that are causing difficulties. But he said the law as a whole remains the best way to move education forward nationally.

Thompson said that there has not been enough improvement overall in the educational success of American children and that the country needs "a quantum step forward."

BEGINNING SUNDAY

Are Milwaukee's public high school students prepared for the next step in their lives? And does it really help to break up large, comprehensive schools such as North Division? Alan J. Borsuk and Sarah Carr of the Journal Sentinel staff take you inside MPS schools in a special four-day series.

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Washington Post

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Had Enough Top-Down Reform?

By Jay Mathews

Here comes another helpful report from a five-star, blue-ribbon, highly respected, serious-minded, no-nonsense, ground-breaking, cannot-be-ignored, significant national commission.

The report of The Commission on No Child Left Behind, co-chaired by former Wisconsin governor and former U.S. Health and Human Services secretary Tommy G. Thompson and former Georgia governor Roy E. Barnes and sponsored by the Aspen Institute, was released this morning. It says all the right things about how to produce more effective teachers and principals, better school-assessment systems and more sensible ways of helping our most disadvantaged children.

This may be the most prestigious of the groups recommending improvements in the No Child Left Behind law. But it isn't the only one. As Congress lurches toward reauthorizing the most ambitious federal education law in our history, we are hearing all kinds of suggestions about No Child Left Behind from every imaginable quarter.

But the more I read these well-intended documents, the more I wonder. Haven't we had enough of this stuff? Are we really going to get significant improvement in our lowest-performing schools through more reports telling us how to fix the federal rules?

I share the view of the majority of Congress, and the leaders of both major parties, that No Child Left Behind was a good idea. It forced the states to pay attention to the poor teaching in our low-income neighborhood schools. That was something many of those states failed to do under an earlier law that asked them nicely but had no serious penalties if they told Washington to mind its own business. Nearly everybody in education applauds No Child Left Behind's insistence on measuring the progress each school and district is making in helping low-income students, learning-disabled students, students from immigrant families and students from the most neglected minority groups.

There are recommendations in the Thompson-Barnes report that I think both make sense and have a chance of being implemented. Assessing teacher quality based on improved achievement of their students, allowing low-income school principals to refuse to accept teachers who have not met the highest quality standards, requiring education schools to teach courses that prepare future teachers for the real-life conditions of inner city classrooms and requiring states to evaluate the effectiveness of federally-mandated after-school tutoring are among the commission's best recommendations. Some of them may find support on Capitol Hill.

But there is also a lot of mush in the report. As is usual with such commissions, the members and staff want to make sure they reflect many points of views, since thoughtful people took the trouble to attend their hearings and share their favorite ideas.

Unfortunately, many of these proposals don't make much sense.

The Thompson-Barnes commission recommends that the federal government hold schools accountable for improving graduation rates. That sounds great, but it will do little good because we have yet to develop techniques that significantly improve graduation

rates in low-income schools of anything but the smallest sizes. Another commission recommendation, requiring high-performing schools to reserve 10 percent of their seats for students who want to transfer from low-performing schools, is also bad. Nearly anyone can see it is a recipe for parental revolt and administrative disaster. A third recommendation, increasing the amount of federal funds set aside by the states for school improvement from 4 to 5 percent of school poverty allocations, will likewise do little. State officials can define "school improvement programs" any way they like and send the money to the least troublesome programs, which are often the least effective.

Some of the commission recommendations might bear fruit, but most of them will just spark more of the arguments over turf and image that characterize much of what passes for school reform these days.

In Virginia, where I sit at my desk in Alexandria and sort through these reports, we have a bitter argument going on between the school superintendent and school board of Fairfax County and one of the county's best-known residents, U. S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings. Along with at least two other Virginia school districts, Fairfax is refusing to follow the rule set by Spellings' department that they, like the vast majority of other school districts in the country, give children from immigrant families the same state assessment test they give all their other students.

There are reasonable arguments on both sides. Fairfax says 80 percent of the county's students of limited English proficiency are already getting the state test, and the remaining children are in the early stages of learning the language. To these children, the test would be mostly incomprehensible and a waste of time. Spellings says that it is important to measure just how far behind they are, and that the law will not work if some rich and powerful districts such as Fairfax, as in the bad old days before No Child Left Behind, are allowed to tell the federal rule makers to go take a long jump into their nearest recreational reservoir.

Fixing schools is not supposed to be about adult fits of pique and petulance. It is supposed to be about kids.

It is, I admit, borderline ridiculous for me to suggest that we stop spending so much time and money pumping the federal law full of new rules, because this is America and that is about the only way the officials we elect know how to change things they don't like. But it would be helpful, I think, if we embraced the likely delays in fixing No Child Left Behind and used the time to think about other ways to go at this.

I would like to take much of the money the Education Department spends getting states to obey the law and invest it instead in the department's admirable programs to identify which public schools are doing the best jobs educating low-income children, and why they are succeeding.

The schools that have surprised me by raising student achievement far above expectations have rarely done that because state and federal school officials gave them new rules to follow. In nearly every case, good teachers found methods that worked and persuaded other good teachers to join them for the joy of working in schools where they knew their efforts would help kids in a big way.

Bottom-up reform, I realize, is often slow and uncertain. But is top-down reform any better? A little bit more of the former, and a bit less of the latter, might be the way to go.

The next several good-hearted national commissions could then spend their time not fiddling with the law, but finding the schools that work and explaining to the rest of us why that happened, and how other schools could do the same.

Gannett News Service
Tuesday, February 13, 2007
By Ledyard King

WASHINGTON _ Student test scores should be used as a factor to determine whether teachers and principals are doing their jobs effectively, a new report from the No Child Left Behind Commission recommends.

The bipartisan commission, examining ways to improve the landmark education act that expires next year, is proposing that educators in low-performing, high-poverty schools show improvement in their students or face transfer to another school.

"Teacher quality is the most important factor for improving school quality, especially for disadvantaged children," former Gov. Roy Barnes, D-Ga., said during a Capitol Hill news conference Tuesday where the report was released. "Instead of simply looking at qualifications, we believe that teachers should have the opportunity to demonstrate their effectiveness in the classroom."

Barnes co-chairs the 15-member panel with former Gov. Tommy Thompson, R-Wis. The report offers 75 recommendations to Congress, which is discussing how to renew and improve the 5-year-old law that expires in 2008.

The commission also is asking the federal government to let more schools meet academic progress goals by tracking the growth individual students make over time rather than comparing this year's third grade to last year's third grade.

It also wants all high school seniors to take a test measuring their readiness for college or work and wants to add science to the subjects (math and reading) where test scores determine whether a school is making adequate yearly progress.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., who chairs the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, blessed the panel's work, saying he expected many of the recommendations "are going to see life."

One of the most controversial proposals calls for states to use test scores as one of several evaluations in assessing whether teachers and principals are effective. Those who don't do well would be given additional training and could be transferred out of their schools.

Current law only requires that teachers be qualified to teach their subject.

Teachers unions have generally resisted programs tying test scores to performance. In Houston and Florida, teachers objected to plans that offered bonuses to teachers who raised student achievement.

Commission member Thomas Hobart objected to using scores to judge teachers. He said classroom instruction is only one of several factors that determine how well children score on tests.

"I don't think it's fair," said Hobart, former president of New York State United Teachers. "We're trying to put off the entire problem on teachers."

Michael J. Petrilli, a former education official in President George W. Bush's administration, was not impressed with many of the commission's recommendations,

saying they didn't stress school choice enough for parents. And although he likes the idea of monitoring teacher performance through test scores, he thought the panel shouldn't have prescribed a federal remedy.

"How do you make this work from Washington?" asked Petrilli, now with the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation in Washington, D.C. "The federal push should stay focused on results: Is student achievement rising? But in terms of which teachers (are effective), those decisions should be left at the local level."

— Highlights

Recommendations from the No Child Left Behind Commission report include:

- _ Allow more states to measure academic growth of students year to year as a way to determine whether schools are making adequate yearly progress.
- _ Create better data systems to track individual progress of students over time.
- _ Use test scores as one of several factors to determine whether teachers and principals in high-poverty schools are effective.
- _ Use incentives to encourage states to adopt a defined set of national standards in math, reading and science.
- _ Require that any subgroup (blacks, Hispanics, special education, etc.) with at least 20 students count in calculating whether the school makes adequate yearly progress.
- _ Test 12th graders on their college and work readiness.
- _ Add science to math and reading as subjects where test scores determine whether a school is making adequate yearly progress

— What other groups want

While many education interest groups disagree on specifics of improving the law, most want Washington to provide more flexibility and aid.

"Demands are placed on schools to improve student achievement without sufficient resources to hire qualified teachers, expand compensatory education programs, upgrade technology, implement parent involvement, and repair facilities," National PTA President Anna Weselak said.

_ The National Parent Teachers Association wants explicit language that would force states and schools to share more information with parents about how to get involved in their children's schools and how schools are doing in meeting the law's requirements. www.pta.org

_ The Council of Chief State School Officers is asking for more flexibility to measure student growth. It also wants schools with only small groups of failing students to have less severe penalties than schools that are clearly low-performing. www.ccsso.org

_ The National Education Association, whose teachers say the emphasis on math and reading has forced schools to abandon other subjects, wants states to be given the latitude

to test any grades it wants to. The current law calls for testing of math and reading in grades three through eight and once in high school. www.nea.org

_ The National School Boards Association wants more flexibility when it comes to testing of special education and non-English speaking students. www.nsba.org

The Associated Press

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Bipartisan commission studying education law calls for stepped-up teacher quality

By Nancy Zuckerbrod, AP Education Writer

A rewritten No Child Left Behind law should measure teacher performance, a private bipartisan panel said Tuesday.

In all, the commission issued 75 recommendations in a report meant to guide Congress in updating the 5-year-old law this year.

Former Georgia Democratic Gov. Roy Barnes and Republican Tommy Thompson, who served as Health and Human Services secretary under President Bush and governor of Wisconsin, led the commission. It was established by the Aspen Institute, a nonpartisan think tank.

One recommendation would require schools to measure progress made by a teacher's students over a three-year period.

The law, which requires testing in reading and math in grades three through eight and once in high school, does not measure the effectiveness of individual teachers. It does require teachers to be certified, have a bachelor's degree and a demonstrated knowledge of their subjects.

"The Commission believes that it is time to raise the bar and allow all teachers to demonstrate their effectiveness in the classroom rather than just their qualifications for entering it," the report said.

Teachers could be forced out of schools if they failed to improve, under the commission's recommendation.

Schools currently must meet yearly progress goals under the law. If schools miss those marks, they can be labeled as needing improvement and may face consequences.

However, the report calls the current system of measuring progress "a fairly blunt instrument" and recommended giving schools credit for making strides, even if they fall short of a specific goal.

The report also recommends closing a loophole under the law that has allowed states to set aside the scores of specific groups of students.

States have a lot of flexibility in determining how large those set-asides should be, and an Associated Press review last year found that nearly 2 million students were not being counted when schools reported yearly progress by racial groups.

The commission also is calling for changes to the way some special education students are assessed. Currently about 10 percent of students are given alternate tests and measured against benchmarks that are different from the ones used to assess general education students.

The report recommends allowing an additional 10 percent of special education students to also be judged against different benchmarks.

The commission also says a new test should be added in high school to assess students' readiness to do college-level work or enter the job market.

National Journal Congress Daily PM

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

EDUCATION : 'No Child' Panel Urges Focus On Teacher, Principal Quality

By Jessica Brady

An independent commission of educators and former elected officials released their recommendations to strengthen the No Child Left Behind law today, including a sharper focus on improving the quality of teachers and principals, new testing in science and requirements that high performing schools to save 10 percent of their space for transfer students from low-performing schools. "We hope this report will serve as a blueprint for Congress and the administration as they work to reauthorize NCLB this year," said former HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson, the Republican co-chairman of the Aspen Institute's Commission on No Child Left Behind. Former Georgia Democratic Gov. Roy Barnes, the other co-chairman, said the panel's 74 recommendations are aimed to "quicken the closing of the achievement gap."

The 15-member commission proposed tweaking NCLB's teacher quality provision by basing measurement of a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom on test scores over three years and installing a peer review process. Under the panel's approach, if teacher effectiveness does not improve after three years, even after additional training and mentoring, instructors could lose their jobs. Principals should be evaluated, the commission said, by requiring them to earn certification based on requirements set by each state and by having their schools measured against similar institutions. Needy schools also should be required to reserve part of their Title I money for professional development programs for principals, the commission said. In addition, the commission urged a leveling of salaries at low- and high-performing schools to entice teachers to work at schools in poor areas.

The panel recommended that schools with high turnover should be required to create action plans to recruit and retain teachers, an issue not addressed by existing law. Schools deemed needing improvement would have to draft a corrective action plan and be re-evaluated one year after enacting that plan. The law now re-evaluates schools the year immediately after they are labeled as underperforming. The panel's final report also addresses a handful of issues already being raised in the debate over NCLB, such as including science assessment scores in yearly evaluations and establishing a searchable database to track student achievement overtime. "The recommendations of this panel are going to see life," said **Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Chairman Kennedy**. In addition to increased funding, Kennedy said his panel will focus on cutting student dropout rates.

Concerns about college readiness were reflected in the commission's proposal for testing graduating seniors. The group also suggests comparing the results of state-administered NCLB tests with National Assessment of Educational Progress scores. The proposal is intended to ensure states are measuring students with the same high standards. Sen. **Christopher Dodd**, D-Conn., and Rep. **Vernon Ehlers**, R-Mich., introduced legislation in January that would offer states additional money if they voluntarily match their NCLB assessments with NAEP standards.

CQ Today

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

No Child Left Behind Panel Unveils Recommendations, Steers Clear of Hot Buttons

By Michael Sandler and Libby George, CQ Staff

A bipartisan panel evaluating the 2002 education law unveiled more than 70 potential changes Tuesday, providing the opening arguments for a contentious reauthorization debate set to begin this spring.

"All of us are really waiting to delve into these recommendations and give life to these recommendations in the reauthorization," said Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., who will play a leading role in writing the legislation as chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

No Child Left Behind, as the law (PL 107-110) is commonly known, is considered the most significant domestic policy achievement of the Bush administration. Perhaps more importantly, it stands as proof that Bush and Democrats can work together -- a distinction more important than ever with Democrats in charge of Congress.

The well-publicized cooperation that helped Republicans and Democrats work together in 2001 was followed by a torrent of criticism over the last five years. Those disagreements, between Democrats and Republicans and among interest groups, now threaten to delay reauthorization.

For the most part, though, the Commission on No Child Left Behind steered clear of the most difficult political pitfalls.

It made no recommendations of funding levels for new and existing programs. Democrats have accused Bush and the Republican Congress of failing to deliver money he promised as part of the deal that cleared the way for passage. They say higher funding is essential if the law is to be reauthorized.

The panel also did not take a position on vouchers for private schools, a major element in the Bush administration's proposal.

The chairmen were optimistic that the mood is once again ripe for bipartisan partnership between Bush and the two Democratic chairmen who guide the committees with major jurisdiction -- Kennedy and George Miller of California.

"I think the administration wants to return to something other than Iraq and this gives an opportunity," said Democrat Roy E. Barnes, the committee's co-chairman and a former governor of Georgia (1999-2003). "I think a new leadership in Congress wants to show they can work on a bipartisan fashion . . . This presents the framework -- a blueprint -- that they can have for some quick action."

Republican Tommy G. Thompson, the co-chairman and former Secretary of Health and Human Services from 2001-05 and Wisconsin governor (1987-2001), agreed. But Thompson warned that the clock is ticking.

"I think next year is going to be hard for anything to pass because the city closes down during a presidential election," said Thompson. "Next year is going to be even more so because everybody is running. There's not going to be anybody left to vote because everybody is going to be in Iowa or New Hampshire or wherever the case may be."

Included in that list is Thompson, who has formed an exploratory committee for the 2008 race.

Under the law, underperforming schools -- those that fail to meet certain annual benchmarks -- face several consequences, including allowing students to transfer to other public schools and to use federal dollars for private tutors. The list of the commission's recommendations included a broad array of ideas, including:

- Adding an exit exam for high school students to take their senior year.
- Creating a national model that would serve as the benchmark for individual state standardized tests.
- Broadening the standard for "highly qualified teachers" to "highly qualified and effective teachers" by adding new requirements that tie their performance to "learning gains" and positive evaluations. The recommendations also call for requiring states to develop new data systems that track student progress.
- Requiring schools that have demonstrated "adequate yearly progress" for students to reserve 10 percent of their seats for transfers from underperforming schools.
- Allowing schools to receive credit for students meeting benchmarks if those students are on a three-year "growth trajectory" based on assessment scores.
- Clarifying rules for including students with disabilities in calculating adequate yearly progress.
- Adding new standards for principals that measure their performance against those of their students.

Interest groups are already zeroing in on the recommendations, specifically the changes that would apply to teachers.

Joel Packer, director of education policy for the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers union, said the proposed revisions to the "highly qualified" standards are a bad idea because many teachers have already made the effort to meet current standards. The changes, Packer said, would create "a new set of hoops everyone has to jump through."

"We think it's an ill-conceived proposal for a variety of reasons," Packer said.

At the other end of the spectrum, Michael Petrilli, vice president for national programs and policy and the conservative Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, called the new teaching requirements "a disaster. " He said the overall recommendations go too far toward creating more bureaucracy at a time when schools should be free of "micromanaging" by the federal government.

"There are surely lots of good ideas. But there are lots of bad ideas. It seems they have left no idea behind," said Petrilli. "If this is to be a first draft of the reauthorization, it's a breathtaking expansion of the federal role in education."

News 10 Sacramento

February 13, 2007

Commission: No Child Left Behind law needs overhaul

By Michael Langely and Karen Massie

The Commission on No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has released a report recommending Congress make much needed changes in the federal education law.

Former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson and former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes are co-chairman of panel which has spent a year talking to teachers, principals, parents and students about the impact of NCLB on schools. Thompson said, "This report is the blueprint for how we can really make the No Child Left Behind law better."

The commission is recommending that Congress redefine what a "quality teacher" is and make sure that low-income schools have equal access to effective teachers. The group also wants lawmakers to establish national education standards instead of allowing each state to set their own. Panel members added that the current accountability system is too punitive and needs to accurately reflect the academic strides being made by schools and individual students.

The Commission made 75 recommendations to update and improve the law. In the report, commissioners call for teachers to demonstrate their effectiveness in the classroom and not just their qualifications for entering it. The report concludes that teachers should face penalties, including dismissal, for failing to improve student test scores over a period of several years.

"We live in a new, international, competitive, global economy and our children have to be able to compete on that international basis," said Barnes.

Right now many California schools designated as failing to make the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB are lauded by the states for improving test scores and their Academic Performance Index (API). Such is the case for Northwood Elementary School in the North Sacramento School District. In 2000 the school's API was 525. Last year the API had jumped to 706 but still the school is listed as needing Program Improvement under NCLB.

Principal Renee Scott-Femenella said the school needed 23 of its 92 English language learners to be proficient in Language Arts. Test scores showed only 21 are proficient. So a notice has gone home to parents telling them the school has failed. Scott-Femenella said, "That's not fair. The teachers and staff have worked hard to help our kids. We analyze our test scores to determine which students need extra help. We've come a long way since I first arrived and someone is still saying it's not good enough."

San Bernardino County Sun

February 13, 2007

'No Child' Education Law Gets Reviewed

by Charlotte Hsu

When hundreds of school-board members converged on Washington last month to express concerns to legislators and officials about a federal education law, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings was the only person who seemed reluctant to discuss change, said Lynda Savage, a San Bernardino school-board member in attendance.

Today, critics and supporters of the five-year-old law, including Spellings, will be waiting to hear the final recommendations of a bipartisan commission charged with reviewing the legislation.

The law, known as No Child Left Behind, requires a rising percentage of students at every school to be proficient on state tests in math and English each year. Populations within a student body, including disabled students and children still learning English, must also meet the proficiency targets. Schools that miss goals in consecutive years are sanctioned.

The law has enjoyed widespread bipartisan support, although many legislators have called for tweaking it.

Sen. Edward Kennedy and Rep. George Miller, Democrats who chair the Senate and House committees on education, will join the Commission on No Child Left Behind when it announces its recommendations today in Washington, D.C.

The 15-member commission, chaired by former Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson and former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes, has spent a year conducting hearings and research on the law, which is up for reauthorization.

Critiques of NCLB at the National School Boards Association's Federal Relations Network conference in January touched on many issues relevant to the Inland Empire, said Savage and fellow San Bernardino City Unified School District board member Teresa Parra, who also attended.

Legislators were receptive to educators' ideas, Savage said.

"These guys really know what we're talking about," Savage said. "The one thing that was extremely discouraging was the secretary of education, Margaret Spellings. ... She was extremely poorly received. It was almost embarrassing."

In a speech last month on NCLB, Spellings said the law was responsible for improved test scores for many students. She emphasized the importance of the legislation at a time when children who are poor, black or Latino lag behind their peers in academics.

However, educators say that while they see the value of keeping public schools accountable, NCLB needs to give schools more money to fix problems. The cost of meeting provisions of the law has totaled millions of dollars for school districts, including San Bernardino - money that could be spent on other programs, Savage said.

Educators would like the law to allow states to give alternate exams to students who are not yet fluent in English, and to allow kids to test more than once a year. Many area schools have been classified as failing because of poor performance among English learners.

Local officials want NCLB to authorize states to use their own systems, instead of the regimen of proficiency targets, to gauge student success.

In a proposal last month, President Bush suggested allowing states to measure success by tracking individual students' progress, but he insisted states meet NCLB's original goal of having all students proficient by 2014.

Jo Ann Webb, a Department of Education spokeswoman, said officials are reviewing whether California's way of tracking progress can be used to measure achievement under NCLB. California does not have a system capable of following individual children through their school careers, but expects to complete one by 2009, according to the state Education Department.

A point of contention between the president and educators lies in the law's treatment of "school choice." NCLB lets parents move children from schools that miss proficiency targets to schools that are meeting goals.

Although school boards would like to place limits on that provision of the legislation, President Bush said he would like to see it expanded. His plan for NCLB includes "Promise Scholarships" and "Opportunity Scholarships," school voucher programs that could pay for children to attend private institutions. Schools deemed failing under NCLB would be forced to let parents choose from alternatives including private school.

USA Today

February 14, 2007

What makes a teacher 'effective'?; Recommendations pave the way for national debate

By Greg Toppo

WASHINGTON -- Even at a glance, Zakia Sims seems like a good teacher: Her classroom at William Lloyd Garrison Elementary School is quiet, orderly and inviting, with students' work on the walls and a cardboard display case groaning with books.

She leads her first-graders quickly through their morning drill. Most come along happily, listening intently and raising their hands as they sit on the rug.

Afterward, Sims jokes about cultivating the routine that, to an outsider, looks so smooth. "That took a long time," she says. "A very long time."

With a master's degree from nearby Howard University and a highly coveted National Board certificate, Sims, 31, is arguably one of the city's most highly qualified teachers: Only 16 of the city's 5,000 teachers are board-certified. But in a few years, her credentials might not help her keep her job.

It might come down to this: How well do her 6- and 7-year-olds do on standardized tests?

When Congress reauthorizes President Bush's **No Child Left Behind** education law in the next year or two, lawmakers almost certainly will add provisions that allow administrators to tie many teachers' jobs to student achievement.

Among recommendations issued Tuesday by the Commission on **No Child Left Behind**, a blue-ribbon panel assembled by the Aspen Institute, a non-partisan think tank, is a call to assess teachers "by their effectiveness in raising student achievement" rather than just their qualifications. It also proposes using evaluations by principals and fellow teachers. Under the proposal, student achievement would count for no less than half of a teacher's score.

Other experts have proposed similar ideas to replace the law's teacher ratings, which have been widely criticized as weak. The current ratings take into account only teachers' credentials: their college major or professional training and subject matter knowledge -- asking, for instance, whether a French teacher knows French. And even when teachers don't meet such standards, states can call them qualified anyway if teachers have taught for long enough and consistently get satisfactory evaluations.

So what makes a teacher effective? And should teachers' jobs -- their careers, really -- be pinned on a couple of pages' worth of bubble answer sheets their students fill in each spring?

The push to rate teachers not by "inputs" (How did they get to the classroom?) but by

"outputs" (What are they doing for kids?) is revolutionary and welcomed by many. The panel's co-chairman, former Georgia governor **Roy Barnes**, says that as part of an overall analysis, "it's entirely appropriate." He also chairs the board that oversees National Board Certification.

The idea already is challenging schools in several states to find a better way to pay teachers. Even now, several big cities are experimenting with higher salaries based on student scores and looking at ways to tempt good teachers into troubled inner-city schools where they're needed most.

Drastic response

But experts say that if tying effectiveness to test scores is broadly applied to schools nationwide, it risks unfairly putting down or dismissing thousands of good teachers.

"In the abstract, which is why it has gained so much currency, it sounds like a fantastic idea," says Kate Walsh of the National Council on Teacher Quality, a Washington research and advocacy group.

But Walsh is "very skeptical about whether it's practical," because it's so difficult to judge teachers objectively by students' work. Such "value-added" measures are still being developed and aren't completely reliable, Walsh says.

In a worst-case scenario, the system could sow such distrust that teachers and principals simply cheat to raise scores.

That happened in 2003 in Chicago, where researchers estimated that as many as 5% of elementary school teachers cheated, typically by erasing wrong test answers and substituting correct ones.

Last year, Texas officials investigated nearly 700 schools for cheating, and similar probes have found cheating in California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and elsewhere. In one Texas case in 2005, 22 teachers lost their jobs.

"If you don't think the system's fair, you're more likely to approach it dishonestly," Walsh says.

The Aspen proposal represents only a tentative first step that, for now, could make it fairly easy for teachers to keep their jobs, commission materials suggest.

It averages three years of test data and applies only to teachers who teach three core subjects: English, math and science. (That would apply to most elementary school teachers, who tend to teach all three.) Teachers would have to stay out of only the bottom 25% of teachers in their state to remain in good standing, and they would have seven years to climb out of the bottom quarter. After two years, they'd have to get training, and after three, their principal would have to write a letter notifying parents that their

children's teacher is struggling to meet "highly qualified and effective" criteria. After seven years, the teacher would be barred from a school receiving federal Title I money for low-income students.

Tests, states may not jibe

The criteria could make the proposal a hard sell with teachers, who already complain that tests required by **No Child Left Behind** are unfairly labeling thousands of schools as needing improvement.

Antonia Cortese of the American Federation of Teachers says that, in many cases, state standards, which dictate what is taught day to day, do not synchronize with what is on the tests. A recent study by the group found that only 11 states had standards aligned with tests required by the law.

Rather than tying jobs to test scores, Cortese says, Congress should work to make the current system "more trustworthy" by simplifying it and by tying tests more closely to state standards.

But what about the teachers who already are experimenting with pay-for-performance plans? Cortese holds out hope for those experiments because teachers chose them, and they weren't thrust upon them by Congress.

"The difference is that teachers agreed through collective bargaining that they'd walk down this route and really explore it," she says. "When they run into a wrinkle, it's an easier thing to adjust than some federal law."

Reg Weaver, president of the National Education Association, says the notion of a principal sending home a letter telling parents of a teacher's inadequacy is insulting. "What kind of crap is that?"

Weaver says the "effective" teachers proposal in general would violate local collective bargaining agreements, which in most cases explicitly detail the working conditions and evaluation processes. "The federal government should stay away from determining what goes into a local contract," he says.

'It can't just be teachers'

As in all good first-grade classrooms, nearly everything in Zakia Sims' room is labeled.

At recess, the girls line up on the linoleum behind a worn sticker that reads Queens. The boys stand behind Kings.

The overhead projector boasts a foot-long placard that reads, "Our Overhead Projector." Behind Sims' desk is a tall steel cabinet covered in red contact paper and labeled, "My Professional Corner!"

Many schools encourage teachers to set up these displays to get students interested in going to college, but Sims' is impressive. It's plastered top-to-bottom with laminated copies of her credentials: a bachelor's degree from the University of California-Davis, a master's from Howard, and teaching licenses from California and the District of Columbia. There's a D.C. Public Schools "Distinguished Educator" award, and on and on. Last December, she climbed teaching's Everest by earning the coveted certificate from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

One recent morning, Sims gathers her first-graders in a circle, points to a colorful calendar on the wall and turns to the business at hand: deconstructing February.

"Who can tell me the date for the third Saturday in February?" she asks. It's a Tuesday morning, and her students have been in school for an hour. But several seem unfocused. "All eyes on the calendar," she exhorts. "I need a date."

The daughter of educators, Sims grew up in San Jose, Calif., and attended private schools. She double-majored in sociology and history at UC-Davis and studied educational supervision and administration at Howard. She went to work at Garrison in 2000.

Most mornings, her students show up early to get the free breakfast offered in the cafeteria, but this morning two boys didn't arrive on time. When a visitor shows up, a volunteer aide is watching the class. After a few moments Sims arrives, a breakfast tray in either hand.

Sims actually welcomes the Aspen idea to judge her by her kids' work -- with a caveat: The school board and superintendent had better come up with the money to get her all the supplies and help she needs. And parents had better get their kids to school on time, rested, well dressed and well fed. "All the stakeholders need to be involved," she says. "It can't just be teachers."

Last November, budget cuts forced Garrison to cut one teacher's job. Overnight, Sims' class grew by nearly 50%, from 16 students to 23 -- big for first grade.

How did she deal with it?

"You just open your arms up a little bit more."

U.S. News & World Report

February 14, 2007

Commission Suggests Changes to No Child Left Behind Law

By Elizabeth Weiss Green

A bipartisan commission delivered more than 200 pages of recommendations on improving the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act on Tuesday—the most detailed set of recommendations Congress has received yet on the 2002 law, which comes up for renewal this year. Early debate between congressional Democrats and the White House had made many observers wonder whether a bipartisan reauthorization would happen this year. But the emphasis yesterday was on urgency, and—one important dissent from the teacher's unions aside—the NCLB Commission received early praise from both Republican and Democratic congressional leaders and the Department of Education.

The commission—which includes two former governors, the chairman of Intel and the CEO of State Farm, as well as a former teachers' union president and a recently retired middle school teacher—spent the past year studying the controversial law, holding 12 public hearings. Its report offers 75 ideas, many of them aggressive changes—including making teachers' employment dependent upon their students' test scores, building science tests into the accountability structure, and drawing up a set of voluntary national standards. These reforms are tough but not as controversial as some of the recommendations the White House issued in January, like private school vouchers and district takeovers.

At the top of the list is a call for voluntary national standards. NCLB mandates that every state drafts its own standards and makes matching annual tests, on which all students would have to score "proficiently" by 2014. Each state complied, but each wrote very different tests with very different definitions of "proficient." Many of them, the commission suggests, are not high enough. "When young people in Milwaukee and Atlanta are competing with young people in Beijing and Bangalore," the report argues, "it is difficult to understand why Wisconsin's definition of proficiency should be different from Georgia's."

Another recommendation would add science tests to the law's accountability regime, asking all students to prove proficiency in science by 2014 as well as math and reading.

Both of those recommendations could prove politically difficult. Unions and local leaders are wary of more high-stakes testing, and national standards have long faced opposition from local leaders concerned about federal intrusion. "It's not that we teach math differently," explains Chris Lohse, the Montana State Education Agency's federal liaison. "It's just we're not sure the beltway understands how math should be taught."

But the commission emphasized it thinks the day for national standards has come. "The debate that has been raging since the time of Lyndon B. Johnson... was settled by No Child Left Behind," says Roy Barnes, the former Georgia governor and the commission's cochair, arguing there is now widespread agreement that education is primarily a federal responsibility. "The sky did not fall. I think they're ready for it. It's the next logical step."

Indeed, Sen. Edward Kennedy already has introduced legislation recommending voluntary national standards.

It was not national standards but a recommendation by the commission on teacher quality that proved the most controversial today, with one commission member—Thomas Hobart Jr., the former president of New York State United Teachers and vice president of the American Federation of Teachers—dissenting, and both the AFT and the National Education Association slamming the idea. That recommendation would require teachers not just to prove they are "highly qualified," a mandate of the law judged via certificates and diplomas, but also "highly qualified effective," a provision that would be judged via students' test scores. If teachers did not show that they had improved student test scores as well as three quarters of their peers had for three years in a row, they would face serious consequences, including not being allowed to teach in certain schools.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Sunday, February 18, 2007

OUR OPINION: How effective are teachers? Under a new proposal of accountability, parents could learn the essential answer

By Maureen Downey

As changes go, it doesn't sound like much. But its implications could be considerable.

The federal No Child Left Behind Act, now up for reauthorization, requires that children in poverty-stricken school districts be taught by "highly qualified" teachers. Now, a commission charged with improving the law says it's even more important that those teachers be "highly effective."

"Highly qualified" is measured by what's listed on a person's resume --- what degrees a teacher has, what experience he or she has.

"Highly effective" is something quite different, a matter of measuring a teacher's actual performance in the classroom, and that's what makes it controversial.

Many teachers and teacher groups argue that there's no fair way to gauge classroom effectiveness, and they resist any movement toward performance-based assessments. But their argument suffers one fatal flaw: If there's no possible way to distinguish ineffective teaching, then it's also impossible to recognize effective teaching.

And that's simply not the case. In many schools, principals and parents can easily point to the teachers who are successful with students.

And research compiled by the private bipartisan Commission on No Child Left Behind documents the importance of effective teachers for at-risk children.

The commission --- chaired by former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes and former Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, and financed by several foundations, including the Gates Foundation --- cites a study in Texas where students of similar backgrounds were followed from fourth through sixth grades.

While the students began at the same academic point, one group fell three grade levels behind by the end of sixth grade. The performance gap was traced to the lesser quality of the teaching that group received.

"The qualified teacher requirements in No Child Left Behind are simply not leveraging real quality in our classrooms," says Barnes. "Instead of simply looking at qualifications, we believe teachers should demonstrate their effectiveness in the classroom."

To calculate teacher effectiveness, the commission wants states to compile achievement scores for all students taught by each teacher over a three-year period. Armed with that snapshot, states would compare the teacher to peers teaching students with similar

demographics. The deciding factor would be whether students showed growth over those three years.

Barnes admits that test scores may not give a complete picture of a teacher's abilities. "That is the reason student improvement should not be the sole measures of teacher effectiveness, but it should have a place," he says. Evaluations from principals and teacher peer reviews would also factor into the determination of whether a teacher has been effective.

Teachers judged ineffective would not be fired from high poverty schools; they would undergo professional development. However, if they continued to founder after three years of help, they'd be dismissed.

"We cannot have the least effective teachers teaching the most disadvantaged children," says Barnes.

A similar scale would be applied to principals, who would have to demonstrate that their schools are producing learning gains or lose their jobs.

The commission's 75 recommendations will irk more than just teachers. For example, the report points out that even when schools are labeled failing, the current law places too much faith in school administrators to inform parents of their options to transfer to a better school or get free tutoring for their children. As a result, fewer than 1 percent of eligible children took advantage of the school choice option and fewer than 17 percent tapped into the free tutoring.

In addition, the commission's call for national standards is likely to generate complaints from state legislatures that already resent federal intrusion into what has been a local province.

Now, 50 sets of standards are in place establishing what children should learn and what represents mastery, and many states --- including Georgia --- have set the bar for proficiency too low.

For example, on a national test, just 26 percent of Georgia's fourth-graders met standards for proficiency in reading. But on Georgia's homegrown test, 81 percent met the standard.

Proposed national standards would be voluntary, but states that forgo them for their own standards would have to alert parents every year if there were a gap in how well students performed on local tests and on national benchmark tests.

Typically, schools insist they want informed parents, yet little of the information that goes home tells parents anything meaningful, such as whether their third-graders are doing as well as kids in Boston or Baltimore. Nor is there any way for most Georgians to know a teacher's track record for raising student achievement.

In the past, schools have essentially told parents to trust them. If Congress adopts the commission's recommendations, schools will have to show them.

The Washington Times

February 14, 2007

Education panel reviews standards

By Amy Fagan

A private bipartisan commission yesterday said Congress, as it renews the No Child Left Behind law, should move toward national education standards and tests that states could voluntarily adopt.

"It is an idea whose time has come," said former Georgia Gov. Roy E. Barnes, a Democrat who co-led the 15-member panel. The group issued 75 recommendations for lawmakers tasked with renewing the five-year-old law.

Former Health and Human Services Secretary and former Wisconsin Gov. Tommy G. Thompson, a Republican, said Congress "is much more willing to take a look" at this type of idea now than it was in past years.

With the implementation of NCLB, "there's more pressure to improve the standard of education," said Mr. Thompson, who co-led the group with Mr. Barnes.

The current law requires testing in reading and math annually in grades three through eight and once in high school, with the goal of having all students proficient by 2014.

The commission -- created by the Aspen Institute and funded by several education groups, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation -- suggests that a national panel be created to come up with national standards and tests for reading, math and science.

The proposal recommends the standards be voluntary for states. States could opt instead to alter their existing standards or do nothing, but the government would examine these states, compare their standards with the national ones, and make the results public, the report says.

Neal McCluskey, education analyst at the Cato Institute, said moving toward national standards means eventually such standards will be forced on the states, and teachers unions and other powerful interest groups will try to keep the standards low.

He said school choice is the best option but "unfortunately, the commission chose to ignore real parental choice and to stick with top-down methods."

Meanwhile, among its other recommendations, the panel would require states to measure teachers' effectiveness, based mostly on three years' worth of student test scores. Teachers who struggle would be given professional development help, but those still struggling after seven years wouldn't be allowed to teach in low-income schools. Principals also would be held to similarly high standards under the panel's plan.

The National Education Association balked at this. NEA President Reg Weaver said the "ill-conceived proposal would add even more bureaucratic hoops for teachers to jump through without adding resources to get the job done."

The panel also recommends that students must be proficient in science by 2014, that high-performing public schools set aside 10 percent of their seats for students in chronically failing schools, and that states evaluate the effectiveness of extra tutoring help provided under the No Child Left Behind law.

And the panel's plan would change the way the law measures a school's yearly performance, to give a school credit for making progress even if it falls short of a specific goal.

Most of the top national education leaders -- including Education Secretary Margaret

Spellings -- didn't comment extensively on specific recommendations, opting instead to broadly congratulate the panel's yearlong effort and promise to discuss the suggestions.

Senate education panel Chairman Edward M. Kennedy, Massachusetts Democrat, said, "today should mark the beginning of a broad, open and inclusive discussion." Republican education leaders such as Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon of California echoed similar sentiments.

The Washington Post

February 14, 2007

'No Child' Commission Presents Ambitious Plan

By Amit R. Paley, Washington Post Staff Writer

A commission proposed a wide-reaching expansion of the No Child Left Behind law yesterday that would for the first time require schools to ensure that all seniors are proficient in reading and math and hold schools accountable for raising test scores in science by 2014.

The 230-page bipartisan report, perhaps the most detailed blueprint sent to Congress thus far as it considers renewal of the federal education law, also proposes sanctions for teachers with poorly performing students and the creation of new national standards and tests.

The recommendations from the Commission on No Child Left Behind underscore that the emerging debate over the law is not over whether it will continue, but rather over how much it will be expanded and modified. Even the panel's leaders acknowledged that their proposal is more sweeping than many politicians had expected or wanted.

"You're never going to hit a home run unless you swing for the fences, and this is swinging for the fences" said Tommy G. Thompson, a former secretary of health and human services in the Bush administration and a former governor of Wisconsin. Thompson, a Republican who is weighing a run for president, co-chaired the commission with former Georgia governor Roy E. Barnes, a Democrat.

In a Capitol Hill news conference, the chairmen of the House and Senate education committees and the ranking Republican members praised the report. "I believe so many of their recommendations are going to see life," said Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

But critics of the law attacked commission proposals that they said would expand the reach of a law that is already too onerous.

"The current No Child Left Behind requirements are challenging enough," said Reg Weaver, president of the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers union. "We certainly don't need any more that are unworkable."

The 15-member commission, sponsored by the nonpartisan Aspen Institute, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other sources, recommended a number of new testing requirements that would take effect sooner than elected officials had proposed.

The law requires testing in reading and math in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school, with a goal of universal proficiency by 2014. Schools that fail to make yearly progress toward that target face sanctions.

If the commission's recommendations were adopted, schools would have to test students in science three times from grades 3 through 12 and in reading and math in 12th grade. The commission recommended sanctions for schools that do not make adequate progress toward 100 percent proficiency on those tests by 2014.

That aim is more ambitious than the Bush administration's plan, unveiled last month, which proposed sanctions for schools that did not make adequate progress toward full proficiency in science by 2020. The administration did not suggest testing for high school seniors to be taken into account when calculating sanctions for schools.

Senior Democratic lawmakers said yesterday that they were open to the commission's testing recommendations. "We certainly support it. The question is whether we can work it into the authorization," said Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), chairman of the Education and Labor Committee.

Kennedy added, "My own hope is that following science, we can get into history."

Among 75 recommendations, the panel also proposed evaluating teachers on how well their students perform. The law requires that teachers be highly qualified and demonstrate mastery of the subjects they teach, but the commission said the law also should require that teachers be highly effective. Teachers would have to meet that requirement by showing that their students improved on tests.

The group also suggested creating national standards and tests that states would be encouraged to adopt. If they did not, the Education Department would publicize where state standards fall short.

The New York Times

February 14, 2007

Tougher Standards Urged For Federal Education Law

By Diana Jean Schemo

No Child Left Behind, the federal education law, should be toughened to judge teachers and principals by their students' test scores, and to block chronically ineffective educators from working in high-poverty schools, a private bipartisan commission recommended on Tuesday.

The recommendations were in a report released here by the Commission on No Child Left Behind, a 15-member group led by former Gov. Roy E. Barnes of Georgia and Tommy Thompson, the former secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and financed by private foundations. The report is meant to be a blueprint for Congress as it prepares to consider renewal of the law, President Bush's signature education initiative, later this year.

The commission also proposed that states revamp their testing systems to track individual student progress from year to year, and to give schools credit if students are within sight of achievement targets, rather than only if they reach them.

The report drew praise from the leaders of the Congressional education committees and the administration, but it was immediately attacked by the teachers' unions and others.

Edward J. McElroy, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said there were no reliable assessment systems to tie student achievement to teacher performance. Currently the law calls for low-income schools to have "highly qualified" teachers, with degrees in the subjects they are teaching. The proposals would ratchet up that criteria.

"The highly qualified measure was only just introduced, and we're just coming to terms with that," Mr. McElroy said. "To add another hoop at this point in time just demoralizes people. It's the opposite of what you'd want to do if you want the system to work."

Joel Packer, a lobbyist for the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers' union, also criticized the proposals, saying factors outside of school affect how children fare academically.

Monty Neill, executive director of the National Center for Fair and Open Testing, which is skeptical of standardized exams, said the recommendations "will only intensify teaching to the test."

At a news conference to release the report, Mr. Barnes said, "We believe our recommendations will help improve academic achievement for our nation's students and, most importantly, quicken the closing of the achievement gap."

The chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate education committees promised that the recommendations would be part of the debate over renewing the law. That set this report apart from the flurry of proposals on updating No Child Left Behind coming out in recent weeks.

"I believe so many of their recommendations are going to see light," said Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, and the chairman of the education committee.

Margaret Spellings, the education secretary, said in a statement that the recommendations "recognize the solid foundation built by N.C.L.B. and reaffirm the law's core principles."

No Child Left Behind, enacted in early 2002, demands that all schools test students annually in reading and math, and break down the results by ethnic, racial and income groups. Schools where too few students reach state-established targets for proficiency face penalties, ranging from paying for private tutoring to reopening the school under new management.

That number would surely grow with the commission's recommendations, which were largely aimed at raising standards and closing loopholes in the law.

For example, the commission said the law should require more uniformity in how states report student performance. Each state now chooses the minimum number of students who must be present for a school to report on test results by ethnic and other groups. Some states set the bar so high that they largely sidestep the law's full scrutiny. Texas, for example, sets the minimum at 200 students, while Maryland, at the other end, sets it at 5.

Citing broad variations in achievement standards between states, the commission also recommended that states adopt a national standard of achievement, pegged to the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Its report compared the way in many states, students considered proficient in reading on the state tests were not considered proficient on the National Assessment. In Mississippi, for example, the state test found that 87 percent of fourth graders were proficient in reading. According to the national test, only 18 percent were.

The Chattanooga Times Free Press

February 14, 2007

'Hungry for accountability'

By Edward Lee Pitts and Christina Cooke, Staff Writers

Chattanooga, TN - Hamilton County Schools Superintendent Jim Scales said Tuesday that while applauding the No Child Left Behind Act for forcing schools to look at achievements of low-income or minority students, many aspects are "problematic" and in need of revision.

"Let's get our heads together and make the necessary changes we can all agree on and move forward," he said, adding that scrapping the law is not a good option. "The nation is hungry for accountability, so if we don't have No Child Left Behind, we're going to have something else."

Upcoming changes to the sweeping federal education law should include a national testing standard and evaluations for teachers, a private commission report released Tuesday stated.

The landmark act, passed five years ago, is set to be reauthorized by Congress this year. To guide lawmakers in their updating of the law, a commission, co-led by former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes and established by the Aspen Institute, unveiled 75 recommendations that mostly were praised Tuesday by members of both political parties.

"We believe our recommendations will help improve academic achievement for our nation's students and, most importantly, quicken the closing of the achievement gap," Mr. Barnes said.

The No Child Left Behind Act requires schools to make adequate progress each year toward the goal of having 100 percent of students proficient in reading and math by 2014. Schools that fail to make enough annual progress face consequences that worsen each year.

Under the commission's recommendations, the government would take into account a school's achievement growth, not just its final scores.

East Ridge High principal Mark Bean said that in the public education system, where schools are charged with teaching every student who walks through the door, requiring single student to meet some standards, such as graduation within four years, can be unrealistic.

"If you can show improvement every year, I think that's where you should be accountable," he said.

Lorna Morris, who teaches algebra at East Ridge High, said setting too-tough requirements sometimes has a negative effect on students.

"If some students don't meet the standards, they might eventually drop out because they feel they can't," she said.

The bipartisan commission, made up of educators, calls for establishing a more unified set of standards nationwide, requiring regular teacher-performance reviews and designing new tests to assess a student's readiness for college and the job market.

The commission favors encouraging more students at struggling schools to take advantage of public school choice options. It also advocates allowing an additional percentage of special education students to be evaluated using a different set of benchmarks.

Mr. Barnes said the rise of global competition means the nation no longer should close its eyes on the importance of setting a national education standard. Each state now sets its own standards and designs its own tests.

But U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., a member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, said lawmakers might face roadblocks from educators and state leaders skeptical that such a standard would give the federal government too much oversight.

"You will run into a lot of political problems if you want a national standardized test," he said.

Also among the report's recommendations, teachers who do not improve their students' test scores or impress their peers or principal during reviews could be forced to leave high-needs schools.

Mr. Barnes said the intent of the teacher evaluations is not to single out, punish or blame a teacher but to improve the education of students.

Sandy Hughes, president of the Hamilton County Education Association, said such reviews cannot measure the full value of teachers.

"The plan they're coming up with is to measure something that's immeasurable," she said. "Teacher effectiveness is completely subjective, no matter if the person (evaluating) is a supervisor, principal, peer or student."

Soddy-Daisy Middle principal Bob Jenkins said one of the main problems he sees with the law is the lack of federal funding.

"There are a lot of mandates, but not a lot of funding," Mr. Jenkins said. "Any piece of legislation that you don't have the funding with has a real serious impact on local schools."

U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, is reviewing the study.

"I'd like to change the whole way we think about No Child Left Behind from catching schools doing things wrong to catching schools doing things right," Sen. Alexander said.

The updated law needs "flexibility and respect for the good judgment of classroom teachers and principals, a more realistic approach to measuring the progress of students with disabilities and with limited English proficiency and adequate funding," Sen. Alexander said.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., chairman of the Senate committee, said this panel's report would not be ignored as Congress reauthorizes the law.

"Unlike other commissions ... I predict many of these recommendations will see life," Sen. Kennedy said.

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Contra Costa Times

February 14, 2007

Panel offers ideas to fix education law

By Shirley Dang

An independent panel urged Congress on Tuesday to make a federal education law tougher on teachers and principals but easier on schools that show progress in raising test scores.

Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act five years ago with the intent of eliminating gross inequities in achievement among students from different backgrounds.

The bipartisan commission on No Child Left Behind, funded in part by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the MacArthur Foundation, studied the effects of the landmark school accountability act for a year.

The much-awaited findings arrive just as Congress is considering a renewal of the law. "If they adopt our recommendations, I'm confident it will go a long way toward closing the achievement gap," said commission co-chairman Tommy Thompson, former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The 15-member commission, a project of the Aspen Institute in Washington, D.C., unveiled its comprehensive 222-page study Tuesday after a series of public forums conducted around the country. Among the 75 recommendations, the commission suggests a more uniform nationwide testing program, more stringent definitions of quality teachers and a new emphasis on science.

The report drew praise from Rep. George Miller, D-Martinez, one of the law's chief architects.

"I think all the recommendations are important," he said. "They highlight areas we need to change in No Child Left Behind."

Teachers' union leaders, however, blasted the idea of tying teacher evaluations to student test scores over a three-year period.

"You cannot judge the quality of a teacher on one standardized test, or three standardized tests," said Barbara Kerr, president of the California Teachers Association.

With No Child Left Behind, the federal government firmly established a school accountability system largely based on math and reading tests. For the first time, schools, school districts and states are graded on the performance of poor students, the disabled and students of different races.

Schools that fail to meet goals must offer free tutoring and allow parents to transfer their children to a higher-performing school. Campuses that fail to clear the achievement hurdle repeatedly could end up being taken over by an outside corporation or the state.

Over the past five years, difficulties with carrying out the law surfaced.

Few parents -- less than 1 percent, according to the report -- switched their children to high-performing schools, partly because of crowding. Less than 20 percent of eligible students received tutoring. To solve the problem, the commission suggested saving 10 percent of the seats at these high-performing schools for transfer students and creating an evaluation system for outside tutoring services.

Problems also cropped up at the state level. Each state can choose which tests to give and how to define success. As a result, some states have lowered their standards to make it easier to meet federal demands, according to the report.

Roy Barnes, commission co-chairman and former governor of Georgia, said the problem could be solved by giving similar exams, if not the same ones, nationwide. The questions would be based on the National Assessment of Education Progress, a test periodically given to select groups of students in each state.

"This is an aggressive move forward," he said.

Although the commission endorses a more unified national testing program, the report also suggested the government should ease up on schools that struggle to make the grade but have improved significantly.

Currently, campuses either make the cut-off rate for passing or fall below into the realm of "failing schools." The commission supports using a growth model that would allow campuses showing decent gains to avoid penalties, even if they fail to meet federal benchmarks. The report also says schools deserve more time to show improvement.

Despite these allowances, critics of standardized testing said the commission's recommendations would only exacerbate inherent flaws within the law, including its intense focus on testing rather than teaching.

"It's NCLB on steroids," said Robert Schaeffer of the National Center for Fair & Open Testing. "They want more testing in more grades in more subjects with higher stakes, and that will do more damage."

State Superintendent of Schools Jack O'Connell said that he largely approved of the commission's advice but remained concerned over the push toward national testing.

He also questioned the state's ability to effectively track teacher quality based on student test scores, which would require a sophisticated data system not yet in place.

"We don't even have a student information system. never mind one for teachers," O'Connell said.

Despite all the changes suggested, the commission largely held firm to the goal of No Child Left Behind: that all students learn at grade level by 2014.

"We don't think it's unrealistic," Barnes said. "It's achievable."

What may not be achieved is a timely renewal of the federal education law within President Bush's last two years in office, said Kerr, head of the state's teachers union.

"The question is Can the people in Washington, D.C.. agree?" she asked. "If they can't, do we wait until there's a new president? It's a dilemma."

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The Washington Post

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Cheating on Tests

Geography should not determine standards of learning.

Editorial

EDUCATORS who are successful in turning around troubled schools say the first step is collecting reliable data. A true measure of performance is the only way to identify problems and map improvement. Yet, five years into the No Child Left Behind Act and its mandate for accountability, too many states are still gaming the system by administering weak tests. They boast about high scores, but their claims are as phony as the performance of their students.

Ending this fraud is among the reforms being pushed by a blue-ribbon commission on No Child Left Behind. The group, led by former health and human services secretary Tommy G. Thompson (R) and former Georgia governor Roy E. Barnes (D), points out that setting intentionally low test standards allows students to post better results and lets states escape sanctions under the law. It also makes comparing the performance of students between states impossible and presents a misleading picture of how well schools and their students are doing. This hypocrisy has become an annual event in which states post the results of achievement tests that in many cases differ widely from the results of benchmark tests given by the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Although the commission correctly diagnosed the problem, it has fallen short with its call for the federal government to require tougher tests from the states or for states to voluntarily use a national model. It's time for the United States to move in the direction taken by other countries in formulating and administering a national test. All students, no matter where they live, should have to show proficiency in certain skills and knowledge. The reason no such test exists has more to do with politics than with education. Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton both tried to get national standards introduced, but their efforts were quashed by conservatives committed to local control of schools and by liberals averse to more testing. Children's rights trumps states' rights, and geography should not matter in how well prepared students are. Shouldn't reading in the third grade be the same in Mississippi as in Maryland? Even more urgent, given the competition the United States faces in a global economy, shouldn't an eighth-grader from Georgia or Pennsylvania have the same math skills as any counterpart in Singapore or Denmark?

There are other good reasons for introducing a national test, including the economic (money would be saved in the development and use of one test) and the pragmatic (switching the debate from what to test to how to teach). The arguments for a national test are so strong that some states are looking to form partnerships with others in developing common tests. As Congress begins to debate the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, it should ask this question: Why wouldn't the nation want, finally, to know how well all of its students perform?

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Sunday, February 18, 2007

OTHER OPINION: EQUAL TIME: Students, teachers owed smarter law

By Reg Weaver

On the first day of school, a sixth-grader at a California middle school raised his hand and asked the teacher, "Is there anything we will be learning this year that we need to remember for longer than the test?"

That child's question tells us all we need to know about the flaws in the No Child Left Behind Act and its obsessive focus on high-stakes testing. Unfortunately, a proposal released by a special commission on NCLB would raise the stakes on standardized tests even higher, pit teachers against one another and make it harder to attract good teachers to the schools and subject areas where they are needed the most.

No Child Left Behind expires this year, and everyone agrees it must be improved before Congress extends it. The National Education Association has proposed positive changes in the law, including testing that better tracks student progress; smaller classes; a qualified teacher in every classroom; strong parental and community support of schools; and extra help for children who need it.

The Aspen Institute's NCLB commission report had some good ideas as well, especially about the need to focus on early childhood education and reducing school dropouts. But its proposal to automatically brand one out of four teachers as ineffective based on students' test scores would be a disaster for teachers and students alike.

The proposal to define and rank teachers in every state manages to be arbitrary and convoluted at the same time. It assumes that the 75 percent of teachers whose classes show the greatest gain in test scores are all "effective," and the other 25 percent are not. This ignores many factors beyond a teacher's control that affect test scores, including class size and resources that vary from school to school.

Under this proposal, a teacher who urged a troubled student not to drop out of school would actually be penalized if that student scored poorly on standardized tests. Since the ratings would only apply to math, reading and science teachers, they would make it harder to attract good teachers to these critical subjects. They would also discourage good teachers from working in schools with high numbers of struggling students.

One test on one day does not measure student learning, and it certainly should not be used to measure a teacher's effectiveness. Rather than trying to make teachers the scapegoats for the challenges in public education, it would be more useful to address all the factors that affect learning.

The co-chairman of the NCLB commission was former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes.

During his administration, Georgia invested \$1 billion to create smaller class sizes, because Barnes knew that smaller classes affect student achievement. The No Child Left Behind Act promised federal help for smaller classes, but the resources to achieve that goal have not been provided. The same goes for preschool programs, tutoring, teacher professional development and support for parents.

If we want to talk about "accountability" in education, let's start by asking why those promises of the No Child Left Behind Act have not been kept. If we truly want to improve the quality of teachers in the classroom, let's give them more opportunities to improve their skills, provide better working conditions and offer salaries competitive with other professions that require a college degree --- all measures that have actually worked in the real world, including a case study that was cited by the NCLB commission.

The 3.2 million teachers, administrators and other educators of the NEA have committed our lives to education, and we fervently believe that every child has a right to attend a great public school. We look forward to working together with Congress and President Bush to achieve that goal.

EQUAL TIME

This column is solicited to provide another viewpoint to an AJC editorial published today. To respond to an AJC editorial, contact David Beasley at dbeasley@ajc.com or call 404-526-7371. Responses should be no longer than 600 words. Not all responses can be published. Published responses may be republished and made available in the AJC or other databases and electronic formats.

The Athens Banner-Herald, GA

Monday, February 19, 2007

Educators: Local control left behind in recommendations

By Jeffery Whitfield

The federal No Child Left Behind law should require high-achieving schools to set aside 10 percent of their seats for students who want to transfer from low-performing schools, a bipartisan commission recommended to Congress.

The set-aside, which some Northeast Georgia educators say would strip school districts even more of local control, is one of 75 recommendations the Commission on No Child Left Behind issued last week to Congress as it prepares to reauthorize the law.

Created by the Aspen Institute, an international nonprofit group headquartered in Washington, the commission examined the successes and failures of No Child Left Behind. Former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes and Tommy Thompson, a former Republican governor of Wisconsin, led the commission.

No Child Left Behind forces schools to show that the student body and small categories of students - such as poor or disabled children - are progressing year to year. A school that fails to make progress with any one of those groups for three years lands on a needs-improvement list and faces consequences that grow more severe each year.

Under the law, students can transfer out of failing schools, but there's no guarantee their choice of a better school within the same district will have room.

Fewer than 1 percent of eligible students transferred in the 2003-04 school year, according to the commission's findings.

In the Clarke County School District, 40 parents transferred students this school year. Fourth Street Elementary, Coile Middle, Clarke Middle and Clarke Central High School offered students the choice to pick another school.

Under the law, low-performing schools must offer tutoring to students, but the commission recommends that schools offer to let students transfer and offer tutoring only if a better school is full. High-achieving schools wouldn't be able to keep out students in zones near the schools to make room for transfers.

Some Northeast Georgia school officials question the set-aside, equating it to a federal guideline that strips away control from local administrators and boards of education.

The set-aside erodes local school boards' and administrators' ability to manage their districts, said Oglethorpe County School Superintendent Jeffery Welch. And the federal government, which makes the rules, provides only a small amount of money to school system budgets in Georgia, he said.

Federal funds comprise only 8 percent of the money Georgia school systems get, and the commission made no recommendations about increasing federal funding to schools.

Although it's hard to project the impact of the recommendation, Clarke County schools don't have extra space for classes, said Mike Wooten, a school district spokesman. "Without looking at the report terribly closely, it seems like it's a valid idea, and one worth considering," said Wooten. "On the other hand ... in Clarke County, we have a number of campuses where I'm not sure we could add classes if we wanted to."

The commission's report includes 75 recommendations for lawmakers to consider as they reauthorize the No Child Left Behind law.

The No Child Left Behind law is the latest in a series of reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Lawmakers are scheduled to reauthorize the law, which expired in January, every five years. Administrators will continue to operate under the law's existing provisions until Congress makes changes, said Jeff Gagne, the state Department of Education federal policy analyst and liaison.

Education Week

Wednesday, February 21, 2007

Panel Report is Latest Rx for NCLB

By David J. Hoff

Now that a high-profile and potentially influential panel has released its detailed proposal for revising the No Child Left Behind Act, the Bush administration and education groups are waiting to hear from the institution that matters most: Congress.

The Aspen Institute's Commission on No Child Left Behind last week unveiled 75 recommendations for changes to the 5-year-old federal law. The commission's report outlines ways to determine teachers' effectiveness using student test-score data, proposes a \$400 million investment in technology so states can track individual students' academic growth, and says that parents should have the right to sue districts if they aren't faithfully implementing the law.

The report also could give new momentum to the push for national standards and tests, observers say.

While the leaders of the House and Senate education committees have broadly outlined their goals for reauthorizing the NCLB law, the Aspen commission offers detailed plans on how to change the law.

"All of us in Congress are waiting to really delve into these recommendations and find out how we can give life" to them, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., the chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee said at the Feb. 12 Capitol Hill news conference held to release the report.

The Aspen panel's bipartisan makeup and its leadership by two prominent former governors gives its report credibility for members of Congress in the rank-in-file, said one education observer.

"If members of Congress feel inclined to reauthorize NCLB," said Sherman Dorn, an associate professor of education at the University of South Florida in Tampa, "it gives them some bipartisan cover."

Building Blocks

The Aspen panel presented a long list of proposed changes to the NCLB law—an overhaul of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, first passed in 1965, and the centerpiece of President Bush's K-12 agenda—but it didn't recommend altering the law's basic tenets, many of which critics say are unworkable. The panel's report calls for keeping the goal that all children become proficient in reading and mathematics by the 2013-14 school year, and that academic progress be tracked by annually assessing student progress in grades 3-8 and once in high school.

Its 230-page report has a series of proposals that range from minor fixes to dramatic changes that could fundamentally alter the traditional ways teachers are compensated and states define what student should know.

Many of its proposals address issues identified by the Bush administration and advocacy groups.

But other issues raised by the commission haven't been proposed by others, such as the idea of allowing parents to file lawsuits in state courts claiming their states or districts weren't adequately complying with the federal law.

Under that proposal, parents would first have to make administrative complaints to their states and the U.S. Department of Education. But if the Education Department declined to review the complaint, the parents could head to court. Judges would have the power to compel states or districts to take specific actions to comply with the law. But the courts would not be authorized to order states or districts to spend money to do so.

The right to sue would be an important tool for parents whose districts aren't providing adequate education opportunities for children, said Tommy G. Thompson, a co-chairman of the Aspen panel and a former governor of Wisconsin. Mr. Thompson, a Republican, also was President Bush's first-term secretary of health and human services.

Perhaps the Aspen commission's most controversial and ambitious proposal would tie the federal law's definition of teacher quality directly to the test-score data of students.

The commission said that Congress should appropriate \$400 million over four years to help states build the data systems they would need to track the impact teachers have on their students' academic progress, as measured by results of state tests.

The teachers who scored in the bottom 25 percent would be given professional development to help them improve their instructional methods.

Teachers who scored in the bottom quartile for seven consecutive years would no longer be permitted to teach in programs receiving money under the \$12.7 billion-a-year Title I program. Title I, the NCLB law's largest program and the longtime flagship federal effort in K-12 education, provides compensatory education for disadvantaged students.

"It's not used to punish," said Roy E. Barnes, the Democrat and former Georgia governor who co-chaired the commission. "It should be used to make sure we have greater professional development and improvement."

While the commission members gave unanimous support to its other recommendations, a former teachers' union official on the panel dissented over the teacher-pay recommendations.

"We're trying to push off the whole problem on teachers, which I think is unfair," said Thomas Y. Hobart Jr., a former president of the New York State United Teachers, an affiliate of both the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers.

What's particularly unfair, said Joel Packer, the director of education policy and practice for the 3.2 million-member National Education Association, is that at least 25 percent of teachers would be classified as needing improvement every year regardless of their students' academic progress.

"These kinds of [teacher] evaluation systems should be decided at the local level," Mr. Packer said last week.

What's more, the proposals would only create a new incentive for teachers to narrow their instruction to material they knew would be on the state assessment, something that is sure to draw criticism from parents and educators, said Mr. Dorn, the University of South Florida professor. Many people contend the law already does that to far too great a degree.

"If you have teacher salaries and principal salaries ... depending on test scores," Mr. Dorn said, "we'll look back five years from now and say: 'Gee, there wasn't teaching to the test then.' "

National Tests Redux

The commission also added to a recent revival of the idea of national academic standards and tests, another topic with a history of controversy.

The Aspen commission's proposal would assign the task of developing new standards to the National Assessment Governing Board, or NAGB. The standards, which would span kindergarten to 12th grade, would be based on the proficiency standards of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which the board oversees. States could adopt those tests, but they wouldn't be required to do so. However, under the Aspen plan, the federal Education Department would periodically issue reports comparing the rigor of states' standards and tests.

While previous national-standards proposals with tests have failed, Congress may be ready to sign off on them now, said Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee.

"There's more and more of a national conversation that state standards reflect what students need to know," Rep. Miller said in an interview after the news conference releasing the report. "There's clearly a growing sense in the country that education is now a matter of national importance, as people look at competitiveness and the economy. ... What you can't afford is an economy in which you lose children to low standards."

But many of the problems that derailed other attempts at national standards still exist, one expert said.

Any academic subject can become politicized over debates such as the best methods for teaching mathematics or over whether evolution should be taught as scientific theory, said Kevin R. Kosar, the author of *Failing Grades: The Federal Politics of Education Standards*.

"This assumes that people are not going to get into fights or try to lobby NAGB," Mr. Kosar said. "It's going to be very politically challenging to pull this off."

Rep. Miller said that he didn't know whether the Aspen proposal would be politically viable in Congress, and that he hasn't decided how to address standards. But he did say he hopes the House will pass a reauthorization bill by the end of the year.

The Senate education committee held its first NCLB hearing this month, but Sen. Kennedy hasn't announced a timetable for producing a bill in that chamber.

Lakeland Ledger, FL

Wednesday, February 21, 2007

**Officials Hoping to Change No Child Act; Nationally and locally,
president's reform for education comes under scrutiny.**

By Andrew Dunn

Congress faces yet another political showdown this year that has nothing to do with Iraq.

At issue is the federal government's sweeping education reform, No Child Left Behind, which must be reauthorized this year. The much-debated law was signed by President Bush in 2002. It set high standards for teachers, required all states to have their own testing programs and judges schools based on their progress toward implementing the ultimate goal of the law - academic proficiency for every child in the nation by 2014.

Schools are judged on whether they are making adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward the goals of No Child Left Behind. That judgment is based on student performance on statewide tests, such as Florida's FCAT.

While all schools are judged, only Title I schools - those that receive federal dollars for having a high percentage of students from low-income families - face any real consequences for not making adequate progress. All students - even those who speak little English or have learning disabilities - are expected to meet the same levels of proficiency. Many educators and policymakers think these policies are unfair.

At least three plans calling for changes to No Child Left Behind have made it to the table. One already has a House sponsor and local support in Polk County. The other two already have some school officials concerned.

The National School Boards Association drafted the language for H.R. 5709, a bill sponsored by U.S. Rep. Don Young, R-Alaska. The legislation calls for 42 changes to the current No Child Left Behind law.

Reggie Felton, senior lobbyist for the NSBA, said his organization is proposing "fixes that we believe lead us toward the goal of is 'it fair, is it accurate and does it make sense?'"

He said the NSBA supports the use of growth or learning gains, which take into account how much a student has improved from year to year, rather than just whether they are academically proficient, in determining adequate progress. In fact, all three reauthorization plans support including growth models.

Felton's group also supports expanding the use of alternative assessments for students with disabilities.

He said if NSBA could change only one aspect of No Child Left Behind, it would be its accountability model. "Change the system by which we determine whether schools and

students are performing well ...," he said. "We just don't have a fair system that says 'you're good and you're bad.'"

Some of those inequities he cited mean schools can fail to make adequate yearly progress because only a few students didn't do well.

LOCAL SUPPORT

Margaret Lofton, chairwoman for the Central Florida Public School Boards Coalition and the Polk County School Board, said her regional group supports the Young bill. She recently traveled to Washington to lobby for No Child Left Behind changes.

"There were about 1,000 school board members from across the United States," she said. "And we all presented the same message."

She and the other board members visited their congressmen to ask them to either co-sponsor the Young bill in the House or to sponsor a companion bill in the Senate. They also asked their senators and representatives to sign a pledge drafted by the NSBA.

The pledge asks congressmen to vote to improve No Child Left Behind, to improve funding for special education, to support prekindergarten programs, to attract and retain teachers and to improve students' skills needed for the future, such as math, science and technology.

"It's not a Democratic issue," Lofton said. "It's not a Republican issue. Schoolchildren should be a nonpartisan issue."

She said that of Polk's congressional delegation, only Sen. Mel Martinez, R-Florida, signed the pledge.

U.S. Rep. Adam Putnam, R-Bartow, was one who did not sign the pledge. He said he wants to read over the Young bill and the other information carefully before he commits to anything.

"There was nothing in the pledge that really raised a red flag with me," Putnam said. "So it is likely that I will."

Putnam said he, too, has thought a lot about the No Child Left Behind law lately. He said he recently spoke to U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings about his concerns. He said his No. 1 problem with the law is the "indefensible" conflict between Florida's accountability plan and the nation's.

He said a Florida school that receives an A from the state should not then be told by the federal government that it is not making adequate yearly progress.

"It has to be fixed," he said. "It sends mixed signals to our schoolteachers, parents and

everyone else."

FLORIDA IMPACT

No Child Left Behind has had less of an effect on states such as Florida that already had accountability systems and statewide tests, Putnam said. But we need to make sure it does not harm Florida's assessment standards and hiring practices, Putnam said.

Lofton said Florida has the best accountability system in the nation. But she said the way Florida wrote its No Child Left Behind implementation plan is hurting the state and needs to be changed.

For instance, she said, Florida uses any demographic at a school if there are at least 30 students represented to determine adequate yearly progress. Other states use much larger numbers.

So a Florida school with only 30 special education students would have to include their scores. But that same school in another state wouldn't have to include those students' scores.

And she said students in every demographic are expected to meet the same standards. So if one category, such as special education students, misses the mark, the school won't make adequate yearly progress.

"It's all conjunctive," she said. "... They have to meet all the requirements in this cell and this cell and this cell, dot-dot-dot to the last cell."

She said it's like telling pro basketball star Tracy McGrady that if he misses one free-throw shot, even if he had a record-breaking game, he's no good.

When asked whether Florida had painted itself into a corner, Lofton said yes - with a caveat.

"They have a chance to change all of that," she said. "Our state legislators last year very wisely passed legislation that said they must approve the accountability plan written by (the Florida Department of Education) before it goes back to Washington."

Putnam said Spellings told him that Florida is being given a pass for a year to work out its implementation kinks, which he supports.

"You should never be ashamed of having high standards," he said. "But you don't want to be punished for having high standards."

Felton said Florida isn't the only state whose accountability system has come back to bite them. He said Maryland and Utah have gone through the same thing. He compared the disparity among state tests to driving tests.

"Everybody needs to pass the driving test to be able to drive," he said. "Some states said everybody needed to be able to drive an 18-wheeler."

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Florida, who also has not signed the pledge, said Congress needs to review No Child Left Behind's reliance on high-stakes tests as its only measuring stick. "Under these regulations, nothing seems to matter as much as the test score - not graduation rates, or even students' individual academic progress," he said in an e-mail.

ANOTHER PLAN

The U.S. Department of Education's plan for No Child Left Behind focuses on narrowing the achievement gaps between white and minority students and rich and poor students, calling for more rigorous middle and high school courses to prepare students for the work force, and expanding parental choice when it comes to their child's education.

That last one has drawn the ire of Polk School Superintendent Gail McKinzie.

She said the inclusion of vouchers, dubbed Promise Scholarships, that allow public students to go to private schools "really angered" her.

"The automatic assumption is that a private school will be better, even though no testing is being done," she said. "There is really no accountability. The schools could be better, maybe not."

Poor students who attend a public school that has repeatedly failed to make adequate yearly progress and has been deemed by the federal government as needing "restructuring" would qualify for the new vouchers. Students can go to a private school or a public school in another district or can receive intensive tutoring.

Federal money plus an additional \$2,500 scholarship will follow the student to their new school. The student also still would have to take their state's test, which in Florida would be the FCAT.

If the students receive tutoring, they'll receive up to \$3,000 to pay for that tutoring.

The federal government's reauthorization plan also includes a grant program "for communities that want to expand local options for parents." Again, poor students attending struggling public schools would qualify for vouchers, dubbed Opportunity Scholarships, to attend private schools. Preference for the grant program would be given to communities with large numbers of schools deemed by the federal government as needing improvement.

Besides vouchers, the federal plan also allows states to use growth or learning gains when determining adequate progress, which McKinzie does support.

YET ANOTHER PLAN

Another reauthorization plan, from the Aspen Institute's Commission on No Child Left Behind, was introduced last week. The institute is a Washington-based nonprofit organization that promotes nonpartisan inquiry and open-minded dialogue on issues. The commission is led by former Gov. Roy Barnes of Georgia and former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson.

The 230-page commission plan includes tweaks to No Child Left Behind similar to Young's bill, such as including student learning gains into the equation. But some points in the plan have Polk school officials concerned.

"It appears it's gone in the opposite direction that many people, myself included, had wanted it to go," said McKinzie. "It's actually gotten more stringent."

For instance, the commission's proposal calls for restricting the number states can use to define a demographic to just 20 students, 10 fewer than Florida's standard.

Also, the plan calls for reducing the proportion of disabled students who can use an alternative test from 2 percent to 1 percent.

McKinzie she'd like to see both of those numbers going up, not down.

Wilma Ferrer, senior director of assessment, accountability and evaluation for Polk schools, said she doesn't agree with the commission plan's call for more testing at the 12th-grade level. She also questioned the plan's recommendation to use the National Assessment of Educational Progress as a standardized test for the whole country.

"I think we should use the test that we have," she said, referring to the FCAT. "I don't know if I'd go that route."

Both Felton, the NSBA lobbyist, and McKinzie said the No Child Left Behind goal to see academic proficiency among all students by the 2013-2014 school year is impossible.

"Statisticians say it is statistically impossible to achieve it," Felton said. "... unless we're willing to talk about alternative assessments, then it is possible."

McKinzie also said the law has never been funded to the level it needs to accomplish the goal. Sen. Nelson agrees.

"The single most helpful thing Congress could do to improve the No Child Left Behind Act is to provide adequate funding," Nelson wrote in his e-mail. "This initiative was intended to close the gap between the haves and the have-nots. But the (Bush) administration hasn't been willing to provide the resources needed to carry out education reform."

McKinzie said schools don't have the resources to hire the resource teachers with master's degrees it would take, particularly in areas of math and science, for which finding teachers with just bachelor's degrees is already difficult.

"It's kind of like they set the goal and no one bothered to check the supply and demand," she said.

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The San Diego Union-Tribune
Monday, February 26, 2007

OPINION: A good law; No Child Left Behind merits reauthorization

Later this year, Congress has to decide whether to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind law. But, when all is said and done, there is nothing to decide. Congress should reauthorize the law without hesitation, for the good of the educational system and the students it serves.

The education reform law -- dubbed "nickel b" by its critics -- may not be perfect, but it represents an innovative and valuable weapon in the ongoing battle to improve America's public schools and ensure that all our students have the skills to compete in a rapidly changing society and world.

President Bush made that very point recently in addressing a group of business leaders in New York City. He noted the strain on the middle class and the persistence of income inequality in the United States, and he said much of it is tied to larger disparities in who gets a quality education and obtains marketable skills and who doesn't. And that, the president said, makes a convincing case for reform measures such as No Child Left Behind. That is, until the education gap is closed, the earnings gap will persist.

Of course, not everyone is sold on the president's argument or even on the law itself. The critics of NCLB -- including teachers' unions and some education professors -- think the law is unnecessarily rigid and punitive, and they complain that teachers are simply "teaching to the test." They also insist the law's requirement that students be tested every few years sets the bar too high and demands too much of teachers and schools.

But, if anything, the opposite is true. The law may be too lenient and have too many loopholes. For instance, under NCLB, schools report students' test results by ethnic group, but individual states have the power to set the minimum number of students that must be present for that requirement to kick in. Some states set the number so high that virtually no reporting goes on.

There should be one uniformed national standard, said a 15-member bipartisan commission led by former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson and former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes. The commission issued its final report recently, and it recommended that the law should actually be toughened. The report also said teachers and principals should accept responsibility for how well their students do on tests, and that there should be more efforts to track the progress of individual students from year to year.

These recommendations are solid and informed, and it's good news that they were warmly received by both Republicans and Democrats in Congress. In fact, both sides said the commission's findings would be part of the debate later this year over reauthorizing the law.

Let's hope that they are -- and that the reauthorization process goes off without a hitch. The No Child Left Behind law deserves another round and more time to work. And our students and schools deserve all the benefits that come from establishing higher standards and ensuring greater accountability.

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Saturday, March 3, 2007

'No Child Left Behind' report spotlights Yough

By Mary Pickels

Yough School District administrators who are included in a newly published report on the No Child Left Behind Act said they welcomed the opportunity to voice a small school district's concerns.

"We felt proud we were selected," Superintendent Lawrence Nemec said. "Sometimes rural schools never get a lot of recognition."

The district was one of only four in the nation, and the only one in Pennsylvania, to be profiled in "Beyond NCLB: Fulfilling the Promise to Our Nation's Children."

"We picked (Yough) because we wanted to showcase a rural, small community with a districtwide approach to complement the research we had on urban and suburban areas," said Jennifer W. Adams, spokeswoman for the Commission on No Child Left Behind.

The commission is co-chaired by Tommy Thompson, former national Secretary of Health and Human Services, and former Georgia governor Roy E. Barnes.

Recommendations, garnered from educator and public testimony, focus on accelerating progress through accountability measures, school improvement and quality student options and standards tied to college and workplace readiness.

It is designed as a blueprint for Congress and the administration as NCLB is evaluated for extension this year.

"I think it's a terrific honor to be included in the conversation," said Dr. Joan Fogg, principal of West Newton Elementary School. "Everyone in the country that it's touched has had an idea on it."

In the district's "snapshot," Yough is described as having met adequate yearly progress for the past two years and having a staff of teachers who meet the highly qualified definition set by the NCLB.

"There are some merits to it," Nemec said of the controversial 2002 law. "To put everything on one test, I'm not so sure that's the way to do it."

It does not take into account those students who are "never going to get it," he said.

It's frustrating, Nemec and Fogg said, to see students with disabilities achieve a degree of classroom success, then face assessments that measure achievement far above the students' level.

Nemec agreed all students should show some advancement. However, he finds the idea that 100 percent of students will be proficient in math and science by 2014, as the act mandates, unrealistic.

Nemec said a parent occasionally will complain that the testing is stressful for students.

"I tell them to complain to their congressman," he said. "But we have to play by the rules."

The fact that each state uses a different measuring tool must be considered in evaluating the act's success, Fogg said.

She favors focusing more on measuring individual students' success, rather than comparing groups year to year.

"If we can move an individual child ahead, then that should count for something," Fogg said. "I think you have to look at portfolios of students' progress, individual data."

Under NCLB, the Yough district began to consider individual student data as an instruction tool, identifying and targeting those students most in need of help, Fogg said.

Visualizing more teacher collaboration, she added, "Classrooms don't have to have walls.

"I sense the teachers trying so hard," Fogg said. "Sometimes we have barriers."

Teachers cannot control attendance, participation in options such as tutoring, or parental involvement, Fogg said.

"I know the teachers feel the pressure," she said. "No teacher wants to be identified with a school not making adequate yearly progress.

"Everybody's in it together," she said. "It's doesn't really fall to one grade level."

The report can be viewed at www.nclbcommission.org.

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The New Standard (NY)

March 6, 2007

Critics say No Child Left Behind report misses real problems

By Livia Gershon

This year, Jevon Cochran's English class has been "postponed." Instead of the usual mix of reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary lessons and discussion, Cochran, a junior at Lewis Cass Technical High School in Detroit, said he and his classmates are now drilling for the ACT exam. They must take the national scholastic test as part of Michigan's effort to evaluate students and schools under federal standards passed in 2001. That, he said, has meant a change in the classroom atmosphere.

In past years, Cochran said, "while we would be reading these novels and stories and whatnot, the teachers would try to get us to become better critical thinkers by getting us to write essays and getting us to talk about what we read in class and how it pertains to things in life that we go through today. Now we're learning just a bunch of crap that's going to be on the ACT."

Later this year, Congress will consider reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). When it does, the chairs of the House and Senate education committees have said that their evaluation of the program will be guided by a report released last month by the Commission on No Child Left Behind, an independent group that evaluated the law's effects over the past year.

But critics say that in creating its report, "Beyond NCLB: Fulfilling the Promise to Our Nation's Children," the Commission ignored the perspectives of students like Cochran as well as parents and educators who see problems with the law.

The controversial No Child Left Behind Act is the keystone of the Bush administration's education policy. Supporters argue that it is a tool for improving education and moving toward educational equality for students of all racial and economic backgrounds. The law requires schools to meet certain goals each year, based largely on students' scores on tests like the ACT. Those schools that do not do so must take specifically mandated steps that may involve providing tutors, replacing school staff, restructuring or even privatizing the school.

Educators, students and parents who oppose the law argue that it is too reliant on standardized tests and too punitive for school districts with poor test scores. Some state and local school leaders also complain that the federal government does not provide enough funding to implement the law's requirements.

The Commission, chaired by former US Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson and former Georgia Governor Roy Barnes, essentially concluded that No Child Left Behind is moving schools in the right direction, but needs to be applied more forcefully. The report recommends creating a more-uniform national standard for

the tests required by law, adding a new 12th-grade test, and evaluating individual teachers and principals in part based on their students' performance on the tests.

"If anything, their recommendations would intensify the role of testing," said Robert Schaeffer, the public-education director of the National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest), a nonprofit group that promotes changes in the use of standardized testing. "It's more of the same bad thing."

The Commission, which is housed at the Aspen Institute, was launched with financial support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and six other private foundations. Its thirteen members are mostly academics and education officials, though about half of them worked as classroom teachers at some point in their careers. In the course of its study of the law, the Commission held a series of hearings across the country, where they heard almost exclusively from high-level education, government, union and business leaders.

Schaeffer argues that the Commission's conclusions are not surprising, given the way the body was formed.

"It was a very elitist operation in which they spent very little time talking to actual practitioners, the people on the ground dealing with the effects of No Child Left Behind every day," he said.

Jennifer Adams, the Commission's communications director, argued that the hearings reflect only part of the Commission's efforts. It also gathered data by visiting schools, seeking comments from the public through its website, and holding round-table discussions with teachers, parents, community leaders and education officials on a number of specific topics.

Still, Adams acknowledged to *The NewStandard*, the commissioners primarily sought suggestions on how to reach the law's stated goals, rather than questioning No Child Left Behind's overall framework. "The mission that we were given was to try to give recommendations to improve this law, not to get rid of the law," she said.

In particular, the report does not question the value of standardized tests, probably the most-widely criticized of NCLB's features. The Commission's summary of its hearing on the use of standardized tests begins with the statement, "There is broad agreement that testing plays a critical role in education reform by giving educators, administrators and the public a means to understand how schools and students are performing."

But critics like Cochran say emphasizing standardized tests encourages teachers to focus on skills that are ultimately not very useful to students.

"The tests are supposed to measure how good you would do in college, and I don't see how," said Cochran, who is a member of By Any Means Necessary (BAMN), a civil rights coalition that works to defend affirmative action and immigrant rights. "For

instance... [in a lesson] on the English section of the test, there was this whole section on where you have to place semicolons in sentences. I don't see how learning about where you place semicolons is going to help you better prepare yourself for college."

Cochran said he would like to see his classes focus more on developing critical thinking skills and helping individual students figure out what learning techniques work best for them.

Another BAMN member, Christopher Sutton, a senior at Murray Wright High School in Detroit, said he notices teachers becoming dispirited and showing less creativity in their teaching when they are preparing students for a standardized test: "It's like, 'Okay, you all know what this is, you already know what we're preparing for, it's boring, I know, I'm sorry, but I have to go over this information because it's mandated by the district.'"

Another flaw some critics see in the report is that its discussion of funding is almost completely limited to making recommendations on how to spend money that is already allocated for education.

Caprice Taylor-Mendez, the director of the Boston Parents Organizing Network (BPON), an advocacy group for parents of Boston public-school students, said that even if test-based evaluations could determine which schools are having trouble, what is really needed is more funding to address the problems. "What does assessment do but flag problem areas?" she said. "Then where is the support?"

The report does suggest that districts provide better assistance to schools that have poor test results, but it does not encourage the federal government to provide money to help them.

"We can't offer a recommendation on [funding levels] because ultimately it lies in the hands of Congress," said Adams, the Commission's spokesperson. "How much is enough -- we can't give a recommendation on this."

Lucia Santana, an organizer with BPON and parent of six children who have gone through the Boston school system, said her children felt "traumatized" when they were required to take the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System tests. She said they did not feel their school had prepared them adequately for the high-stakes exams, and that schools must reduce their class sizes to teach students effectively.

"If we continue with No Child Left Behind," she said, "I want to see more resources, more money for the school department."

The report does recommend a minor increase in federal education funding, but it is for education research and state data systems, not individual schools' budgets.

The Washington Times
Wednesday, March 14, 2007
'No Child' education act under review
By Amy Fagan

The battle over renewing President Bush's No Child Left Behind education law this year began in earnest yesterday, as House and Senate lawmakers heard a range of suggested changes -- such as greater leniency and help for struggling schools, new systems to measure teacher effectiveness and even voluntary national standards.

"We must ensure that all children are taught by teachers who can demonstrate their effectiveness in the classroom," Roy E. Barnes, co-chairman of the Commission on No Child Left Behind, said at a joint House-Senate hearing. His commission recommended requiring teachers to demonstrate their effectiveness, helping those who struggle but asking those who don't improve in seven years to leave the neediest schools.

But Reg Weaver, president of the National Education Association (NEA), argued that the best way to secure and retain effective teachers -- a key goal of lawmakers -- is to focus efforts on providing better starting salaries, financial incentives, reduced class sizes, mentoring programs and a better school environment.

Business, education, union, state and local leaders gave suggestions on a range of issues involving No Child Left Behind at the hearing, led by House education panel Chairman George Miller of California and his Senate counterpart, Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts.

Mr. Barnes' commission called for the creation of voluntary national standards, while Elizabeth Burmaster, president of the Council of Chief State School Officers, argued for less federal intrusion and more autonomy for states. "Give me some more flexibility," she said.

"You're the only one I see up there that has any concept of freedom," Rep. Peter Hoekstra, a Michigan Republican and staunch critic of the law's federal reach into the classroom, told her.

Mr. Hoekstra and other Republicans plan to introduce a bill later this week that would free states and schools from some of the law's federal regulations.

And the House Education and Labor Committee's top Republican, Howard P. "Buck" McKeon of California, introduced a bill yesterday that would give parents money to place their child in a private school, if their public school is given a failing grade for five consecutive years.

Mr. McKeon conceded it probably won't go anywhere because of strong opposition from Democrats and groups such as the NEA, but said he still intends to fight for it -- arguing that it is critical to improving education.

Lawmakers from both parties will soon start to piece together legislation renewing the five-year-old No Child Left Behind law, which mandates that students be able to read and do math on grade level by 2014, and requires states to set standards, test students and measure progress. Critics say it's far too onerous; supporters say it rightly holds states accountable.

Several specialists urged the government to ease the way it measures progress of struggling schools in order to give schools credit for making strides in improving student performance even if they fall short of annual targets, known as adequate yearly progress.

Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of Great City Schools, suggested giving schools three years to make needed changes.

Reuters

Thursday, March 15, 2007

Education law faces renewal amid reform calls

By David Alexander

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A far-reaching education law President George W. Bush hails as one of his signature achievements is being reviewed by Congress this year amid widespread demands for it to be reformed.

Critics of the law, the No Child Left Behind Act, complain it puts too much emphasis on testing, fails to hold states to the same educational standards and is a huge federal intrusion into matters traditionally left to state and local government.

"NCLB in its current form is burdensome and demoralizing to teachers," Edward McElroy, president of the American Federation of Teachers, told a congressional hearing this week.

Many question whether the law is working. The aim is to achieve universal proficiency in reading and math for all students by 2014, a goal few people believe is achievable.

The most recent national test results -- from 2005 -- showed minimal progress since 2002. The number of fourth graders performing proficiently in reading improved slightly to 31 percent, but eighth and 12th graders showed little change, at 31 percent and 35 percent.

"Unacceptable achievement levels continue to plague our schools," the independent Commission on No Child Left Behind, headed by former Bush Cabinet secretary Tommy Thompson and former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes, said in a report last year.

For all its flaws, there are strong incentives for Congress to reach an agreement to reauthorize the law, which would continue in its current form unless a deal is reached. That has Bush, a self-confessed C student, visiting schoolrooms in a bid to gain political headway on the law he has made the domestic cornerstone of his presidency.

With test results showing American students lagging their counterparts from Finland to Slovakia to Hong Kong, the president sees education as key to future national prosperity.

"Our students are going to have to compete for jobs with students in China or India or elsewhere," he told educators in Indiana.

WAR ON POVERTY

The No Child Left Behind Act was the 2002 version of an education law first passed in 1965 as part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty that has been extended

ever since. It channels some \$12 billion annually to help disadvantaged children, a fraction of the cost of meeting its requirements.

The current law capped a 20-year effort to bring accountability and testing to schools nationwide after a warning that mediocre education was jeopardizing America's economic future.

It for the first time required states to set standards for reading and math and conduct tests annually in certain grades. It also established penalties for schools where students failed to learn.

That has been its primary accomplishment.

It has met opposition in Utah and Connecticut and a spate of other jurisdictions and produced distorted outcomes.

Many teachers feel pressed to stop teaching the broader curriculum in order to help students learn to take the reading and math tests.

"Educators tell us they are required to administer test upon test upon test, including school, district and state tests," McElroy said.

And while states were required to set standards, they were allowed to decide the level at which students could be considered proficient.

As a result, in 2003, state exams found 87 percent of Mississippi fourth graders were proficient, whereas national tests found only 18 percent at that level. Other states had similar disparities.

Calls for change are coming from all sides.

Dan Lips, an education analyst with the conservative Heritage Foundation, favors letting states opt out of the law without losing funding. A group of three Republican lawmakers will introduce a similar measure this week, he said.

"States would have the freedom to take their share of federal funding free from the existing rules and regulations and spend it on state-level initiatives," Lips said.

The Commission on No Child Left Behind proposed more than 50 changes. Educators and business groups have offered suggestions, as has Bush, who wants to use scientists and engineers in the classroom, even if they're not teachers.

"It's not cool, but it's important to emphasize math and science," Bush said.

The Plain Dealer (Cleveland, OH)

Thursday, April 26, 2007

This test should be easy for Congress: No Child Left Behind up for reauthorization

By: Scott Stephens

No Child Left Behind is being put to the test.

The 5-year-old federal education law, which requires all students to be proficient in math and reading by 2014, is up for reauthorization in Congress.

Most believe lawmakers will indeed reauthorize the law - considered the centerpiece of President Bush's domestic agenda - either this year or next.

Former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes, who co-chaired a bipartisan Commission on No Child Left Behind, said he expects that will happen later this year.

"The new Democratic leadership in Congress needs to prove to the American public that it can do something effective and affirmative," Barnes said. "The president and the administration want to have a discussion on anything that doesn't have the word 'Iraq' in it."

But few expect the bill to emerge unscathed. And even ardent supporters say the law has weaknesses that should be fixed.

"We believe changes need to be made - changes that will make the law stronger," said Raymond Simon, deputy secretary for the U.S. Department of Education.

Those changes will be the subject of a panel discussion tonight in Aurora. The event kicks off a three-day "leadership institute" sponsored by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, a Cincinnati-based nonprofit that specializes in education issues.

Panelists are expected to include Wendy Puriefoy of the Public Education Network, Kathleen Fulton of National Commission for Teaching and America's Future, and Mitchell Chester, senior associate superintendent at the Ohio Department of Education. David Ferrero of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will kick off the discussion with remarks.

Among topics they will be discussing are four major changes Simon says the administration is pushing for as the law is debated:

Credit schools for academic progress, even if they don't make test-passage targets.

Allow districts to be able to exempt more special education students with severe mental disabilities from taking regular tests, and give them alternative assessments instead.

Credit schools for teaching immigrant children English, even if limited language skills prevent those youngsters from scoring well on standardized tests.

Change the scale on which a school's success is judged. Under the current law, a school that misses one target - say the math passage rate for Latino students - is judged the same as a school that misses 30 targets.

Other areas the administration and various advocacy groups would like to see addressed range from changing the way teachers are paid to moving away from the law's focus on tests.

But even some true believers are having doubts. Former Bush administration member Michael Petrilli, for instance, says despite good intentions, the mechanics of the law are broken.

"I think it's fundamentally flawed and probably beyond repair," said Petrilli, now vice president of national programs and policy for the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

For information on the KnowledgeWorks program, visit www.kwfdn.org.

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The Plain Dealer (Cleveland)
Friday, May 11, 2007
Senior-itis: Rampant, real, no known cure
By Scott Stephens, Plain Dealer Reporter

Educators and policy makers are searching for a cure for a common malady that's highly contagious this time of year.

Senior-itis - the tendency of seniors to slack off during their final year of high school - is a uniquely American rite of passage.

By the time spring rolls around, many seniors have been accepted to college, have a job lined up, plan to travel overseas or are simply bored with school.

"It's definitely real," said Lakewood High School senior Stephen Bond, 18. "It goes on quite a bit. I think it's the psychological fact that everyone knows they are almost done."

Bond may be the rare senior whose grades have actually improved during his high school career.

But research confirms that senior-itis, if not epidemic, is at least a real concern.

Recent data from the U.S. Department of Education's High School Transcript Study found that high school seniors in 2005 earned slightly better grades, but fewer credits, than they did in grades nine to 11. The credit difference equated to 48 fewer hours of classroom instruction.

Researchers theorize that many students complete difficult math and science credits before their senior year, leaving themselves with easier electives to fill their schedule.

Many believe that the trend of early college acceptance - a practice that lets students pick a college early in their final year of high school - has made the senior slump worse.

"It starts earlier and earlier these days," said Cuyahoga Heights High School Principal Lora Garrett. "For those planning on college, we stress that most of the colleges request a final transcript before officially accepting a student."

That final transcript is more than a formality. In fact, a college's offer of admission is contingent on successful completion of high school, said Patricia Rossman Skrha, director of undergraduate admissions at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea.

"We review those transcripts and, if we see some extreme behavior, we contact the student and find out what happened and why," said Skrha, formerly a counselor at St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland. "I have witnessed admission offers being rescinded even to students who have graduated."

That's why high schools have developed ways to combat senior-itis. Cuyahoga Heights, for instance, several years ago began Senior Project, a program in which seniors may elect a two- or three-week placement in a career field that interests them. Teachers also use research projects in the spring to keep students engaged, Garrett said.

Students could well be seeking that kind of challenge, according to a survey conducted last year by the National Governors Association. A vast majority of the high school students surveyed said their classes were not very difficult. Two out of three said they would work harder if the classes were more demanding or interesting.

"A good student just takes a lap around the field in their senior year," said former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes, co-chairman of the bipartisan Commission on No Child Left Behind. "The 12th grade is actually a fairly recent experience. It only started in the 1940s."

Barnes and others, such as Marc Tucker of the National Council on Economic Education, have long argued that high schools don't adequately prepare students for college and work in a global economy and need to be fundamentally overhauled.

That was the gist of a report released in December that proposed ending high school sooner for most students. The report, called "Tough Choices or Tough Times," proposes giving 10th-graders new state exams that would let most of them leave high school and enter community colleges directly without remediation. High-scoring students could stay in high school for advanced coursework to prepare for admission to selective colleges.

The money saved on high schools could be used to make high-quality early-childhood education available to all 4-year-olds and all low-income 3-year-olds.

But the best strategy, said B-W's Skrha, is for seniors to use their final days in high school to build on the skills they will need in the rigorous world of college.

"The reason study 'habits' are called study 'habits' is that it's important to maintain them," she said. "Students do themselves a real disservice if they slack off senior year."

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cleveland.com/education

Gwinnett Daily Post (Georgia)

Saturday, May 26, 2007

Our public school teachers need support, not meddling

Editorial

As another school year comes to a close in Georgia, hats off to those heroes who labor in the trenches underpaid, underappreciated and under pressure — our teachers.

I have two public school teachers in my family, Dr. Ted Wansley and Ken Yarbrough. Both are high school science teachers, and I wonder sometimes why they do it. It sure isn't for the money. I suspect the reason is the satisfaction they get in having a positive impact on young lives. Not many of us have that kind of opportunity.

There are more self-styled experts with their finger in the public education pie than there are fleas on a dog. Remember the two state legislators who decided for themselves that the school year in Georgia was too long and "interfered with family vacations," and introduced legislation in the session to cut the year back by 10 days? Neither legislator talked to the Department of Education or to teachers before introducing their ill-advised bill. Fortunately, that bad piece of legislation never saw the light of day in the 2007 session and hopefully never will.

Then there is the federal government program, No Child Left Behind. Former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes co-chaired a yearlong bipartisan commission to evaluate the program. I could have saved the commission a lot of time. I have never seen a federal program that wasn't out-of-touch with reality, full of red tape and loaded with bureaucratic gobbledygook. Why should No Child Left Behind be any different?

One of the recommendations of the commission was for teacher testing. "Teacher quality is the most important factor in improving school equality," said Barnes, "especially in disadvantaged children." Sounds reasonable on the surface, but how do you test teachers fairly? How do you compare a teacher in the inner city with a teacher in the affluent suburbs?

Georgia recently enacted into law the opportunity for parents to send their disabled children to private schools through a voucher system. Where does that leave public schools? Most likely, with those disabled students who are the least educable. How do the bureaucrats factor that into their tests?

How do you test teachers who must deal with impoverished children? My former boss, John Clendenin, retired CEO of the now-departed BellSouth Corp. and one of the most dedicated public education advocates in the country, once said, "You can't teach geometry to a hungry child." Amen.

How do you test teachers who have children in the classroom who can't speak English? Should they slow down the lesson plan and bore the kids who are in class to learn, or should they go full-speed and ignore those non-English-speaking children who don't understand what is being said?

Why don't we first test parents to see if they have a clue about their own role in public education? Require them to understand their child's lesson plan, check their homework daily, make sure they behave at school and punish them when they don't. When we are certain that parents understand their responsibilities and promise to live up to them, then we can rightfully test teachers.

It never ceases to amaze me that well-meaning and learned people can't accept the fact that the problems with our schools start outside the classroom door. Public schools reflect the values and mores of society — no more, no less. Change the environment for the better, and you will change public education. Why is that so hard for people to understand?

In spite of the meddling, second-guessing and finger-pointing from legislators, think tanks and the media, some good things are happening in public education in Georgia, thanks in large part to State School Superintendent Kathy Cox, a former school teacher herself. Superintendent Cox says her goal is to "lead the nation in improving student achievement." There is no question that we have a long way to go, but the important thing is that we have begun the journey.

In the meantime, I suggest to schoolteachers that the next time somebody tells you how to do your job, invite them to spend a year in the classroom. That ought to shut them up.

E-mail columnist Dick Yarbrough at yarb2400@bellsouth.net.

USA Today

Thursday, June 07, 2007

State tests put image ahead of performance

By Ledyard King, Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON — Almost every fourth-grader in Mississippi knows how to read. In Massachusetts, only half do.

So what's Mississippi doing that Massachusetts, the state with the most college graduates, isn't? Setting expectations too low, critics say.

The 2002 federal No Child Left Behind law was designed to raise education standards across the country by punishing schools that fail to make all kids proficient in math and reading.

But the law allows each state to chart its own course in meeting those objectives.

The result, according to a Gannett News Service analysis of test scores, is that many states have taken the safe route, keeping standards low and fooling parents into believing their kids are prepared for college and work.

On Thursday, federal education officials plan to release a report that is expected to reach the same conclusion: Many states hold students to a relatively low standard.

Critics say states are more worried about creating the appearance of academic progress than in raising standards.

"Ironically, No Child reforms may have the exact opposite effect they were intended to have," said Bruce Fuller, an education and public policy professor at the University of California at Berkeley.

The GNS analysis found that relying on state test scores to judge students' performance is misleading.

For example, 89% of Mississippi fourth-graders passed the state's reading test in 2005, but only 18% passed the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test. That gap of 71 percentage points was the widest in the nation.

Massachusetts had one of the smallest gaps, with 50% of fourth-graders passing the state reading test and 44% passing the NAEP test.

The national test is taken only by a small percentage of students in each state and often includes questions on material that schools haven't covered yet.

Fuller's research indicates the gap between state test scores and NAEP scores has actually widened in many states since the federal law took effect.

States that don't push students to meet higher standards risk sending them into the work world unprepared — even as global competition increases. More than half of 250 employers surveyed in 2006 said high school graduates are deficient at writing in English, foreign languages and math skills.

"The future U.S. workforce is here — and it is woefully ill-prepared," concluded the report called *Are They Really Ready To Work?*

States: Comparisons to NAEP unfair

State education officials deny critics' claims that they're gaming the system by making their tests easier. And they say it's unfair to compare state tests to NAEP.

They also say any changes in testing policies came after careful review and were designed to make sure children learn what state standards require them to know. And they note that federal officials signed off on the changes.

"We didn't game anything," said Tom Horne, superintendent of public instruction in Arizona, which lowered passing scores on several tests in 2005. "We called together a task force and the state (school) board decided to follow their recommendation."

No Child Left Behind requires states to test students in math and reading from third through eighth grade and once in high school. Every child must be proficient in those subjects by 2014.

Schools that don't make "adequate yearly progress" toward that goal risk being flagged as underperforming. Students at those struggling schools may transfer to a better school or the local school district could be forced to use its federal education money to pay for tutoring.

States use a number of "cheap tricks" to create the illusion that students are doing better than they really are, said Dan Koretz, a Harvard University testing expert.

Those include designing tests easy enough for almost all students to pass or lowering passing scores to make sure most students make the grade.

"We fuss all the time about getting parents involved," said former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes, who co-chaired a national commission that looked at ways to improve No Child Left Behind. "Well, we've got to tell the truth to parents so they can get involved."

Philadelphia schools chief Paul Vallas thinks the answer is national standards. Every grade in every state would teach the same material and administer the same test.

Vallas, who will run New Orleans schools starting in July, said students who fled the hurricane-devastated Gulf Coast in 2005 were stunned to find much more rigorous education standards elsewhere.

"The shocker ... is how poorly the kids have done in another state," he said. "It was probably a wake-up call."

President Bush and lawmakers say the punitive elements of No Child Left Behind have prompted states to re-examine standards and focus on long-neglected groups of students, notably minorities and students with disabilities.

On Tuesday, the independent Center on Education Policy issued a report saying student achievement on state tests has risen since 2002.

But it said "it's very difficult, if not impossible" to credit those gains to No Child Left Behind because states and districts already were making improvements before the law took effect.

Test-taking trauma

Critics of the law say it has forced schools to drill kids and emphasize testing at the expense of other learning.

Tiffany Collins, 12, a seventh grader at Robert Frost Middle School in Fairfax, Va., knows May is test time.

"When you think about the test, it's like, 'Oh, it's a big test, and, oh, am I going to be ready for it?'" she said. "I just think it's really a lot of pressure."

States and some independent experts say comparing scores on the federal and state tests isn't valid.

The national exam, they say, was never designed to compare standards from state to state. It's administered only to a sample of students, each of whom takes only a portion of the test.

And teachers and students are far more focused on the state tests because those tests determine whether their schools make adequate progress and, in some cases, whether seniors receive a diploma.

In Maryland, 58% of fourth-graders passed the state reading test in 2003, compared with 32% who passed NAEP. Two years later, 82% passed the state test while the percentage scoring proficient on NAEP stayed the same.

"If it doesn't count for kids, they're not going to take it seriously," said Dixie Stack, director of curriculum at the Maryland Department of Education.

Some states are taking the issue seriously.

In 2005, Tennessee reported the largest difference in the nation between eighth-grade student scores on the state's math and reading tests and scores on NAEP.

The state looked at its standards and found them largely in line with NAEP standards, said Rachel Woods, spokeswoman for the state Department of Education. But the Tennessee tests focused on a multiple-choice format as opposed to NAEP, which demands more essay responses.

Now, Tennessee is rewriting its tests and increasing requirements for high school graduation. That will almost certainly lower the number of kids scoring in the proficient range and increase the number of schools flagged as poor performers, Woods said.

But she said, "What's important is having more kids graduate with the skills they need to succeed in life."

Contributing: Greg Toppo, USA TODAY

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U.S. News & World Report

February 1, 1999

The governors are on a roll

By Ben Wildavsky

President Clinton isn't the only politician with new initiatives on the table. The nation's governors are proposing ambitious plans on everything from **education** to health care to tax cuts. And unlike in Washington--where Congress is a bit preoccupied these days--many of these local ideas have a good shot at becoming law. "The states are where the action is in domestic policy," says Donald Kettl, director of the La Follette Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin--Madison. "The distance between the beltway and everywhere else in the country has never been greater."

What's more, the governors have the bucks to carry through on promises. Thanks to higher tax revenues (courtesy of the booming economy), plummeting welfare caseloads, and a substantial slowdown in Medicaid growth, most of the states are rolling in dough. They've built up rainy-day funds against future economic downturns and this fiscal year sliced taxes by \$ 7 billion and raised spending by a projected 6.3 percent. "The last couple of years have been among the best ever," says Donald Boyd, director of the Center for the Study of the States at the State University of New York's Rockefeller Institute of Government.

Flunking schools. Collectively, states are now sitting on the largest budget reserves in almost two decades--and there's more to come from their historic settlement with the tobacco industry. Topping governors' to-do lists: improving schools. For several years the rallying cry in **education** has been setting high standards. Today's buzzword is accountability. The biggest question governors face is what to do when teachers, pupils, principals, or schools fail to make the grade. In California, incoming Democrat Gray Davis says principals who don't cut it should be sacked and teachers at schools where students perform poorly should be transferred (box, Page 30). Given the traditional alliance between Democrats and teachers unions, it's noteworthy that another Democrat, New Hampshire's Jeanne Shaheen, is backing legislation that would give the ax to subpar teachers.

School vouchers remain popular among Republicans. Florida's Jeb Bush wants performance report cards on each school in his state; students at schools that flunk would get vouchers for private schools. Gov. Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania is pushing a five-year pilot voucher program.

Many governors are dipping into their bulging coffers to fund **education** packages. Others are raising school money through statewide lotteries. James Hodges of South Carolina and Don Siegelman of Alabama have both promised lotteries to pay for college scholarships and pre-kindergarten classes.

Taking a cue from Texas Gov. George W. Bush, many governors are pairing **education** reform with plans to slash taxes. More than 30 states have tax cuts on tap for 1999.

Wisconsin's Tommy Thompson wants a 10 percent across-the-board cut totaling \$ 1.8 billion over the next four years. Fellow GOP-er James S. Gilmore III of Virginia is now in a bidding war with Democratic state legislators over how much of the state's nearly \$ 900 million surplus should be used to reduce Virginia's 4 percent food sales tax. Republican Christine Whitman of New Jersey plans a \$ 1 billion property-tax cut over the next five years. Whitman is among a group of governors--also including Ridge and New York's George Pataki--pushing bills to require a "supermajority" of lawmakers to raise taxes. "You'll know whether somebody's thinking of being president, vice president, or a cabinet member by whether or not they're thinking of cutting taxes," says Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform.

Health care reform is also high on many governors' agendas. **Georgia Democrat Roy Barnes** campaigned on a pledge to expand patient choice in HMOs. "If you can choose who changes the oil in your car, you ought to be able to choose who delivers your baby," he argued.

Other state priorities range from controlling sprawl--a pet project of Maryland Democrat Parris Glendening--to early-childhood-development programs. Republican Bill Janklow of South Dakota plans to promote the benefits of reading to infants developing in the womb.

The boom times for states--and the accompanying policy fest--may not last forever. An economic tumble could bring the era of state surpluses to a rapid end. For now, though, real governors are giving a president who many say acts more like a governor a run for his money.

The Economist
July 17, 1999, U.S. Edition
Barnes-storming in Georgia

HE LOOKS like a secondary-school maths teacher: a rumpled man of 51 in a suit that probably hails from the discount store, with an unruly head of grey hair and sensible spectacles. He sounds like a southern country lawyer, whose advice to legislators approached by lobbyists "with their eel-skin briefcases and alligator shoes" was: "It's OK to lie to lobbyists. In fact, I recommend it from time to time." His wife Marie (pronounced "May-ree" by her husband) routinely calls him a smart-ass. But **Roy Barnes**, **Georgia's** Democratic governor for all of seven months, is on a roll. Never has **Georgia** given such power to a politician, and never has one done so much so quickly.

Mr Barnes submitted 27 pieces of legislation to **Georgia's** General Assembly this year. To everyone's astonishment, they all passed. He got a property-tax cut that will be phased in over eight years, with estimated savings to taxpayers, the governor says, of \$640m a year; health-care reforms, which will allow many patients to choose their doctors and sue their HMOs; a new consumer advocate's office, which will take in complaints and try to ensure that insurance rates stay reasonable; and an open-records and open-meetings law, which will require politicians and bureaucrats to be more candid with voters about what they are up to.

All this paled, however, beside the creation of the **Georgia** Regional Transportation Authority, a new body which gives the governor huge power to fight sprawl and restrict the building of roads. No other governor in the country has anything approaching this -- but then few cities have built new roads with anything approaching Atlanta's abandon.

Under the GRTA (widely translated as "Give Roy Total Authority"), Mr Barnes can exercise complete control over transport and development in the 20 counties that make up the Atlanta metropolitan area, as well as in any other part of the state that falls out of compliance with anti-pollution requirements. This bill also contains a political masterstroke: it gives the governor the right to veto actions by the state Department of Transportation, which has been a law unto itself for much of this century.

How was all this done? With a good deal of guile; Mr Barnes did not spend 21 years in the legislature for nothing. Before his day, **Georgia's** governors delivered their proposals in a bundle at the beginning of the sessions. "But we trickled it out," Mr Barnes says, "so we controlled the dialogue that was going on, and it didn't get all jumbled up." This controlled flow enabled the governor's relentless public-relations machine to surround his every move with fanfare, a practice that continues even now that the legislature has gone home. The governor also stretched precedent and protocol to the limit by being aggressively accessible and visible to his old friends -- even wandering into the legislative parts of the state capitol, where governors are not supposed to go. And because he knew the open-meetings law was the bill that would anger legislators most, he rammed it through at the beginning of the session to avoid logjams and trade-offs later.

Luck played a part. Important civic groups wanted something like the GRTA, and it was fortunate also that business leaders flocked to the cause, leaving any possible Republican opposition flat-footed. But Mr Barnes has a way of taking good ideas that already have influential backing, needing only some sculpting and a boost from the state, and hauling out his chisel to produce the finished article. A typical example is the Yamacraw Mission, named after the bluff where General James Oglethorpe established **Georgia's** first settlement. The mission was just an idea -- to tap the combined forces of private industry, state government and state-supported universities to sponsor microchip design in **Georgia** -- when it was first proposed to the governor-elect. Mr Barnes signed on immediately, said he would find \$13.7m to support it, and promised \$60m from the state over five years. By the end of May, the mission was signing up its first corporate partners.

Surprisingly, these warp-speed political successes have not yet exacted much political cost. The governor remains his own man, in part because he has credentials in many camps; both the Sierra Club and big developers, for example, supported his candidacy. Given such far-flung support, he can step on toes, and often does so. He excluded all elected officials and many big names from the new transportation authority committee he named in June, provoking many yelps but reducing friction. As someone who has worked closely with the governor puts it, "His stock is so widely held that no one has a controlling stake."

Next year's proposals are already fixed in Mr Barnes's mind. He has set up a 64-member commission on **education**, which began meeting in June. The governor wants to establish accountability; to measure, reward or punish the performance of students, teachers and schools; to make schools safe; and to get a better balance of spending between rich and poor school districts. He also dreams of a conservation authority as far-reaching as his transport authority is meant to be. Having fought to protect lakes, rivers and streams as a legislator, he now plans to get all regional water and sewage policy under his thumb as firmly as he has the roads.

His stock may fall, of course. The economic boom, which gives him money to burn, may peter out, and legislators may have second thoughts about creating such a figure at the head of the state. But, for now, Mr Barnes roars on. It all marks an extraordinary rise for the boy from Cobb County, whose parents ran the hardware store in Mableton, and for the post-graduate law student who sat at the feet of Archibald Cox, the Watergate special prosecutor. Mr Barnes himself sometimes seems bemused that he has become the most powerful governor in the country in terms of what he can do in his state. Those hoping to emulate him should note that he has little charisma, that his presence is described as a glow rather than a dynamo, and that it is often his silence that makes him stand out in a crowd. This rumpled figure has few of the makings of a national candidate. But he is certainly remaking **Georgia**.

USA TODAY**October 14, 1999****Georgia sets the standard**

Even given that **Georgia** had the highest number of All-USA Teacher Team nominees, it's still overrepresented on the First Team with six of 20 spots. If there are reasons beyond a statistical glitch, they may start at the governor's office, where Gov. **Roy Barnes** is building on policy set by his predecessors, First Teamers say.

Gov. Zell Miller, who held office from 1990 to 1998, followed through on promises to use lottery money for **education**, they say. Miller is also credited with bringing teachers' salaries up to national norms, high for the Southeast.

But Tina Cross, magnet lead science teacher at Carver High in Columbus, says the movement for quality **education** started in the '80s with former governor Joe Frank Harris. Harris started the push for salary increases and established the Quality Basic **Education** Act, which set uniform class size and equalized funding for basic supplies.

Finally, **Georgia** offers incentives that encourage progressive teaching and professional development. Three First Teamers won \$ 500 outdoor classroom grants from the state that helped them get innovative programs going.

Four of the six First Teamers with doctorates teach in **Georgia**, where the degree earns higher pay. One, Lenell Lindsey of Len Lastinger Primary School in Tifton, got a financial boost for earning National Board Certification, a standard reached by only 1,900 teachers nationwide.

The New York Times

January 5, 2000

States Gather Big Surpluses, Benefit of a Strong Economy

By Robert Pear

Buoyed by revenues from a strong economy, states have accumulated large surpluses, are cutting taxes and plan to increase spending for **education** and health care this year.

In a new report, the National Governors' Association said 36 states had surpluses equal to 5 percent or more of their spending.

State surpluses totaled \$35 billion at the end of the 1999 fiscal year, and states expect to wind up the current fiscal year with more than \$27 billion in surpluses.

In the last year, 42 states cut taxes. And a separate survey by the National Conference of State Legislatures says that at least one-fourth of the states are seriously considering tax cuts this year. Governors or legislative leaders have proposed such cuts in Alaska, Colorado, Florida, **Georgia**, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah and Wyoming.

The conference of state legislatures said states had cut taxes in each of the last five years. William T. Pound, executive director of the conference, said: "For the sixth year in a row, states are expecting to see continued sound fiscal health. This unprecedented streak is the fiscal equivalent of defying gravity."

In Massachusetts, State Senator Mark C. Montigny, a Democrat who is chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, said, "We're in about the strongest financial position we've been in." Mr. Montigny said the state had a comfortable cushion in its unemployment fund and its budget stabilization fund, enough to carry it through a recession, should one occur.

The last recession ended in March 1991, and President Clinton often says that the nation will set a record next month for "the longest economic expansion in the history of our country."

In this year's elections, politicians from both parties are stressing their commitment to tax cuts.

Gov. Thomas R. Carper of Delaware, a Democrat running for the Senate seat held for 29 years by William V. Roth Jr., a Republican, boasts that Delaware has cut personal or business taxes for seven years in a row.

Stacey R. Mazer, a fiscal analyst at the National Association of State Budget Officers, said states were using more of their surplus money for construction of roads and schools this year. By contrast, she said, in the last few years, they set aside more of the money in

"rainy day" funds, which can be used in time of economic trouble. But having made provision for a rainy day, states say they can now use their surpluses for other purposes.

Gov. **Roy Barnes of Georgia**, a Democrat, asked the State Legislature on Monday to use some of the state's \$648 million surplus to improve **education** and health care, and he is also proposing a cut in property taxes.

"We have been blessed with unprecedented prosperity," Mr. Barnes said. "One way to help keep **Georgia** prosperous is to let taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned money."

The New York State Legislature convenes on Wednesday, and members say they expect a surplus of \$1 billion or more in the fiscal year that ends March 31. That does not include a surplus of \$1.8 billion that accumulated in the prior fiscal year and is being used to pay for property tax cuts.

In New York, as in many states, legislators would like to use some of the surplus for programs popular with voters. But independent budget monitors, including bond-rating agencies, have expressed concern that tax cuts already enacted in New York could hamper the state's ability to deliver services, particularly if there is an economic downturn. Gov. George E. Pataki, a Republican, is expected to plead with lawmakers to set aside much of the surplus as a hedge against such a downturn.

In California, the Legislature convened this week, with state officials projecting a budget surplus of at least \$2.6 billion for the current fiscal year. And they foresee a \$3 billion surplus for the next year.

How to use such surpluses will be a major issue for lawmakers in California and other states. State legislatures begin their regular sessions this month in 36 states. Legislators convene in eight more states in February, March or April.

Raymond C. Scheppach, executive director of the National Governors' Association, said that Medicaid costs were surging again, after several years of slow growth in the health program for low-income people. Spending on prescription drugs is a major reason for the increase, he said.

The survey by the governors' association found that states cut taxes last year by a total of \$5.2 billion. Texas reported the biggest cut, \$1.9 billion, followed by Florida (\$834 million), Minnesota (\$796 million), Michigan (\$497 million), Pennsylvania (\$407 million), Ohio (\$337 million) and California (\$302 million).

Property tax relief and other tax cuts were a major element of Gov. George W. Bush's legislative program in Texas last year. And they are a major element of the record on which he is running for president.

New York reported a tax cut of \$99 million, while New Jersey cut taxes by \$101 million and Connecticut cut \$104 million.

Illinois reported the biggest net increase in revenues, \$436 million, mainly because it increased motor vehicle registration fees, to help finance public works projects. New Hampshire, Oregon and Tennessee also increased taxes, the governors' association said.

The governors said 10 states had taken action to change the amount of cash payments to families on welfare in the current fiscal year. Nine states -- California, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia -- increased benefits for at least some welfare recipients. Florida was the only state that reported a reduction in cash assistance benefits, a 15 percent decrease.

In 40 states, the report said, welfare benefit levels remain the same as in 1999. In general, it said, states are making fundamental changes in the structure of welfare programs without altering benefit levels. The number of people on welfare has plummeted, by 51 percent since January 1993, but spending for welfare and child care has increased. As a result, states say, they now spend more for each family on welfare, on the average, than they did seven years ago.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

The New York Times

April 4, 2000

Lagging in Education, the South Experiments

By David Firestone

The states of the South, long home to the nation's poorest and worst-performing students, have desperately begun to experiment with **education** theories and school reform plans in ways that are drawing national attention.

While experimentation is going on in a few states in other regions, almost every Southern governor, Republican or Democrat, is either hunting for new school money or trying combinations of familiar and occasionally untested ideas for improving student achievement. Some of the plans mix new spending for large state **education** agencies and teacher salaries with conservative proposals like vouchers and an end to teacher job protection.

"The Southern states have really been pushing the envelope," said Kathy Christie, who runs the information clearinghouse at the **Education** Commission of the States, a nonprofit policy group based in Denver. "They may be low in achievement, on average, but they have a number of high-quality proposals out there that may start to change that in the next few years."

Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky seemed to be speaking for the entire South earlier this year when he informed state lawmakers of his top four priorities: "**Education, education, education and education.**" Not all his colleagues have been quite so wry about it, but in virtually every statehouse in the South, the priorities are essentially the same.

Georgia is about to become the first state in the country to wipe out all job protection for teachers, a measure Gov. **Roy Barnes** pushed through the state legislature over the objections of teacher organizations as a message that the world had changed. The end of tenure is the most attention-getting element of Mr. Barnes's sweeping **education** overhaul, approved last month, which mandates smaller class sizes, bonuses for teachers in good schools and a new **education** bureaucracy to monitor annual testing.

South Carolina has been spending more than \$70 million a year to raise teacher salaries above the regional average and provide scholarships for future teachers, and it has established a new training institute for principals.

A Texas approach begun in the early 1990's and enhanced by Gov. George W. Bush has put a strong emphasis on testing, breaking new ground in the close monitoring of low-income and minority students.

North Carolina -- hailed along with Texas in a 1998 study by the National **Education** Goals Panel as having made among the largest gains in reading and math scores in the first part of the 1990's -- is tightening the licensing of both new and experienced teachers. At the same time, it is offering substantial bonuses for teachers in high-performing

schools.

Florida has pioneered a program to provide private-school vouchers for students in poorly performing public schools. The program was recently ruled unconstitutional by a state judge, but the state is appealing the decision.

As the region with the lowest per-capita income, the South has always lagged the rest of the country in educational achievement, burdened by its former reliance on low-skill jobs and the residue of segregated school systems. Forty percent of Americans without high school diplomas are in the South, twice the percentage of any other region, according to the Southern Regional **Education** Board, a cooperative compact to improve the public schools.

The South was slower than the rest of the country to begin its school reform, and for all the recent years of innovation, performance has just barely begun to move up. The Southeast is still the lowest-ranking of the nation's four regions on the federal government's National Assessment of **Education** Progress tests.

Of the 16 states that belong to the regional board, only 6 meet the national average for proficiency in fourth-grade reading (although others have shown some improvement), and only 3 do so in eighth-grade reading. In the Deep South, only North Carolina meets the national proficiency averages for both grades.

"We've lagged behind the rest of the country for so long that there is a much greater receptivity to experimentation," said John Dornan, executive director of the Public School Forum, a nonprofit public policy group based in Raleigh, N.C. "The states are trying a lot of high-stakes programs, but we're just now starting to fight our way up to average."

As in most states, the effort to improve public schools began in the South with the dire warnings published 17 years ago in "A Nation at Risk," a federal commission's report attacking the quality of American **education**, and was prodded by business leaders who said the regional economy was at stake. But the South had much further to go than the rest of the country. It spent less on **education** than any other region, and had by far the largest number of dropouts and failing students. Nowhere was the connection between student poverty and school performance more evident.

"We just didn't put importance in the state of public **education** until the last few years," Governor Barnes, of **Georgia**, said in an interview last week, riffling through bulging folders of **education** statistics. "Because in the South you didn't have to. You had manufacturing concerns -- kids could drop out in high school and go to work at a mill. Well, the mills are no longer there; the mills are in Mexico or Asia. The economy has changed, and we've got to improve our standards or we won't have the smart people to fill those jobs."

Governors of the New South like Lamar Alexander in Tennessee and Richard Riley in

South Carolina first began talking like this in the 1980's, trying to repair their states' reputations with the first wave of school reforms like testing and improving teacher quality. James B. Hunt Jr. of North Carolina, one of the earliest and most successful **education** advocates among the governors, was the founding chairman of the national standards board that certifies teachers in their fields, and his state now leads the nation in board-certified teachers.

Other states, particularly in the Deep South, moved more slowly, but now it is no longer possible to be a Southern governor without a similar agenda. In Mississippi, which has the nation's lowest-performing schools, Gov. Ronnie Musgrove promised in his inaugural address in January to find \$286 million to raise teacher salaries to the regional average over the next five years (although he has not yet persuaded legislators).

Next door, in Alabama, Gov. Donald Siegelman has also proposed substantial raises for teachers, in exchange for making it easier to dismiss them without a lengthy procedure. But after his plan for a state lottery to support **education** failed last year, he said the money would have to come out of the same pot as is used for higher **education**, and now university administrators have come out against the proposal.

In any case, it is the South's wealthier states, like **Georgia**, Florida and the Carolinas, that are setting the pace for innovation. **Georgia's** plan, centering on school accountability, is typical of what other Southern states are approving or considering, and Governor Barnes frankly admits that much of it was borrowed from North Carolina.

The **Georgia** plan, passed overwhelmingly in the state legislature last month and set to be signed into law in a few weeks, is based on annual tests in Grades 1 through 12 in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. If students meet the goals set by a new State Office of **Education** Accountability, the teachers in their school will get bonus pay. If students in a school fail repeatedly, they will be allowed to move to a different school, and teachers and administrators can be disciplined or dismissed.

At the same time, class sizes will be limited to 21 students in first through third grade, down from the current maximum of 33; in later grades, class sizes can grow to 28. School councils of parents, teachers and business leaders will be set up to work with principals.

Any teacher dismissed will be given a written reason but will not have the right to a hearing. Although a few other states have shortened the hearing process, none of them have eliminated it entirely.

The larger of two state teachers organizations, the Professional Association of **Georgia** Educators, eventually dropped its opposition when Mr. Barnes agreed that the dismissal rule would be applied only to teachers hired from now on, not to existing faculty. But a smaller teachers group, the **Georgia** Association of Educators, remains opposed; its executive director, Drew Albritton, said the provision would drive away good teachers by permitting arbitrary dismissals.

Mr. Barnes, a Democrat who ran the risk of alienating a crucial constituency of his party with the measure, acknowledged that there was no statistical link between teacher tenure rights and student achievement. But he said the move sent a message to educators that change would be pronounced. "Tenure is an outdated concept," he said, "born of a time when we treasured process over performance."

Georgia's consensus is not always easy to come by, however, especially in states that passed the first reform measures some time ago and are now coming to realize that the costs only go up. In Kentucky, which has seen steady improvement since passing a school reform bill in 1990, legislators have been unable to agree on Governor Patton's proposal to pay for enhanced teacher training programs. Gov. Mike Foster of Louisiana has not been able to find the \$220 million he wants to raise teacher salaries to the Southeastern average, and the state's teachers groups are murmuring about an autumn strike.

"We've actually made a lot of progress, considering where we were," said Mark Musick, president of the Southern Regional **Education** Board. "But we had a lot of room to make progress. The next steps are going to be even harder."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

The Washington Post

January 3, 2001

'A Certain Distance' From 1960s in Georgia; Leaders in a State That Once Fought Civil Rights Movement Rise to Defend University's Approach to Affirmative Action

By Kenneth J. Cooper, Washington Post Staff Writer

Michael Adams, president of the University of **Georgia**, faced a simple choice after a federal judge struck down the university's policy of affirmative action in admissions. Adams could fight or he could fold.

He chose to fight -- all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court if need be. Professors gathered on this sprawling campus encircled by Confederate landmarks burst into applause when he announced his decision.

But something even more unexpected has happened since U.S. District Judge Avant B. Edenfield last summer forced the University of **Georgia** to stop weighing race in its admissions decisions.

Most of the top leaders of a state government once pledged to "massive resistance" to civil rights have risen in bipartisan defense of affirmative action. They are pressing an appeal that could become a national test case for admissions at colleges across the country.

Democratic Gov. **Roy Barnes**, the chancellor of higher **education**, the board of regents and even the Republican state party chairman and the GOP leader in the state Senate have backed Adams.

Although not unanimous, the support of affirmative action stands as powerful evidence of just how much **Georgia** and its politics have been transformed since the 1960s.

"**Georgia** is a changing state," says Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) a former civil rights activist who represents Atlanta. "We've come a certain distance." Says Chuck Clay, the state Republican chairman: "This is politics aside. This is a moral issue."

In recent weeks, federal courts have upheld forms of affirmative action in admissions policies at state universities in Michigan, Washington and Texas. The **Georgia** case, or any of the other three, could yield a landmark decision from the U.S. Supreme Court if it chooses to review one.

Given the opportunity in 1996, the Supreme Court declined to review the University of Texas case, ending affirmative action in that state until the 5th Circuit Court of Appeal lifted the ban on Dec. 21.

The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta is expected to hear the university's appeal this year. Whatever the outcome, its decision is also certain to be appealed.

Driving the changes in **Georgia's** politics on race have been two legacies of the civil rights movement: the voting power of African Americans, who are now nearly 30 percent of the population, and the moderate racial views held by Adams, Barnes and other middle-aged sons of a changing South, who dominate the state's leadership.

"Many of these people who are now academic, political and business leaders came of age during the civil rights movement, and it helped to sort of change and mold them," Lewis says.

But the law has been changing, too. In a series of cases, the Supreme Court has sharply restricted racial considerations in government contracting and broadcast licensing, decisions that Edenfield concluded apply to college admissions as well.

The **Georgia** policy struck down by the federal judge in July as "naked racial balancing" gave bonus points for being a minority -- just as it did for being a good athlete or the child of an alumnus -- to some roughly equal applicants. Race, however, did not figure in picking most **Georgia** freshmen: More than 80 percent were typically admitted solely on the basis of their high school grades and SAT scores. About 6 percent of the university's 31,000 students are African Americans.

The University of **Georgia**, Adams maintains, has followed the kind of admissions procedure allowed under the prevailing interpretation of the Supreme Court's 1978 decision in *Bakke v. Board of Regents*. The decisive opinion of Justice Lewis F. Powell outlawed strict quotas but held that colleges could seek a diverse student body by considering race as one of several factors in admissions decisions.

But A. Lee Parks Jr., the Atlanta lawyer who filed the class action lawsuit on behalf of white students denied admission last year alleges that the university manipulated the weight assigned to race to reach a preconceived enrollment target. He contends that the university has failed to show that student diversity on its campus meets Supreme Court tests justifying the use of race established since *Bakke*.

"It's an uncanny quota," Parks says. "They haven't proven there's any educational value to [diversity]. That's an assumption."

What's undisputed is the dishonorable history of segregation at the University of **Georgia**, best known across the country for its football teams, but of late an academically selective institution.

For 175 years, the state university in this quiet college town about 60 miles northeast of Atlanta was segregated. Forty years ago, the first two African Americans arrived as transfer students, their enrollment delayed for a year and a half while university officials invented pretext after pretext to keep them out: The dorms were full. One of the black students had received a traffic ticket. It was too tricky to convert the other's academic credits.

Finally, a federal judge ordered the black students admitted in January 1961, nearly seven years after the Supreme Court outlawed segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Georgia did not go quietly into the era of desegregation.

Before the two new students could finish registering for classes, then-Gov. S. Ernest Vandiver won a temporary stay of the judge's order. The state rushed an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, which rejected it. Soon the legislature passed a law to pay the private school tuition of white Georgians who wanted to escape desegregated public schools.

The first black students in Athens were Charlayne Hunter-Gault (then Charlayne Hunter), now a CNN correspondent, and Hamilton Holmes Jr., who became a prominent Atlanta physician before he died in 1995.

The teenagers were escorted through the main gate to the campus by their parents and lawyers, including a lanky Howard University law school graduate, Vernon Jordan. (Rummaging through admissions files, Jordan had discovered that the university had devised a way to convert a white student's quarter hours into semester credits, contrary to its professed difficulty with admitting Hunter-Gault.)

Both black pioneers led fairly lonely existences in Athens.

Hunter-Gault, a journalism major, recalled in her autobiography that she never wrote a word for the student newspaper because interviewing people on campus would have been extremely difficult in that hostile racial climate. She did succeed in making a few friends but was often isolated in her dorm room, an office converted into a suite that had its own bathroom.

To insulate himself from the racial tension, Holmes lived off-campus with a black family in Athens and drove home to Atlanta every weekend.

The university had once suggested Holmes was not qualified for admission, though he was valedictorian of the all-black high school he and Hunter-Gault attended. Vengeance came in driving up the grading curve in premed courses, angering white classmates and earning his way into the Phi Beta Kappa honor society.

A gifted football player, Holmes never took the field for the **Georgia** Bulldogs. At the time, it was inconceivable a black player ever would.

What happened the next year in Albany, across the breast of **Georgia** in the state's southwest corner, was just as inconceivable to a young white boy named Michael Adams, who spent the steamy southern summers in the municipal swimming pool.

Rather than desegregate its cool, chlorinated waters, Albany's city fathers closed the pool.

"I distinctly remember thinking as a kid in a hot Albany summer that if the choice is between swimming with Negroes -- which is what the prevailing term was -- or not swimming at all, for me that's an easy choice." says Adams, 52. Adams wanted to swim.

The protests that became known as the Albany Movement, and the disturbances surrounding them, became a seminal experience for Adams, who was then just 14.

"I remember the race riots in Albany," the college president says. "I remember dual school systems and dual drinking fountains. . . . I know that things were unequal by any measure."

Change has come to the governor's office, too.

Vandiver, now 82, has recanted the segregationist position he took as governor. During his 1958 campaign, he vowed that "not one" black student would go to school with whites in **Georgia**. Now Vandiver says it was all a matter of political expediency.

"I made some statements during my campaign I shouldn't have," says Vandiver, who graduated from the University of **Georgia** when it was still segregated. "The man I ran against said I was weak on segregation."

But once elected, Vandiver continued in the role of ardent segregationist, resisting change through legal means.

Forty years later, every serious candidate in the Democratic gubernatorial primary supported affirmative action. A state legislator before he became governor, Barnes voted to kill a proposed statewide ban on affirmative action despite being in the midst of a campaign.

The Republican he faced in the general election. Guy Millner, opposed affirmative action. His comments on racial issues worried black Georgians, who flocked to the polls. This time, the racial moderate won.

Barnes, 52, graduated from a desegregated University of **Georgia** in 1969 and its law school in 1972. The first-term governor says he opposes racial quotas but endorses the university's affirmative action as a "mild system" justified by the state's past.

"Given **Georgia's** history, it was necessary to continue to bring about some inclusion at the University of **Georgia**," he says. "Things that go on for centuries just don't go away when a court says, 'That's gone.' "

State Sen. Eric Johnson, the Republican leader in the **Georgia** Senate, doesn't agree with the opposition to affirmative action expressed by his national party and some fellow GOP legislators in **Georgia**. As a little boy in the late 1950s, Johnson watched through a window in his family's home as a cross flamed in the front yard of an aunt who had

written a letter to the local newspaper supporting civil rights. His father was the first white doctor in Shreveport, La., to integrate his waiting room.

"I don't have a problem with some affirmative action," says Johnson, 47. "I do believe that a system to strive for some diversity that's not quotas has to continue" at the flagship university.

With the passage of time, the university has reconciled with its segregated past and first black students.

Every year since 1985, a distinguished speaker has delivered the "Holmes-Hunter Lecture." A scholarship was given in their name to black students until last year, when it was suspended to avoid another lawsuit based on Edenfield's ruling. Hunter-Gault delivered the commencement address in 1988. Holmes, who became a big booster of the football team, sent his son to college in Athens.

This month, the university plans to celebrate the 40th anniversary of its desegregation. Hunter-Gault is to be the keynote speaker, and a plaque will be installed in front of the red-brick building where she attended her first class. One of the participants will be Vandiver, the former governor who tried to keep Hunter-Gault and Holmes out.

But on a campus so large that students use shuttle buses to get around, the racial separateness that she and Holmes experienced continues, though without open hostility. The affirmative action lawsuit, controversial as it is, has not generated a lot of public dialogue on campus.

"Teachers stay away from it," says Tony Simon, president of the College Republicans and a supporter of Edenfield's ruling. "I think there needs to be more of a healing process on campus."

Mark Anthony Thomas, who last year became the first black editor of the campus newspaper, has detected racial tensions rising beneath the surface. "We have a very segregated campus," he says. "And there has been a lot of tension because the administration did decide to fight for affirmative action."

The New York Times

May 31, 2001 Thursday

Statehouse Journal; Denials Only Fuel Talk of Presidential Bid

By Kevin Sack

His name is barely known north of the **Georgia**-Tennessee line. Rumpled, owlsh, and a tad pudgy, with a sorghum-thick drawl, he will never be mistaken for Robert Redford in "The Candidate."

And yet, **Roy Barnes**, **Georgia's** first-term Democratic governor, is showing up on lists of presidential mentionables for 2004.

Mr. Barnes, 53, dismisses as absurd any suggestion that he is considering a race other than for re-election in 2002. His aides have been warned to quash all speculation for fear that Georgians might punish him next year for harboring higher ambitions.

"Let me see if I can put this without equivocation and as strong as I can," Mr. Barnes said in an interview. "I am not running for president of the United States. I am running for governor. And when I finish that I intend to go back to practicing law. That is all I am doing."

But there is wiggle room in such a denial. And it has not stopped admirers and **Georgia** party leaders from promoting the logic of a Barnes candidacy.

They note that Mr. Barnes has built an enviable record on resonant issues like **education** and regulating urban growth. He won national notice by orchestrating a stealthy compromise that minimized the Confederate battle emblem that had dominated the state flag. Polls show that he is popular at home, and that he appeals to independents and African-Americans.

The potential Democratic field is thick with Washington insiders. It makes sense, Mr. Barnes's partisans say, that a governor or two will join the competition.

The governor once considered the most likely choice, Gray Davis of California, has been roughed up by his state's energy crisis. Mr. Barnes leads the next most-populous state with a Democratic governor. And the Democrats have an affinity for centrist Southerners. A candidate's ability to capture a significant Southern state like **Georgia** could be decisive.

"I would say he's the leading Democratic governor in the region that Democrats have got to win to carry the White House," said David Worley, **Georgia's** Democratic chairman.

Dane Strother, a consultant for Mr. Barnes, said he had been reprimanded by the Barnes camp for handicapping the governor's prospects. But he did so anyway, while emphasizing that he accepts Mr. Barnes's disavowal of interest. "He's a member of the N.R.A. He basically supports Bush's **education** platform," Mr. Strother said. "He'd be

running from the middle. Everybody else would be running from the left."

The talk about Mr. Barnes has started to move past cocktail-party chatter in Washington and is planted firmly with columnists, television commentators and political operatives.

Advisers to other potential candidates took note this month when Mr. Barnes accepted an invitation to address a Democratic dinner in South Carolina. While there, he joined South Carolina's Democratic governor, Jim Hodges, in lobbying Terry McAuliffe, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, to move up the 2004 South Carolina primary, so that it would follow only the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary.

Mr. Barnes said he would support such a move in any Southern state because it would give early influence to the South and to African-American voters. But operatives close to other prospective candidates smelled self-interest, several party officials said. They suspected that Mr. Hodges might be trying to secure an advantage for Mr. Barnes, who would be expected to perform well in South Carolina.

Mr. Barnes's fund-raising plans may attract attention. He will be raising money in Washington next month for his re-election campaign. His finance director, Kristin Oblander, said she might schedule events in New York, Miami and Chicago. Some supporters say that such trips would not only raise money but raise Mr. Barnes's profile with party financiers. Mr. Barnes's aides respond that they simply need at least \$12 million for the 2002 race. Two Republicans -- Linda Schrenko, the state school superintendent, and Bill Byrne, the chairman of the Cobb County Commission in suburban Atlanta -- have declared their candidacies.

But the more Mr. Barnes denies having any interest in running for president, the more some observers assume he is up to something.

"There's no doubt there's speculation fed by the fact that he has built both a fund-raising apparatus and a political machine that suggest ambitions beyond the state's borders," said Ralph Reed, **Georgia's** new Republican chairman. "And that speculation has only been fueled by the adamant nature of his denials."

National Review

June 1, 2001

The Next Jimmy Carter?

By Michael Graham; Radio talk-show host & author of *The Dumbest Generation*, forthcoming this summer

When you see **Roy Barnes**, the word "president" does not come to mind, unless it is immediately preceded by the phrase "Rotary Club." He's frumpy, jowly, and large - a throwback to the days of pre-television politics, when guys with sideburns could still get elected to high public office.

But as a candidate on paper, Barnes looks much better. He's popular at home among Democrats and independents, he's got an impressive record of getting legislation enacted, and he's a strong fundraiser. This popular Southern governor from the fast-growing state of **Georgia** could be a strong presidential candidate for his party in 2004.

He could be, but he's not.

First, the "could be."

In an April wire story announcing that the race for the Democratic presidential nomination was on, Barnes got only a mention. Since then, however, Hotline - the Bible of inside-the-beltway politics - and the New York Times - the bulletin board for Eastern establishment politics - have run profiles on Barnes as a potential stealth candidate.

Why the change? For one thing, it seems to be sinking in among Democrats that Al Gore's disastrous performance in the South was responsible for his loss in November.

This past Wednesday, for example, Joe Lieberman was in South Carolina raising money for the Democrats, and he apologized for neglecting the region. "You're not going to get elected president unless you carry some of the South," he told a state Democratic party gathering. He went on to point out that if he and Gore had won just one southern state (say, Gore's home state of Tennessee), they would be in the White House today.

These comments make sense and, ironically, undermine Sen. Lieberman's own efforts to win his party's nomination while raising the prospects of southern Democrats like Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina and **Georgia's Roy Barnes**.

In addition to geography, **Roy Barnes** is a strong politician. In 1990 he came in third in the Democratic gubernatorial primary, behind then-liberal Zell Miller, and the even more liberal Andrew Young. Miller converted to a moderate while in office after a near-disastrous first term, but Barnes was always there. Eight years later, Barnes ran again and won with the support of conservative Democrats and liberals like black state senator Charles Walker.

As governor, he's kept these coalitions alive. Along with Walker, described by the

Savannah Morning News as "Barnes' right-hand man in the Senate." the Democratic governor also picked Cobb County Republican Charles Tanksley as one of his floor leaders in the legislature.

The results have been impressive: a nearly unbroken string of legislative victories on issues ranging from urban sprawl to shrinking the Confederate battle emblem to a postage stamp on the **Georgia** state flag. His aggressive and effective "lightning strike" resolution of the flag issue - he accomplished in ten days what South Carolinians fought over for ten years - caught the attention of national Democrats and raised Barnes's national prospects.

Then there's the money. **Roy Barnes** may have grown up working in his daddy's country store in the small town of Mableton, **Ga.**, but today he's a big-time trial lawyer who has a million dollars of his own and can raise even more. His 1998 race against multi-millionaire Guy Millner was **Georgia's** costliest ever at \$25 million, but Barnes was able to go nearly toe-to-toe in the fundraising fight. Barnes beat the well-known Republican 54-44 percent.

A rich trial lawyer who's the popular governor of a fast-growing southern state...so what's the problem? Problem No. 1 is television. The New York Times describes him this way: "Rumpled, owlish, and a tad pudgy, with a sorghum-thick drawl, he will never be mistaken for Robert Redford in 'The Candidate.'" Unlike his likely southern competitor, Sen. John Edwards - widely viewed as a made-for-TV lightweight - Barnes is part of that long tradition of hard-working southern legislators who appealed to voters by working hard and eating plenty of barbecue.

And, unlike Rhodes Scholar Clinton and Willard Hotel Gore, Barnes is a true Southerner. He's a member of the N.R.A. He's been pushing tax cuts. He openly brags that his **education** legislation for **Georgia** is modeled on George W. Bush's reforms in Texas. He didn't actually remove the Confederate logo from the state flag; he merely reduced its size.

In other words, he will never win the Democratic party's presidential nomination.

As the two political parties continue to reshape themselves into ideological ones, there is less room for a presidential candidate like **Roy Barnes**. While black voters in **Georgia** may appreciate his flag compromise, the fact that the Confederate emblem is still there is enough to keep Al Sharpton on the campaign trail all the way to the Democratic convention. And how does he explain his NRA membership to Democratic primary voters in New York and California?

Barnes was able to win his statewide Democratic primary by avoiding an ideological fight. **Georgia** is the only southern state to never have a Republican governor, and Barnes was viewed by his party as the best candidate to keep that record alive. He was able to build a coalition on party interests, not ideological ones.

It is very unlikely that Barnes - little known outside his home state - could do the same

among national Democrats. Barnes can't be the Democratic party's nominee because he simply doesn't represent the modern Democratic party.

The **Georgia** Family Council reports a recent poll in which 61% of Georgians described themselves as conservatives. In national polls, about 16% of Democratic primary voters make the same claim.

That fact alone will be enough to keep **Roy Barnes** from following Jimmy Carter's trail to the White House.

USA TODAY

October 9, 2001

Key education summit will proceed, despite terrorism

By Tamara Henry

PALISADES, N.Y. -- Taking their lead from a national determination to maintain normality, the USA's governors meet today only miles from the Sept. 11 New York City terrorist attack site to discuss ways to raise standards and achievement in America's schools.

About 25 governors, 35 corporate leaders and 30 educators or heads of **education** groups convene for the fourth National **Education** Summit. IBM Chairman Louis V. Gerstner Jr., bristles at suggestions the high-profile event be delayed or canceled, as others have.

"I don't think the governors or the CEOs or the educators think that our children should suffer because of terrorist attacks," says Gerstner. "Most people today recognize this is the time to strengthen and reinforce our democracy and there is nothing more important to democracy than a well-functioning public school system. It would be a shame if we neglected the urgency of fixing the public schools because America's been attacked."

The summit is expected to focus on the challenges states face in developing tests to measure progress toward higher academic standards, pinpointing and working with low-performing schools, and closing the achievement gap between races. It's the third time the group has met since the first event in 1989, when President George Bush encouraged the development of national **education** goals for all schools.

"These are periodic opportunities for leaders across the sectors to not only take stock of where we are in this movement but to reaffirm their commitment to work together and press ahead in the states," says Bob Schwartz, president of Achieve Inc., a non-profit organization developed in 1996 to improve schools.

Dominating summit discussions is the Bush administration's **education** bill now in a House-Senate conference committee. That legislation, the main federal law for kindergarten through 12th-grade **education**, aims to tie federal aid to school performance using annual math and reading tests for students in grades three to eight. **Georgia's** Democratic Gov. **Roy Barnes** says that in times of crisis, people are more open to change, so the summit comes at "a good time to set correct priorities, and **education** is No. 1."

The New York Times

October 28, 2002

Metro Matters; The Governor, Same Time, Other Channel

By Joyce Purnick

THIS column normally avoids making political endorsements. Not its job.

But in the race for governor this year, avoidance is difficult. Seems like an abdication of responsibility, given the challenging problems in the state's immediate future. Therefore, in a departure from the past, Matters takes a deep breath and endorses the governor for re-election.

The reasons are many, but the main one is: he showed up! He did not have to, practically speaking. He is way ahead in the polls and in spending. He could probably sit out the rest of the election and still win.

But when a television station invited him to debate yesterday, he did. He sat with his two main opponents, taking and answering questions on all manner of subjects, from child protective services to transportation projects. He showed once again that he is not the most eloquent of debaters, and Matters does not agree uniformly with his reasoning. He is not perfect.

The governor has not solved the state's transportation problems or reformed campaign finance laws. **Education** in the state is not what it should be, and the governor was more than a bit disingenuous yesterday when he said, "I hate raising money," but explained he had to because television ad time did not come free.

No kidding. That, of course, is not the issue. The issue is limiting spending and fund-raising in ways that would give all candidates an even playing field. Incumbents, who always have the advantage in fund-raising, rarely support reforms that would put a crimp in their war chests.

The governor has gotten a bit predictable. How much longer will he oversimplify the state's fiscal situation? Until the day after the election, probably. And does he have to keep saying he wants the state "to grow and prosper"? Who does not? He needs a new script.

But would his opponents do any better? Based on yesterday's debate -- in which, we repeat, he participated -- the answer seemed clear, since they often seemed as intent on criticizing him as on establishing their own bona fides. Therefore:

Roy Barnes for re-election!

O.K., this column is not endorsing anyone. It is having a little fun with a televised and instructive coincidence. Yesterday, while Gov. George E. Pataki boycotted a debate on WCBS, Channel 2, leaving his two main opponents, H. Carl McCall and Tom Golisano,

to face each other, Governor Barnes of **Georgia** was debating his Republican and Libertarian opponents on WSB-TV in Atlanta. That debate was televised nationwide on C-Span.

The helpful remote control allowed easy shifting back and forth. Neither exchange was an exercise in eloquence. Evasions, cliches and oversimplifications were as common in Atlanta as in New York. But at least **Georgia's** voters got to see the Democratic incumbent face his main opponents.

Mr. Pataki has refused to participate in debates unless up to five minor-party candidates are included -- in the ostensible interests of participatory democracy. There have been two of those multicandidate debates -- one six-way, the other seven-way, both with one-issue candidates who know they cannot win. Neither can the public, since the crowded setup gave each participant a maximum of a minute an answer, give or take. Most edifying.

YESTERDAY on C-Span, Mr. Barnes of **Georgia**, and his Republican and Libertarian opponents, really talked to each other. So did Mr. McCall, the Democrat, and Mr. Golisano, the self-financed Independence Party candidate. Unfortunately, what they mainly talked about was the man who wasn't there, during their amiable half-hour of Pataki-bashing.

Mr. Pataki, who wanted no part of debates with the minor-party standard-bearers when he was the challenger eight years ago, spent the day on an orchestrated whistle-stop tour upstate. His reasoning is not hard to figure. He is winning, as even the head of the Democratic National Committee acknowledged last week, and Mr. Pataki is not a strong debater. Sixty-second answers in a crowded field limit the risk that others have been taking nationwide.

Records at C-Span, which has been broadcasting political debates from across the country, show that most of the debates among candidates for governor include only the main candidates. In some states, candidates hold a large debate with all comers, then another between just the chief opponents. Mr. Pataki rejected that, too. In fact, New York's seven-way debate was the largest this year, said C-Span's political editor, Steven L. Scully. "We haven't heard of any others like that," he said.

New York, distinct again. The place has always known how to distinguish itself.

The Washington Post

November 1, 2002

Ga. Democrat Advances by Staying Put

By Edward Walsh, Washington Post Staff Writer

-- **Roy Barnes** and Sonny Perdue were once political allies, but they followed different paths to their confrontation Tuesday to decide who will be **Georgia's** governor the next four years.

Their paths diverged in 1998. Until then, both men were conservative Democrats in a state and region that were tending more and more Republican. But in 1998, Barnes was elected governor of **Georgia**, becoming one of three unheralded Democrats -- the others were Jim Hodges in South Carolina and Don Siegelman in Alabama -- whose victories in gubernatorial races suggested the possibility of a comeback for their party in the South.

That same year, Perdue, then the president pro tem of the **Georgia** Senate, switched parties and became a Republican.

Now Perdue is carrying the GOP banner in what is widely regarded here as an uphill battle to deny Barnes a second term. Of the three first-term southern Democratic governors who are seeking reelection this year, Barnes is in the strongest position.

As such, he stands a good chance of emerging from this year's elections as one of the leading Democrats in the South. There is already muffled talk of a national role for Barnes in his party's future.

But it might not have turned out that way if Barnes, like Perdue and hundreds of other erstwhile southern Democratic politicians, had decided to abandon his ancestral political home and ride the rising Republican tide. The path he didn't take led Barnes to where he is now.

Barnes first ran for governor in 1990, casting himself as a conservative in a field of five Democratic primary candidates. He finished third in the race won by Zell Miller, who went on to serve two terms as governor and is now one of the state's two U.S. senators.

"At that point, he had to decide whether he wanted to be a more centrist Democrat," said Merle Black, a political science professor at Emory University here.

"What a lot of other conservative Democrats were doing across the South was to switch to the Republican Party. If he had done that, he would have been very successful. He kind of exemplifies what the Republican Party in **Georgia** has never had -- a very skilled, shrewd and experienced politician."

Black said he did not know whether Barnes ever seriously considered switching parties, and Barnes's staff said he was not available for an interview in the closing days of the campaign. But Barnes, a veteran state legislator, remained a Democrat. He gradually

moderated his views, such as his 1990 opposition to a state lottery, which he now champions as the source of funding for a state college scholarship program for students with a B average in high school.

By national Democratic standards, Barnes remains very much a conservative. He has been endorsed, as he was in 1998, by the National Rifle Association. His campaign advertising attempts to link his state **education** reforms with President Bush's "leave no child behind" initiative on the national level. He is also a rare Democratic incumbent governor seeking reelection who has not been endorsed by his state's teachers union, usually a reliable Democratic ally.

Barnes pushed through a major overhaul of **Georgia's** elementary and secondary **education** system, which is a centerpiece of his reelection campaign but has been criticized by Perdue as ineffective. But to teachers, "many sections of the **education** bill were punitive," said Bob Cribbs, government relations director of the **Georgia** Association of Educators. "We felt left out of the process."

Still, the teachers union hedged its bets by not endorsing Perdue. "We felt the governor would probably win reelection, and by remaining neutral we were putting ourselves in position to say to the winner, 'We want to work with you,'" Cribbs said.

The union's reluctance to confront Barnes directly is one measure of his role in a state government that, despite party switchers like Perdue and other GOP gains among **Georgia** voters, remains firmly in Democratic hands.

"Barnes controls everything at the state level, so when he wants to get something done he's not going to be stiff-armed," said Charles S. Bullock, a political scientist at the University of **Georgia**. "He knows power, he understands it, he likes to use it."

Barnes enjoys a huge fundraising advantage over Perdue, in part because of the strong support of the Atlanta business community. One way Barnes earned that support was his unexpected move in 2001 to push through legislation to change the state flag, relegating the divisive symbol of the Confederate battle emblem, which once dominated the flag, to a tiny corner on the state banner. His role was applauded by business leaders, who wanted an end to an issue that had bedeviled other southern states, and deepened support for Barnes among black voters.

Georgia Republicans concede that Barnes is leading but say Perdue could pull off a come-from-behind surprise. Ralph Reed, the state GOP chairman, noted in a race that includes a third-party candidate, Barnes's poll numbers have never exceeded 50 percent. "Anytime you're running against a well-funded incumbent governor, it's a tough race," he said. "But if I were Barnes, I'd want to be over 50 percent and up by 10 points."

Black said the "Democratic plan in **Georgia**" on Tuesday involves reelection victories for Barnes and Sen. Max Cleland (D), who is clinging to a small lead over Rep. C. Saxby Chambliss (R); continued control of the state legislature; and Democratic gains in the

state's congressional delegation, which appear likely because of a redistricting plan engineered by Barnes and his allies.

"I think Barnes would like to have such a victory that when people look around the country and see Democrats in **Georgia** gaining in the legislature and the House [delegation], the incumbent governor and senator winning, then the focus is going to be on who produced this Democratic success, and that's going to be **Roy Barnes**," Black said.

EDUCATION WEEK

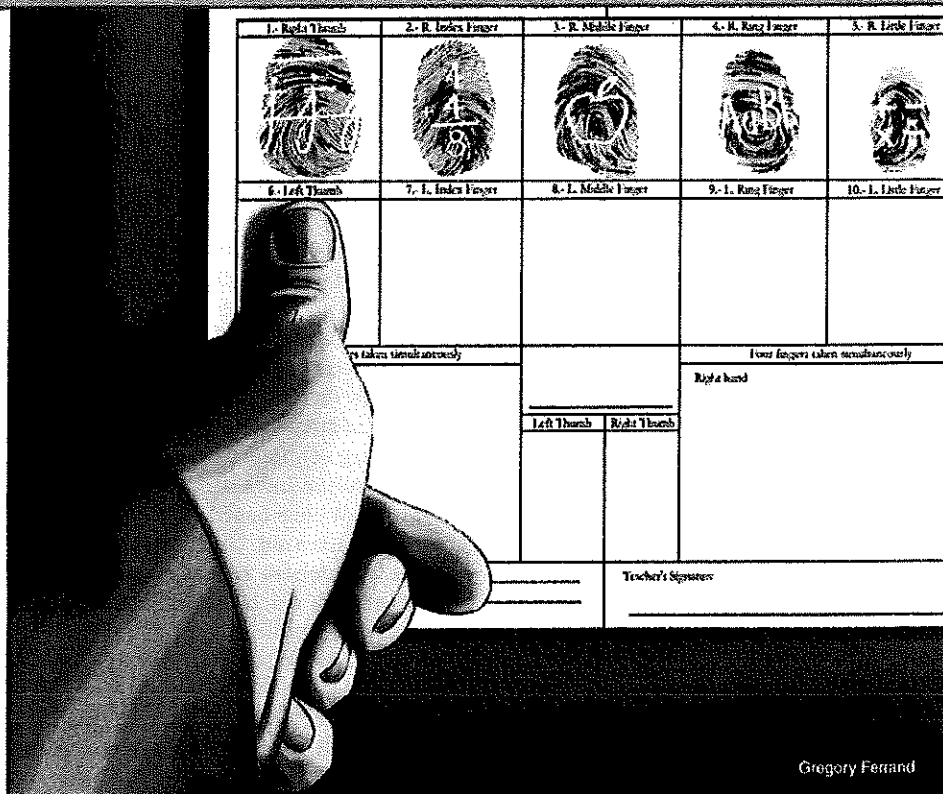
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COMMENTARY



Gregory Ferrand

Sidetracking the Debate On Teacher Quality

Have High Expectations Given Way
To the Lowest Common Denominator?

By Roy E. Barnes
& Joseph A. Aguerrebere Jr.

The nation began debating what it would take to put a highly qualified teacher in every classroom a decade ago. State leaders recognized then that to improve teaching, they had to shore up all parts of the career continuum, focusing on preparation, licensure, induction and mentoring, and professional development, as well as on the recognition of highly

accomplished teachers. This push led to the establishment of large-scale induction programs to help retain more new teachers, a reassessment of professional development's costs and benefits, and crucial investments in incentives and additional pay for accomplished teachers who sought or attained certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Today, more attention is paid to credit hours and criminal-background checks than to the skills and knowledge it takes to be a high-quality teacher.

In the No Child Left Behind era, the policy debate about teacher quality has been unintentionally sidetracked. One of the consequences of the federal mandate that all teachers meet state-set minimal standards for content knowledge is that the quest for excellence has become an exercise in meeting the lowest common denominator of quality.

While 39 states set aside funds for professional development today, states have hit the wall in advancing many other efforts to raise teacher quality. The number of states that require induction programs or mentoring for new teachers has remained relatively unchanged for the past 10 years. Today, only 15 states require mentoring (compared with 16 in 1997), and only five require it for more than one year.

Today, more attention is paid to credit hours and criminal-background checks than to the skills and knowledge it takes to be a high-quality teacher. True, the federal No Child Left Behind Act improves the odds that poor and minority students will get at least a teacher who has studied the subject he or she will teach. It does not guarantee, though, that the 3 million teachers in classrooms nationwide will continue to grow across multiple dimensions of teaching, including the knowledge of subject matter, expertise in how children learn, pedagogy, and the ability to help even the most challenging students achieve high standards.

The focus on minimal standards will not significantly improve teacher quality or capacity, nor will it create the sea of change needed for good teaching practices to become standard. In an era that requires all students to master high-level skills and the knowledge to compete for jobs in a global economy, we need to set

high expectations for teachers. If we want all young people to have higher-order thinking skills, we need all educators to have higher-order teaching skills.

This will require redoubled efforts to bolster professional development. While this is an area where policy-makers worry that education dollars are most likely to be wasted, professional development is the best way to maximize the performance of good teachers and mobilize them to take on new roles as mentors and instructional leaders.

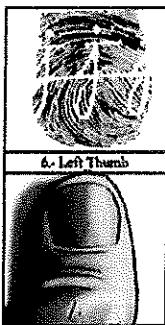
We also need to broaden common definitions of what good teaching is and how we measure it. Good teaching is not just evident in student-achievement gains on standardized tests. It also can be measured through the expert analysis of teaching practice and in the richness and complexity of student work. Evaluation of quality teaching must take into account how deeply teachers understand what they teach, how well they transform that knowledge into instruction for students of different ages and abilities, and how well teachers put it all together in the classroom.

The nearly 50,000 teachers who have gone through the rigorous process of achieving national-board certification are living proof that this process works to generate some of our most highly accomplished teachers, gives them a reason to stay in the classroom, and raises student achievement.

Possibly the best evidence of the impact of national-board certification is the progress that has been realized by North Carolina, the state that employs the largest number of nationally certified teachers and also has posted the largest gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress over the past decade. Almost 10 percent of all teachers in North Carolina are certified by the NBPTS—five times the national average.

Meanwhile, virtually every study that has been conducted on nationally certified teachers has found that they are effective, and the vast majority of research indicates that such teachers have a significant impact on student achievement. To date, a preponderance of the more than 150 reports, studies, and papers on national-board certification has found that it has a significant, measurable impact on teacher performance, as well as on student learning, engagement, and achievement.

In a study by the University of Washington researcher Dan Goldhaber, for example, students of board-certified teachers scored from 7 to 15 percentage points higher on year-end tests than the students of other teachers. Na-



The focus on minimal standards will not significantly improve teacher quality or capacity, nor will it create the sea of change needed for good teaching practices to become standard.

tionally certified teachers were particularly effective with minority students, according to the study.

Other researchers' findings show that, across four grades, four years of data, and three measures of academic performance, the students of nationally certified teachers surpassed those of non-board-certified teachers in almost three-quarters of the comparisons. Additional studies, moreover, indicate that learning gains in classrooms led by nationally certified teachers are particularly strong in mathematics, and are equivalent (on average) to spending about an extra month in school.

Even in studies where student-achievement gains have not been as positive, the data reveal that board-certified teachers account for significant differences in achievement for students by race and gender, and in certain grades and subjects. These studies also show strong teacher performance in practice-related areas such as graduate coursework, student assignments, and the quality of classroom planning. They further indicate that nationally certified mentors have a positive effect on other teachers and on the achievement of their students.

School leaders and policymakers must recognize that certification by the national board fosters and measures highly accomplished teaching, and is the most defensible and widely accepted form of performance-based pay in education. If we are to retain and reward highly competent teachers and pay for their performance, we need to know that they have demonstrated a higher level of teaching, and know they will produce results. National-board certification does just that.

Researchers will continue to study the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. We welcome more research, but we also think it is time to get on with the difficult work of changing the conditions and the culture of teaching, improving professional development, and making better use of highly accomplished teachers in the difficult work of school transformation.

Florida lawmakers, for example, recently appropriated \$87 million to provide a 10 percent salary bonus for nationally certified teachers who mentor other teachers, on top of a 10 percent bonus for all nationally certified teachers, in addition to covering most of the cost of such certification.

All states should set a goal of ensuring that, at minimum, 10 percent of all teachers become certified by the national board, and should provide incentives to boost the numbers of such teachers working at low-performing schools. North Carolina and South Carolina have already reached this milestone. Where board-certified teachers are concentrated in low-performing schools, and where school leaders tap the talents of such teachers, schools have seen real, positive results.

In rural North Carolina, D.F. Walker Elementary School, for example, moved from being a low-performing to a high-performing school by increasing the number of nationally certified teachers in teaching and leadership positions, and by strategically using these teachers and the national board's standards to guide school change. In the 1999-2000 school year, just over half the school's students performed at grade level. By the 2003-04 school year, 82.8 percent met grade-level standards, and the school was recognized as a North Carolina School of Distinction, a label accorded schools that meet individualized benchmarks for "expected growth" for 80 percent to 89 percent of students. The school also met 20 out of 21 of its adequate-yearly-progress targets under the No Child Left Behind Act.

Researchers Julia Koppich and Dan Humphrey note that the key to success at D.F. Walker Elementary was the ability of school leaders "to infuse the national-board standards and the practices that paralleled the certification process into the school's professional-development and improvement strategy."

To increase the number of nationally certified teachers, the board is working to lower the cost of certification and address the un-

derrepresentation of minorities. It is seeking as well to increase the number of board-certified teachers serving in low-performing schools. Several major urban districts are using board-certified teachers to help recruit and support candidates, serve as mentors, and help design professional-development programs. We must begin to offer outstanding minority teacher-education candidates scholarships if they pledge to teach in low-income communities, and to support these teachers through the national-certification process. More states and districts should provide incentives for board-certified teachers to teach in low-performing schools.

The national board plans to work more closely with states to improve the quality of professional development available to teachers. Under the leadership of Gov. Edward G. Rendell, Pennsylvania has taken a giant step toward making national certification a permanent part of that state's professional-development strategy. The board also is making discrete

parts of the certification process available to a broader audience through the Take One! program, which allows teachers to videotape their classrooms over time, examine their performance against national standards, and have it scored and judged by expert teachers.

Ultimately, the success of national-board certification will depend on the willingness of states and districts to re-engage in the debate about high-quality teaching and support all highly accomplished teachers in taking a more central role in school improvement. For all its success, national certification is a program that needs to be brought to scale. We believe that it continues to be one of America's best hopes for improving teaching and learning.

With renewed commitment and support, national-board certification will enable teachers, the strongest assets we have to promote student learning and school improvement, to become the agents, rather than the targets, of reform. ■

TalkBack: What do you think? Has the quest for teaching excellence been hampered by the No Child Left Behind Act? Submit your comments online. www.edweek.org/tb/

Roy E. Barnes, the governor of Georgia from 1999 to 2003, is the chair of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, based in Arlington, Va. Joseph A. Aguerrebere Jr. is the board's president and chief executive officer.

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Atlanta Journal
Constitution

March 26, 2004

National board certification works for teachers, students

By ROY E. BARNES

I generally believe former governors should neither be seen nor heard on matters of public policy. However, a recent column by my Cobb County neighbor Jim Wooten, disparaging the state's invest-



Roy E. Barnes was governor of Georgia from 1999-2002.

ment in national board-certified teachers, demands a response ("Teacher certification too pricey," @issue, March 23). Great schools begin with great teachers. That principle guided my thinking about education issues during my term as governor.

We need an array of programs to improve our public schools, but every education reform proposal begins with the important relationship between teachers and their students. When great teachers lead Georgia's classrooms, great things happen for Georgia's kids.

Among the most important efforts I supported to improve teacher quality was national board certification. It's an innovative and rigorous program designed to identify, recognize and reward teachers who meet the highest standards of their profession. It is so rigorous that last year only about 39 percent of the teachers who began the process were successful.

To achieve certification, teachers must demonstrate thorough mastery of the subjects they teach, the methods of instruction to use and the skill to apply their knowledge in classrooms every day. National board certification is the gold standard for good teaching, and it works for teachers and students.

Georgia's investment in this

process has been significant.

We now have more than 1,300 national board-certified teachers in our state's schools; with another 700 in the pipeline. Like any good investment, this will pay rich dividends over time. In fact, we're just beginning to get an idea how rich those returns can be. Now is not the time to sell ourselves short.

Just two weeks ago, research by the University of Washington and the Urban Institute showed that students of certified teachers improved an average of 7 percent more on year-end math and reading tests than students of teachers without certification.

What's more, certified teachers were particularly effective in reaching younger and lower-income students, who posted testing gains as high as 15 percent.

It is no coincidence that in the last decade our sister state of North Carolina, which in the last decade has experienced the greatest educational advancement in the nation, is also the state with the largest number of national board-certified teachers. Clearly, national board certification improves student learning.

Last year I was honored to be elected chair of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which administers national board certification.

One of my priorities is to increase the number of these accomplished teachers in schools with the highest needs. About 30 percent of Georgia's certified teachers work in Title 1 schools, which qualify for high levels of federal funding because they serve students with the greatest economic need. We can do better, and systems are in place to make it easier for teachers in high-need schools

to seek certification.

In Atlanta, the national board has invested heavily in a partnership with the Georgia-Pacific Foundation to encourage more minority teachers to go for certification. Working closely with the Atlanta Public Schools, this targeted program has attracted 33 new candidates for certification, who will benefit from mentorship and support from currently certified teachers. The program is expected to attract 50 new candidates in the 2004-2005 school year.

At Fort Valley State University, the national board and the State Farm Insurance Companies have teamed up to recruit teachers in rural central Georgia to seek certification.

Not only that, but they are also creating a resource center on the Fort Valley State campus to make sure all teachers in the area have access to the best practices that national board certification embodies.

Is it worth it? Georgia's financial commitment to

national board certification represents only about one-tenth of 1 percent of our total state education budget. That seems like a reasonable investment to improve the quality of the teachers who spend every day in the classrooms with our children.

The major difference between our society and other great civilizations of the past is universal public education, available to everyone regardless of color, class or gender. Education is the cement that binds our society together and we should do everything in our power to improve it.

So, Jim, when you leave Smyrna in the morning, roll down your windows, smell the flowers and watch the children walking to school. They are our hope for the future, and they are worth the investment.

National board certification is the gold standard for good teaching, and it works for teachers and students.



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EDUCATION

Maintain top teachers' incentives

By ROY E. BARNES

Last week, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 34, creating a master teacher program for career teachers. I have supported such a program in the past, and with high standards and objective criteria, I believe the concept can be an important part of the advancement and recognition of quality teaching.



Roy E. Barnes was governor of Georgia from 1999 to 2003.

However, the House Education Committee placed an amendment in the bill that takes a giant step backward in rewarding great teachers. The amendment would gut incentives that have so far encouraged more than 1,700 Georgia teachers to achieve national board certification, a school reform effort that we know improves student learning.

I urge Gov. Sonny Perdue either to veto SB 34 or have his floor leaders pass an amendment on another bill pending in the General Assembly to remove this step backward for our best and brightest teachers.

As it stands, the bill calls for rolling back 10 percent salary increases for most future teachers who achieve national board certification, the gold standard of teaching excellence in the United States. National board certification is an innovative and rigorous program designed to identify, recognize and reward teachers who meet the highest standards of their profession.

It is so rigorous that last year only about 39 percent of the teachers who began the process were successful. To achieve certification, teachers must demonstrate thorough mastery of the subjects they teach, the methods of instruction to use and the skill to apply their knowledge in classrooms every day.

I think most Georgians would agree that those are exactly the kinds of teachers every school needs. Yet the amended SB 34 proposes withholding the state's 10 percent incentive from most teachers, offering it only to those who serve in low-performing schools. That restriction will limit — not expand — Georgia's ability to provide all our kids with the education they deserve.

I confess that I am an unabashed supporter of national board certification. As governor, I supported it as a way to both encourage and reward great teaching. And

Study after study shows that National Board Certified teachers help students learn more.

now I am honored to serve as the nonpaid chair of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the non-profit organization that administers the national board certification program. In that role, I've gained a new appreciation

for just how effective an education reform this process can be.

Study after study shows that national board-certified teachers help students learn more, measurably raising student performance. Research funded last year by the U.S. Department of Education documented that students of NBCTs improved an average of 7 percent more on their year-end math and reading tests than students of non-NBCTs. Younger and lower-income students posted gains as high as 15 percent.

At a time when Georgia policy-makers seem intent on scaling back this successful program, other states are ramping up. In Wyoming, Gov. Dave Freudenthal is supporting a dramatic expansion of national board certification as a tool for improving teaching and learning. In North Carolina, it's no coincidence that the state making the greatest public education gains in recent years is also the state that provides the most support for national board certification and has the most national board-certified teachers in the nation. Legislators just to our south in Florida have seen fit to fund the program to the tune of \$60 million.

Georgia's students deserve teachers who are just as highly qualified.

The General Assembly has plenty of time to fix its mistake. If it does not, Perdue should veto this bill and come back next year with a bill having only his original master teacher proposal. In this way we can be assured Georgia does not take a step backward as it takes a step forward in the educational reform process.



Burrelles
INFORMATION SERVICES

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Georgia schools

Teacher bonuses worth the cost, says Barnes

Staff and wire reports

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ATLANTA — Bonuses for school teachers earning a national board certification are adding to the woes of the education budget in Georgia, but former Gov. Roy Barnes says the cost is worth it.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards announced Tuesday that 513 Georgians earned certification this year. That is up from 386 last year and gives the state a No. 5 ranking in the number of teachers newly certified by the board.

In the Clarke County School District, there are nine board-certified teachers, including four who recently received notification of their certification, spokesman Mike Wooten said. The Oconee County School District has 16, including four recently certified. Madison County has one, with about six teachers working toward certification, and Barrow County has

about 10. Oglethorpe County has one, with about four teachers in the program and working their way toward certification.

Clarke County district policy encourages teachers to be certified and guarantees a \$2,500 bonus to those who are. Teachers must agree to remain with the district for the following academic year to receive the bonus.

The state now has 1,323 board-certified teachers. When he was governor, Barnes pushed for the bonus program and called for 1,000 nationally certified teachers by 2003.

State budget writers, however, have to come up with annual 10 percent bonuses — almost \$6,000 on average for each newly certified teacher. The bonus program is expected to double next year

to \$15.6 million. Should the state meet Barnes' goal of 10 percent of the teachers in Georgia, that program would cost \$60 million a year in bonuses.

Barnes, who was chosen last month as chairman of the national board, was a proponent of school reform during his four-year term as governor, which ended in January.

"If you're going to talk about accountability and excellence in teaching, you have to create some financial incentive and rewards," Barnes said. "What this shows is, teachers will rise to that challenge if you give them that incentive."

Rep. Ben Harbin, R-Martinez, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, said he is worried about the cost. The state Board of Education is having to ask lawmakers for extra money to pay for the bonuses while possibly passing on to local school systems \$410

million in budget cuts for basic school services.

"Those teachers that do this should be commended," Harbin said. "However, we have to make sure our systems are getting enough money to provide an education to all students. I don't know where the money is coming from."

If state projections hold, the bonus program that cost about \$100,000 in fiscal year 2000 could cost the state as much as a 1 percent pay raise for all Georgia teachers within a few years.

Bonuses for teachers earning the certification began in the 1990s with the backing of former Gov. Zell Miller. At the time, only a few teachers in Georgia and fewer than 100 nationally had earned certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

The initial bonus in Georgia was 5 percent. Barnes raised it to 10 percent after he took office.



BARNES

Raises for certified teachers targeted

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Feb 10, 2005

By JAMES SALZER
jsalzer@ajc.com

A Republican legislator wants to change a politically popular law that gives 10 percent raises to nationally certified teachers.

Rep. David Casas (R-Lilburn), a teacher in Cobb County schools, said he wants to amend one of Gov. Sonny Perdue's school bills so that Georgia teachers who earn or renew their national board certification status on or after July 1, 2006, would get the 10 percent raise only if they worked in schools that had been on the state's list of low-performing schools for two or more consecutive years.



Rep. David Casas wants restrictions on raises for board-certified teachers, and those who gained certification in the next school year, would not be affected.

The aim is twofold: to get more good teachers in struggling schools and to slow the skyrocketing cost of the program.

"It's a black hole," said Casas, who chairs the subcommittee that will consider the amendment today. "We're

Teachers: Raise for board certification targeted

> Continued from C1

"What they are actually saying is these exceptional teachers that go the extra mile are being penalized."

Kristy Beam, a teacher of gifted students at Pharr Elementary School in Snellville, is working toward national board certification and was shocked by the proposal.

"That is awful," she said. "I agree that giving teachers a 10 percent raise for going to low-performing schools is a good thing, but I don't see why they are linking it to national board certification."

To gain certification, teachers have to pass a series of tests. Barnes said last year, only 40 percent of teachers taking the tests passed them all.

Beam said the change would put pressure on teachers to get certified before the end of the year.

"I think it would definitely reduce the number" of

CERTIFIED TEACHERS

There are 1,635 teachers in Georgia public schools who have earned national board certification. Below is the count of board-certified teachers in select counties:

County	Number
Gwinnett	160
Fulton	152
Cobb	90
DeKalb	60
Columbia	53
Fayette	53
Cherokee	48
Chatham	42
Clayton	42
Hall	41
Forsyth	40

Source: Georgia Professional Standards Commission, Georgia Department of Education

teachers seeking certification, Beam said. "Most people do it to enhance their teaching, not to change schools."

When Barnes was governor, he ramped up the raises

for teachers earning the certification from 5 percent to 10 percent.

At the same time, he talked of providing higher pay for good teachers willing to take jobs in low-performing schools. But that didn't happen before he was defeated for re-election in 2002 by Perdue.

The number of teachers earning certification has shot up in the past few years, and so has the cost. The raises cost the state \$452,000 in 2002. The figure is expected to be \$11 million next year.

Casas said the majority of board-certified teachers in Georgia work in affluent schools. The top four systems for certified teachers are Gwinnett, DeKalb, Cobb and Fulton counties, followed by suburban Columbia County near Augusta and Fayette and Cherokee counties.

Less than 20 percent are

working in schools considered low-performing for two or more years, according to state records. About half of the state's 180 school systems have two or fewer board-certified teachers.

"The areas that really need these teachers don't have them," Casas said.

He wants to add the requirement to a Perdue bill creating financial incentives for top teachers who agree to mentor less experienced colleagues. That bill already has passed the Senate.

Tim Callahan, spokesman for the Professional Association of Georgia Educators, agrees that struggling schools need top teachers and principals. But he opposes the idea of making changes to cut costs. "I think this is a good place to invest funds in the best teachers," he said. "Quality teaching is central to quality student achievement."

Teachers' well-earned bonus adds to shortfall

James Salzer - Staff
 Wednesday, December 3, 2003

A record number of Georgia teachers earned national board certification this year, far surpassing former Gov. Roy Barnes' call for 1,000 nationally certified teachers by 2003.

But the good news for top-performing teachers may be bad news for state budget writers, who have to come up with annual 10 percent bonuses --- nearly \$6,000 a year on average --- for each newly certified educator. The bonus program's cost is expected to double next year to \$15.6 million.

Officials of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards announced Tuesday that 513 Georgia educators earned national certification this year, up from 386 last year. Georgia ranked fifth in the country in the number of newly certified teachers.

The state now has 1,323 board-certified teachers. North Carolina, with 6,641, has the most.

Barnes, who chairs the national board, said the next goal should be one nationally certified teacher in each of the state's approximately 2,000 schools. After that, he said, the state should shoot for 10 percent of the teachers in the state. At that rate, the program would cost about \$60 million a year in bonuses.

The former governor, who successfully pushed legislation mandating the 10 percent yearly bonus for board-certified teachers, said the cost was worth it.

"If you're going to talk about accountability and excellence in teaching, you have to create some financial incentive and rewards," said Barnes, who championed school reform during his four-year term as governor, which ended in 2002. "What this shows is, teachers will rise to that challenge if you give them that incentive.

"This is the best money you can invest, and if you are actually serious about high-quality teaching, this is where the rubber meets the road."

However, Rep. Ben Harbin (R-Martinez) said he worried about the cost, particularly with the state Board of Education having to ask lawmakers for extra money to fund the bonuses while possibly passing on to local systems \$410 million in budget cuts for basic school services.

"Those teachers that do this should be commended," said Harbin, a member of the House Appropriations Committee. "However, we have to ask some serious questions about this. As the costs continue to rise, we have to make sure our

systems are getting enough money to provide an education to all students. I don't know where the money is coming from."

Those who have achieved certification say the process renews veteran teachers. Teachers spend 200 to 400 hours on average putting together the portfolio of classroom work required for the process. They also must videotape and submit classroom lectures. Then they must pass a national assessment to earn the certification.

Tandi Pressley, a veteran teacher who now works for Bibb County's school system, has no doubt the process makes for better teachers.

"The national board experience was more rigorous than earning my master's degree," said Pressley, who earned the award this year. "The process puts teachers in a position where they must reflect on their instructional practices. It makes you really analyze your [teaching] choices."

Barnes said the program was not designed to attract top teachers to schools that need the most help. An additional bonus might be needed, he said, to attract teachers to low-performing schools.

"This program rewards excellence in teaching wherever they are," the former governor said. "What we know in Georgia is, teachers react to financial incentives."

If state projections hold, the bonus program that cost about \$100,000 in fiscal 2000 could cost, within a few years, as much as a 1 percent pay raise for all 100,000 Georgia public school teachers.

Bonuses for teachers earning certification began in the 1990s with the backing of Gov. Zell Miller. At the time only a few state teachers and less than 100 nationally had earned certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The initial bonus was 5 percent, which Barnes raised after he took office in 1999.

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RICHMOND, VA
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Number of NBCTs Growing Rapidly 6587

ARLINGTON, VA—The teacher quality movement is gaining momentum nationwide, as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) announced that the number of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) now surpasses 55,000.

Approximately 7,800 teachers earned NBCT status in 2006, a 7 percent increase over the number who did in 2005, which brings the national total to 55,306. Some evidence for the growing numbers and importance of NBCTs:

- The number of NBCTs has more than tripled in the past five years, going from 16,040 nationwide in 2001 to the current number of 55,300.
- 19 states experienced at least a 30 percent growth in the number of new NBCTs in 2006, as compared with 2005.
- While the number of white teachers who earned national certification remained steady between 2005 and 2006, numbers in other racial and ethnic groups grew. During that same time period, black NBCTs grew by 24 percent, Hispanic NBCTs by 13 percent, and Native American NBCTs by 50 percent.

Further, some 39 percent of NBCTs are teaching in schools that have been identified as Title I schools by the U.S. Department of Education. More than 5,000 math and science teachers have earned national certification since 2001, making up about 10 percent of all NBCTs.

"National Board Certification strengthens and reaffirms quality teaching strategies, adds credibility to the teaching profession, represents the profession's highest standards, and has a positive impact on student learning," says former Georgia Governor Roy E. Barnes, chair of the NBPTS Board of Directors.

All 50 states, the District of Columbia and over 700 school districts recognize NBPTS certification as a distinction of honor. In Virginia, NBCTs receive, from the state, \$5,000 in their first year of certification and \$2,500 annually for each of the next nine years.

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LCHS math teacher earns national board certification

Chad Crumley of Hall County earned his profession's top honor by achieving National Board Certification in 2004, according to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

Crumley teaches mathematics at Lumpkin County High School. He has been a teacher for four years and holds degrees in Mathematics (B.S.) and Mathematics Education (M.Ed.).

"With teacher quality serving as the benchmark in determining a student's academic success, the National Board congratulates all teachers who went through the rigorous National Board Certification process," said former Georgia Gov. Roy E. Barnes, chair of the NBPTS Board of Directors.

"Chad's achievement is especially significant when

you consider the powerful research released this year confirming that teachers who earn this distinction represent the gold standard in teaching and are among the most effective teachers in our nation's classrooms today."

National Board Certification is the highest credential in the teaching profession. A voluntary process established by NBPTS, certification is achieved through a rigorous performance-based assessment that takes between one and three years to complete and measures what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

There are more than 40,000 National Board Certified Teachers nationwide.

For more information about NBPTS, visit www.nbpts.org.

LEADER-UNION

VANDALIA, IL
WEEKLY 6.100
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Former Vandalia teacher earns NBPTS certification

6587
Kerry (Keele) Martin of Huntsville, Ala., earned the teaching profession's top credential by achieving National Board Certification in 2006, according to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

Martin teaches kindergarten at Monte Sano Elementary School in the Huntsville City System.

She has been a classroom teacher for 17 years and holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education, with an emphasis in early childhood development and a minor in music.

In addition, Martin holds a master's degree in guidance and counseling. She has also taught swimming for more than 25 years and is certified as an American Red Cross water safety instructor.

After serving as a substitute teacher and then a teacher's aide in the Bond County School System, Martin began her career as a classroom teacher in Vandalia. She taught first grade at Washington School from 1987-1996, where she received mentoring from the experienced staff and Principal Rodney Deem.

She is the daughter of Wanda Keele of Salem and the late Kenneth Keele.

Martin is one of more than 7,700 teachers nationwide who achieved National Board Certification this year.



Kerry (Keele) Martin

"The single most important school-related factor in raising student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. National Board Certification strengthens and reaffirms quality teaching strategies, adds credibility to the teaching profession, represents the profession's highest standards, and has a positive impact on student learning," said former Georgia Gov. Roy E. Barnes, chair of the NBPTS Board of Directors.

"Today, there are 55,000 teachers who have achieved

National Board Certification. These teachers are living proof that this process works to generate some of the most highly accomplished teachers in the field."

A voluntary process established by the NBPTS, National Board Certification is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based assessment that typically takes more than a year to complete and measures what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. Teachers who earn this advanced teaching credential are among the best qualified in the nation to improve instruction, raise student achievement, and improve teaching practices in their classrooms, schools and districts.

NBPTS continues to be the most thoroughly grounded, in research terms, of any assessment program in the teaching profession and has subjected itself to a higher standard of research and validation than any other professional board in the United States.

"The vast majority of research (more than 75 percent) indicates that National Board Certified Teachers make a significantly measurable impact on teacher performance as well as student learning, engagement and achievement," said NBPTS President and CEO Joseph A. Aguerreberere.

"Our research portfolio has helped us better understand just how the National Board's focus on learning has led to explicit outcomes and real achievement gains for students from all backgrounds," he said.

All 50 states, the District of Columbia and hundreds of individual school districts across the nation recognize National Board Certification as a mark of distinction and have implemented policies and regulations to recruit, reward and retain NBCTs.

"NBPTS truly appreciates the increasing number of states, school districts, and municipalities that support National Board Certification and the impact it has on the teaching profession and improved student learning," Barnes said. "We also thank the many foundations and corporations that support National Board Certification at the local, state and national levels who share our vision that every child deserves an accomplished teacher."

"National Board Certification is one of the best hopes we have for improving teaching and learning over the long haul," Aguerreberere said. "With renewed commitment and support, National Board Certification will enable teachers, the strongest assets we have, to promote student learning and school improvement."

Shawnee News-Star

(Shawnee, OK)

March 10, 2007

Bethel teacher earns National Board Certification

Jenny Affentranger of Bethel Public Schools earned the teaching profession's top credential by achieving National



Jenny Affentranger

Board Certification in 2006, according to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

Affentranger teaches first grade at Bethel Elementary School. She has been a teacher for six years and holds degrees in elementary education from Oklahoma Baptist University and in Elementary Principalship from East Central University. She lives in Shawnee with her husband, Michael, and daughter, Marlee.

Affentranger is one of more than 7,700 teachers nationwide and one of 282 statewide who achieved National Board Certification this year. She is one of three nationally certified teachers at Bethel.

"The single most important school-related factor in raising student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. National Board Certification strengthens and reaffirms quality teaching strategies, adds credibility to the teaching profession, represents the profession's highest standards, and has a positive impact on student learning," said former Georgia Gov. Roy E. Barnes, chair of the NBPTS board of directors. "Today, there are 55,000 teachers who have achieved National Board Certification. These teachers are living proof that this process works to generate some of the most highly accomplished teachers in the field."

Vienna Times

(Vienna, IL)

Feb. 22, 2007

NSH Teacher Earns Profession's Top Credential

6587
Kaye (Bradshaw) Walker of Simpson earned the teaching profession's top credential by achieving National Board Certification in 2006, according to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

Walker teaches fourth grade at New Simpson Hill. She has been a teacher for 17 years and holds a bachelor of science degree in elementary education from Murray State University and a master of science degree in elementary school curriculum from Southern Illinois University.

Walker is one of more than 7,700 teachers nationwide who achieved National Board Certification this year.

"The single most important school related factor in raising student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. National Board Certification strengthens and reaffirms quality teaching strategies, adds credibility to the teaching profession, represents the profession's highest standards, and has a positive impact on student learning," said former Georgia Gov. Roy E. Barnes, chair of the NBPTS Board of Directors. "Today, there are



Kaye Walker

55,000 teachers who have achieved National Board Certification. These teachers are living proof that this process works to generate some of the most highly accomplished teachers in the field."

A voluntary process established by the NBPTS, National Board Certification is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based assessment that typically takes more than a year to complete and measures what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. Teachers who earn this advanced teaching credential are among

FRONT PAGE
the best qualified in the nation to improve instruction, raise student achievement, and improve teaching practices and in their classrooms, schools and districts.

"National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) are instructional leaders in their schools and communities," said Rebecca A. Palacios, vice chair of the NBPTS Board of Directors and an NBCT in Corpus Christi, Texas. "It's important to realize that they help their fellow teachers understand and promote

Continued on page 10

A NSH Teacher

(continued from page 1)

high-quality teaching and learning which is making a positive difference in increasing student achievement."

NBPTS continues to be the most thoroughly grounded, in research terms, of any assessment program in the teaching profession and has subjected itself to a higher standard of research and validation than any other professional board in the United States.

"The vast majority of research (more than 75 percent) indicates that National Board Certified Teachers make a significantly measurable impact on teacher performance as well as student learning, engagement

President and CEO, Joseph A. Aguerrebere. "Our research portfolio has helped us better understand just how the National Board's focus on learning has led to explicit outcomes and real achievement gains for students from all backgrounds."

All 50 states, the District of Columbia and hundreds of individual school districts across the nation recognize National Board Certification as a mark of distinction and have implemented policies and regulations to recruit, reward and retain NBCTs.

HARRODSBURG HERALD

HARRODSBURG, KY
WEEKLY 6.000
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Teachers Earn National Board Certification

Several local teachers achieved certification in 2006. have recently earned National Board Certification, a credential awarded by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Kentucky had 218 teachers certified last year and is ranked ninth nationwide in National Board Certified teachers.

"The single most important school related factor in raising student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the classroom," said former Georgia Gov. Roy E. Barnes, chair of the NBPTS. "National Board Certification strengthens and reaffirms quality teaching strategies, adds credibility to the teaching profession, represents the profession's highest standards and has a positive impact on student learning."

Local teachers who have recently earned their certification include: Traci M. Brown of Harrodsburg, second grade teacher at Mercer County Elementary School; Teresa J. Castle of Lancaster, fourth grade teacher at MCES; Lynette Freeman of Harrodsburg, first grade teacher at MCES; Tina R. Goodman of Harrodsburg, third grade teacher at MCES; Traci Goodlett of Harrodsburg, kindergarten teacher at MCES, and Jennifer W. Privett of Salvisa, primary resource teacher at MCES.

The teachers are among 7,700 teachers nationwide who

A voluntary process, certification is achieved through a performance-based assessment that typically takes more than a year to complete and measures what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and nongovernmental organization governed by a board of directors. For more information, visit www.nbpts.org.

SLICE OF SELMA

Southside teacher achieves national board certification

FRONT PAGE
First in Dallas County to earn profession's top credential

credential

SUBMITTED TO THE TIMES-JOURNAL

Brenda Allen Holder of Selma has earned the teaching profession's top credential by achieving National Board Certification in 2006, according to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

Holder teaches English at Southside High School.

She has been a teacher for 13 years and holds a bachelor's degree in language arts and a master's degree in school counseling.

"This very special to me, to gain this certification while teaching at Southside High School," Holder said. "When I was hired to teach for Dallas County Schools, I interviewed at all three of the system's high schools, and I chose to teach at Southside. I have never regretted my decision. We have a dedicated and profes-

sional faculty. The fact that I have qualified for National Board Certification while teaching here is representative of the kind of teachers we have here."

Holder is one of more than 7,700 teachers nationwide who have achieved National Board Certification this year and is the first teacher in all public and private schools in Dallas County to earn this recognition, while teaching in the county.

"The single most important school-related factor in raising student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. National Board Certification strengthens and reaffirms quality teaching strategies, adds credibility to the teaching profession, represents the profession's highest standards, and has a positive impact on student learning," said former Georgia Gov. Roy E. Barnes, chair of the NBPTS Board of Directors. "Today, there are 55,000 teachers who have achieved National Board Certification. These teachers are living proof that

TEACHER: Major-McKenzie congratulates Holder

FROM PAGE A1

this process works to generate some of the most highly accomplished teachers in the field."

A voluntary process established by the NBPTS, National Board Certification is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based assessment that typically takes more than a year to complete and measures what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

Teachers who earn this advanced teaching credential are among the best qualified in the nation to improve instruction, raise student achievement, and improve teaching practices in their classrooms and dis-

tricts.

NBPTS continues to be the most thoroughly grounded, in research terms, of any assessment program in the teaching profession and has subjected itself to a higher standard of research and validation than any other professional board in the United States.

All 50 states, the District of Columbia and hundreds of individual school districts across the nation recognize National Board Certification as a mark of distinction and have implemented policies and regulations to recruit, reward, and retain National Board Certified teachers. "National Board Certification is one of the best hopes we have for improving teaching and learning over the long haul," NBPTS President and

CEO, Joseph A. Aguerrebere said.

"With renewed commitment and support, National Board Certification will enable teachers, the strongest assets we have, to promote student learning and school improvement."

Dallas County School System Superintendent, Dr. Fannie Major-McKenzie congratulated Holder on her accomplishment, and said, "I am very proud that Mrs. Holder has attained this honor. The effort necessary to achieve National Board Certification is formidable. Mrs. Holder's certification should stand as testimony to our teachers that this goal is attainable, and should be an encouragement to others to follow her example."



SE TEACHER A5

Brenda Holder

SUBMITTED TO THE TIMES-JOURNAL



McCarty achieves National Board Certification

The Board of Education recognized ULNE teacher Kathleen McCarty at the March 13 meeting. McCarty, who has been teaching at Upson-Lee North for seven years achieved National Board Certification.

On Jan. 9, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) announced that Thomaston-Upson School System's McCarty was among 191 Georgia teachers who achieved National Board Certification in 2006. National Board Certified teachers are recognized as being among the nation's top educators.

"National Board Certification strengthens and reaffirms quality teaching strategies, adds credibility to the teaching profession, represents the profession's highest standards, and has a positive impact on student learning," said former Georgia Gov. Roy E. Barnes, chair of the NBPTS Board of Directors. "The single most important school-related factor in raising student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the classroom."

National Board Certification is the highest credential in the teaching profession. A teacher-driven, voluntary process established by NBPTS, certification is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based



Superintendent Howard H. Hendley, ULNE Principal Ann Wilkinson, National Board Certified Teacher Kathleen McCarty, BOE Chairperson Jacqueline Hollis

assessment that typically takes one to three years to complete and measures what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. As part of the process, teachers build a portfolio that includes student work samples, assignments, videotapes and a thorough analysis of their classroom teaching. Additionally, teachers are assessed on their knowledge of the subjects they teach.

All 50 states, the District of Columbia and more than 700 local school districts recognize National Board Certification as a mark of distinction, similar

to the way the medical, engineering and accounting professions recognize expertise.

Celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2007, NBPTS continues to be the most thoroughly grounded, in research terms, of any assessment program in the teaching profession.

For more information about NBPTS and National Board Certification, visit the NBPTS website at www.nbpts.org.

Created by educators and policymakers in 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is an inde-

pendent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and nongovernmental organization. NBPTS advances the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished teaching; creating and administering National Board Certification, a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet those standards; and integrating certified teachers into educational reform efforts. Today, more than 55,000 National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) are making a positive difference in the lives of students across the nation.

Navajo teacher achieves National Board Certification

Vicki Nance of Altus earned the teaching profession's top credential by achieving National Board Certification in 2006, according to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. **FRONT PAGE**

Nance teaches 5th grade Social Studies, 6th grade World History and 7th grade American History at Navajo School. Nance has been a teacher for 16 years and holds a degree in Elementary Education, Middle School Social Studies and a Masters of Education Administration.

Nance is one of more than

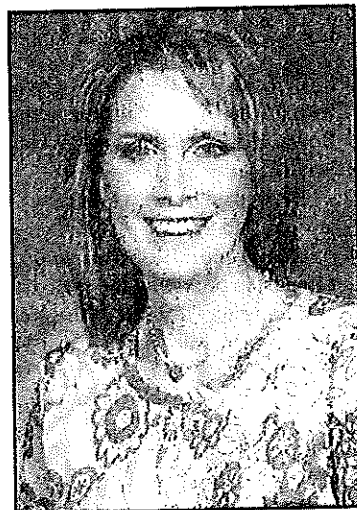
7,700 teachers nationwide who achieved National Board Certification last year.

"Today, there are 55,000 teachers who have achieved National Board Certification. These teachers are living proof that this process works to generate some of the most highly accomplished teachers in the field," said former Georgia Gov. Roy E. Barnes, chairman of the NBPTS Board of Directors.

A voluntary process established by the NBPTS, National Board Certification is achieved through rigorous, performance-based assessment that typically

takes more than a year to complete and measures what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. Teachers who earn this advanced teaching credential are among the best qualified in the nation to improve instruction, raise student achievement and improve teaching practices in their classrooms, schools and districts.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and nongovernmental organization governed by a



Vicki Nance

See NANCE page 3A

Nance

continued from page 1A

board of directors, the majority of who are classroom teachers. Its mission is to establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

Clay County Courier

Dec 28, 2006



Marcy Selig and Melanie Manatt.

National certification for Corning's Manatt, Selig

Two sisters, teachers at Corning Central Elementary School, have achieved the teaching profession's top credential, National Board Certification.

Melanie Manatt and Marcy Selig, daughters of Karen Parks and the late George Parks, were notified of their accomplishment in a letter from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

Mrs. Selig teaches sixth grade Science and Social Studies. She has been a teacher for six years and has a degree in Elementary Education with a Middle School Science endorsement.

Mrs. Manatt teaches Library Media. A teacher for 15 years, she holds a degree in Elementary Education and a Master's Degree in Library Media.

"The single most important school-related factor in raising student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the classroom," says former Georgia Governor Roy E. Barnes, chair of the NBPTS Board of Directors. "These teachers are living proof that this proves works to generate some of the most highly accomplished teachers in the field."

A voluntary process established by NBPTS, certification is achieved through rigorous

performance-based assessments, which include teaching portfolios, student work samples, videotapes or DVDs and thorough analyses of the candidate's teaching and the students' learning. The process involves written exercises that probe the depth of a candidate's subject-matter knowledge, as well as his or her understanding of how to teach these subjects.

Certification takes between one and three years to complete and measures what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. There are more than 55,000 National Board Certified Teachers nationwide.