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NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN AMERICA'S BIG CITY SCHOOLS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN AMERICA'S BIG CITY SCHOOLS

Wednesday, June 23, 2004
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Education and the Workforce
Washington, DC

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:35 a.m., in room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John A. Boehner (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Boehner, Petri, McKeon, Castle, Ehlers, Isakson, Biggert, Platts, Tiberi, Osborne, Kline, Gingrey, Burns, Miller, Kildee, Andrews, Woolsey, Hinojosa, McCarthy, Tierney, Kind, Kucinich, Wu, Davis of California, McCollum, Davis of Illinois, and Bishop.

Staff present: Amanda Farris, Professional Staff Member; Kevin Frank, Professional Staff Member; Joshua Holly, Director of Media Affairs; Sally Lovejoy, Director of Education and Human Resources Policy; Alanna Porter, Legislative Assistant; Deborah L. Samantar, Committee Clerk/Intern Coordinator; Alice Cain, Minority Legislative Associate/Education; Tom Kiley, Minority Press Secretary; John Lawrence, Minority Staff Director; Ricardo Martinez, Minority Legislative Associate/Education; Alex Nock, Minority Legislative Associate/Education; Joe Novotny, Minority Legislative Assistant/Education; and Linda Theil, Minority Legislative Associate/Education.

Chairman BOEHNER. A quorum being present, the Committee on Education and the Workforce will come to order.

We're holding this hearing today to hear testimony on "No Child Left Behind: Raising Student Achievement in America's Big City Schools." Now, opening statements are limited to the Chairman and Ranking Member. With that, I ask unanimous consent for the hearing record to remain open for 14 days to allow member statements and other extraneous material referenced during the hearing today to be submitted for the official record. Without objection, so ordered.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

I want to thank all of you for being here, especially our witnesses. Today is the ninth hearing held by the Committee on the

implementation of No Child Left Behind. And we're here today to take a look at how No Child Left Behind is helping to improve student academic achievement in our nation's urban schools.

Previous hearings held by this Committee have examined the benefits No Child Left Behind provides for rural schools, for schools with high numbers of students with disabilities, for states and schools working to put a quality teacher in every classroom.

But with today's hearing, we turn our attention to the early results being seen in America's inner city schools, where the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers has been—has perhaps been the most evident since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was first enacted in 1965. We all recognize improving our educational system is essential, not only to our society but to our nation's economy and competitiveness as well. President Bush recognized this when he made education reform his top domestic priority upon taking office 3 years ago. And the members of this Committee, Democrats and Republicans alike, were proud to work with him to produce a law that was uniquely bipartisan.

That law was No Child Left Behind, and it has fundamentally changed the approach we take to Federal education spending. As a result of NCLB, our nation is spending far more than ever before on education. But we're also expecting more in exchange for that money: states and school districts are expected to improve academic achievement for all of their students, regardless of where they live, who their parents are, their backgrounds, or other factors.

For too many years, states and school districts point—pointing to rising overall student test scores for a school had accepted an ever increasing amount of Federal funding, even though certain groups of children were falling behind. States and schools were able to highlight aggregate data showing most students were making progress. But because they were required only to report this data in the aggregate, parents and taxpayers could be kept in the dark, when some children were actually losing ground.

No Child Left Behind is ending this practice. The law requires student test data be broken down by subgroup and reported to the public. Now achievement gaps between disadvantaged students and their peers, once hidden from public view, are public knowledge for all to see. The law is shining a bright spotlight on the most neglected corners of our public education system. The very corners of the classroom hidden from public view during the aggregate days are now beginning to see some of the early payoff for parents and students.

One report released earlier this year by the Council of Great City Schools, which we'll hear more about during Dr. Casserly's testimony, shows students in the nation's big city schools posted significant increases in math and reading test scores during the first year of No Child Left Behind. The report shows students in 61 school districts, in 37 states, made improvements on fourth- and eighth-grade math and reading assessments. And the authors of the report—partially credit the reforms in No Child Left Behind for these gains.

This year one of the Council of Great City Schools member school districts, which also happens to be in my congressional district, showed considerable progress on math and reading tests again this year. The fourth-grade reading test scores in the Dayton Public Schools increased by 9 percentage points, from 25 percent passing last year to 34 percent passing this year.

In math, Dayton fourth-graders showed another 9 percent gain, going from 22 percent passing on last year's test score to 31 percent this year. And state-wide, math scores have also improved dramatically, from 58 percent last year to 66 percent this year. Maybe not as much progress as some would hope, but certainly we're seeing progress.

As other states release their test data, we're seeing similar proof that student achievement is on the rise and achievement gaps are closing.

In Maryland, 71 percent of third-graders passed the reading exam this year, as compared to 58 percent in 2003. Limited English proficient students posted an impressive 27-point increase in reading scores this year.

Delaware students have also posted significant gains this year. Student scores in three out of four grade levels improved in all three subjects tested, reading, writing, and math. Now fifth-grade reading performance in Delaware climbed to 85 percent, a 7-percent increase from last year.

Florida has also seen an increase in the number of schools that they expect to meet adequate yearly progress standards this year.

Now these increases are early evidence that the law is working as intended. Schools and communities are responding to No Child Left Behind by focusing on closing the achievement gap like never before. Instead of making excuses, many are making changes. And those changes appear to be making a difference. As the Great City School report says, "They're beating the odds."

Is the news as good as it appears? How are they doing it? What challenges lie ahead? And we're interested in knowing what lessons others can draw from the experience in our inner-city schools.

So I'd like to thank all of our distinguished witnesses for being here, and thank all of you who've shown your interest in coming today. And with that, I'd like to yield to my friend and colleague, Mr. Miller.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Boehner follows:]

Statement of Hon. John A. Boehner, Chairman, Committee on Education and the Workforce

Good morning. Thank you all for being here for the tenth hearing held by the House Education & the Workforce Committee on the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act.

We're here today to take a look at how the No Child Left Behind Act is helping to improve student academic achievement in our nation's urban schools.

Previous hearings held by this committee have examined the benefits No Child Left Behind provides for rural schools; for schools with high numbers of students with disabilities; and for states and schools working to put a quality teacher in every classroom. But with today's hearing we turn our attention to the early results being seen in America's inner-city schools, where the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers has perhaps been most evident since the Elementary & Secondary Education Act was first enacted in 1965.

We all recognize improving our educational system is essential not only to our society, but to our nation's economy and competitiveness as well. President Bush rec-

ognized this and made education reform his top domestic priority upon taking office three years ago. And the members of this committee—Democrat and Republican alike—were proud to work with him to produce a law that was uniquely bipartisan. That law was the No Child Left Behind Act, and it has fundamentally changed the approach we take to federal education spending. As a result of NCLB, our nation is spending far more than ever before on education—but we're also expecting more. In exchange for that funding, states and school districts are expected to improve academic achievement for all of their students—regardless of where they live, who their parents are, their backgrounds, or other factors.

For too many years, states and school districts—pointing to rising overall student test scores for a school—had accepted an ever-increasing amount of federal funding even though certain groups of children were falling behind. States and schools were able to highlight "aggregate" data showing most students were making progress. But because they were required only to report this data in the aggregate, parents and taxpayers could be kept in the dark when some children were actually losing ground.

No Child Left Behind is ending this practice. The law requires student test data to be broken down by subgroup and reported to the public. Now achievement gaps between disadvantaged students and their peers, once hidden from public view, are public knowledge for all to see. The law is shining a brilliant spotlight on the most neglected corners of our public education system—the very corners of the classroom hidden from public view during the "aggregate" data days. We're now beginning to see some of the early payoff for parents and students.

One report released earlier this year by the Council of the Great City Schools—which we'll hear more about during Dr. Casserly's testimony—shows students in the nation's big city schools posted significant increases in math and reading test scores during the first year of NCLB implementation. The report shows students in 61 school districts in 37 states made improvements on fourth and eighth grade math and reading assessments. The authors of the report partially credit the reforms in NCLB for these gains.

This year, one of the Council of the Great City Schools' member school districts—which also happens to be in my congressional district—showed considerable progress on math and reading tests again this year. Fourth grade reading test scores in the Dayton Public Schools increased by 9 percentage points—from 25 percent passing last year to 34 percent passing this year. In math, Dayton fourth graders showed another 9 point gain—going from 22 percent passing on last year's test to 31 percent this year. Statewide, fourth grade math scores have also improved dramatically, from 58 percent last year to 66 percent this year.

As other states release their test data, we're seeing similar proof that student achievement is on the rise and achievement gaps are closing. In Maryland, 71 percent of third graders passed the reading exam this year, as compared to 58 percent in 2003. Limited English Proficient (LEP) students posted an impressive 27 point increase in reading scores this year.

Delaware students have also posted significant gains this year. Student scores in three out of four grade levels improved in all three subjects tested—reading, writing and math. Fifth grade reading performance in Delaware climbed to 85 percent, a seven percentage point increase from last year. Florida has also seen an increase in the number of schools they expect to meet their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards this year.

These increases are early evidence that the law is working as intended. Schools and communities are responding to No Child Left Behind by focusing on closing the achievement gap like never before. Instead of making excuses, many are making changes—and those changes appear to be making a difference. As the Great City Schools report says, they're "beating the odds." Is the news as good as it appears? How are they doing it? What challenges lie ahead? We're interested in knowing what lessons others can draw from the experience in our inner-city schools.

I would like to thank everyone for attending today. I'd especially like to thank our distinguished witnesses for their participation. I look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE MILLER, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

Mr. MILLER. Thank you very much, and I want to thank Chairman Boehner for holding this hearing—as he pointed out, one in a series of hearings—and I'm delighted that he's assembled this panel, because of your wealth of knowledge and experience in deal-

ing with many of the issues that we've shown concern about over the years. But also because it focuses on the central and the exceedingly important goal of No Child Left Behind, and that is, obviously, eliminating the achievement gap among low-income and minority children. And I share the excitement of the Chairman with the report of the Council of Great City Schools, showing improvement among schools in very difficult environments and hope that it signals future changes.

I continue to be concerned about whether or not we have properly funded this act so that we can get that continuous improvement over the long term. I and many of my colleagues believe that the act currently is short about $27 billion, and we believe that that would make a substantial difference in our ability to maintain these improvements that you're going to report on today.

And that raises a couple of questions that I hope you—we will have a chance to address later, maybe in your testimony, but maybe in the questions. And that is, in terms of the prioritizing of the spending under the act, whether you think it's right or wrong or whether you would change it around to help you sustain these results or improve these results. I think it's important for us to know clearly the implementation of the act—some of us have had trouble with the implementation—we believe that—we've introduced the NCLB Fairness Act that would take schools that have previously failed to comply, use the standards now set by the department and the changes for last year. You can discuss that.

But also I guess the question that really hounds me is that many of you have had experiences in getting a bump in performance. And we know, in my own case, the new superintendent, a change in the school board, a refocusing of goals gets us these bumps in performance. The new reading program gets us a bump in grade performance in schools. The question is—the goal of this legislation, of course, is that we make this continuous improvement over a period of 12 years, that we sustain a bump which would be precedent-setting compared to what happens in most areas of improvement where we get two, maybe we get 3 years' improvement, then it seems to plateau out. What should we be doing in terms of thinking about helping these districts that have made this kind of improvement, those who we hope will make it in the future, be able to sustain it? Because that will be the real test as to whether or not this gap in fact gets closed that we've put so much emphasis on.

And so I look forward to your testimony. I would hope that we would be able to discuss these matters of continuous improvement, of funding, and of implementation of the act and the guidance that you have received.

So thank you very much for being here this morning. We look forward to hearing from you.

[The prepared statement of Hon. George Miller follows:]

Statement of Hon. George Miller, Ranking Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce

Good morning. I'm looking forward to today's hearing because it focuses on a central—and exceedingly important—goal of NCLB: eliminating the achievement gap among low-income and minority children. Our witnesses have great expertise in this

area and I'm eager to hear their perspectives' both about what is working well so far and the challenges they continue to face.

I am pleased that the Council of Great City Schools has found that in the first year of NCLB, students in our urban public schools are advancing academically. It is very encouraging that these students are posting significant gains in both reading and math.

But reform without resources isn't sustainable over the long term. We're turning our backs on our children by not fully funding NCLB—especially the Title I program.

Since NCLB's enactment, President Bush and the Republican Congress have underfunded NCLB by $27 billion. The shortfall in the President's budget next year is $9.4 billion.

I am working to try to increase the amount of funding for NCLB next year. I am interested in hearing from our panel about whether the schools they are working with have the resources they need to provide every child with a quality education.

I am also interested in knowing how you would prioritize the spending if we are successful in getting even a modest funding increase for NCLB. How could extra funding make the most difference?

I am also concerned that we've turned our backs on properly implementing this law. A problem of particular concern is a basic fairness issue: schools were forced to have their initial AYP results calculated before the Bush Administration had released crucial guidance to schools.

Now that the guidelines are in place, the Department of Education is not permitting schools to recalculate their AYP based on the standards set in the Department's own guidelines. So, some schools that would make AYP using these standards are being identified as needing improvement.

Misidentifying successful schools as needing improvement will dilute—rather than increase—the amount of assistance available to schools that do need to improve.

A related problem is that it will be difficult to determine whether reforms are working if schools are judged on different criteria for different years. How can we possibly tell if schools are making progress if they are held to different standards different years?

The Secretary of Education has cited the lack of any legislative authority as an obstacle to applying the regulations retroactively.

To address these problems and provide the Secretary with this authority, Senator Kennedy and I introduced the NCLB Fairness Act last week. It gives schools the flexibility to have their AYP for last year recalculated based on the Department's guidance on children with disabilities and limited English skills.

I am pleased that all of the Democrats on the committee have co-sponsored it. I hope all of our Republican colleagues will join us. Congress should respond to the needs of schools by enacting this bill.

Nothing we will do this year on this committee is more important that ensuring that we live up to No Child Left Behind's promise of a quality education for every child. I appreciate all that each of you are doing to make this a reality and look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BOEHNER. Thank you, Mr. Miller. And while Mr. Miller and I may have disagreements on whether the funding glass is half full or half empty, I think I can speak for both of us in terms of our commitment to make this law work and to help those children in America who today aren't getting the best chance at a decent education.

It's my pleasure to introduce our distinguished panel of witnesses. Our first witness is Dr. Michael Casserly. Dr. Casserly has served as the executive director of the Council of Great City Schools, the nation's primary coalition of large urban public school systems, since January 1992. And before assuming this position, Dr. Casserly served as the organization's director of legislation and research for 15 years.

Then we'll hear from Dr. Margaret Raymond. Dr. Raymond is the director of the Center for Research on Education Outcomes, which analyzes education reform efforts around the country. In addition

to her work at the Center for Research on Education Outcomes, Dr. Raymond has taught in the public policy analysis program at the University of Rochester since 1992.

Then we'll hear from Dr. Eric Smith. Since July of 2003, Dr. Smith's been the superintendent of the Anne Arundel County Public Schools. And prior to his work in Maryland, Dr. Smith was the superintendent for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools in North Carolina, where he was a recipient of the 2002 Superintendent of the Year Award. And prior to becoming a superintendent, Dr. Smith was a principal and teacher in Orlando, Florida.

Then we'll hear from Mr. Paul Vallas. Mr. Vallas is the chief executive officer of the school district of Philadelphia. And prior to this, Mr. Vallas served as the chief executive officer of Chicago public schools from 1995 through 2001. Mr. Vallas is implementing a sweeping district-wide reforms in Philadelphia, duplicating many of the approaches that changed the Chicago public school system from one of the most under-performing in the Nation to a nationally recognized model for education reform.

And then we'll hear from Dr. Marcus Newsome. Dr. Newsome is currently superintendent of the Newport News public schools. And he's also served as regional executive director in Prince George's County, Maryland, public school system, as well as a teacher in the District of Columbia public schools.

And before the witnesses begin, we all know about the lights. Don't get too worried about the lights, but don't get too carried away either. And the members will all ask their questions when the entire panel is finished.

And with that, Dr. Casserly, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF DR. MICHAEL D. CASSERLY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS, WASHINGTON, DC

Dr. CASSERLY. Thank you very much. Good morning. My name is Michael Casserly. I'm the executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools. Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify, and I would like to take up some of the issues on the implementation and sustaining gains that Mr. Miller raised during the question-and-answer period.

Mr. Chairman, I've been asked to focus my testimony this morning on the findings of a report that my organization recently published, called "Beating the Odds: A City by City Analysis of Student Performance and Achievement Gaps on State Assessments," and to offer some perspective on the initial impact of No Child Left Behind on student achievement in the nation's big city schools.

The council published this report, "Beating the Odds," in March 2004. It was the fourth edition of this study and contains detailed statistics on the percentages of urban school students achieving at or above proficiency levels on each city's respective state test through spring 2003. We have published this report annually since 2001 to make it clear to the American people that our urban schools are strongly in favor of the standards movement and are thoroughly committed to higher performance and accountability; to track our progress on academic goals that the Nation has set for

us; and to better understand the effects of the reforms that we are pursuing.

Our most recent report attempted to answer the question, "Have urban schools improved student performance since No Child Left Behind was enacted?" The answer appears to be yes. The evidence from "Beating the Odds IV" and other sources suggests that the nation's big city schools have seen important gains in reading and math achievement since No Child Left Behind.

Between 2002 and 2003 school years, the percentage of urban fourth-graders scoring at or above proficiency levels on their respective state reading test increased from 42.9 percent to 47.8 percent, an increase of 4.9 percentage points. The percentage of urban fourth-graders scoring at or above proficiency levels on their respective state math test increased from 44.2 percent to 51 percent, an increase of 6.8 percentage points.

The percentage of urban eighth-graders, moreover, scoring at or above proficiency levels stayed approximately level at about 37 percent and the percentage of urban eighth-graders scoring at or above proficiency levels in math increased from 36.4 percent to 39.4 percent, a gain of 3 percentage points.

The council also looked at the percentage of urban school districts that had posted reading and math gains between 2002 and 2003. The results showed that about three-quarters of our cities posted reading and math gains in half or more of the grades tested, and about half posted faster gains than their respective states. In addition, the report found stronger—strong gains among African-American and Hispanic students in our urban schools.

Many of these findings from "Beating the Odds" are corroborated by reading data from the Trial Urban NAEP Assessment. These data show that the reading performance among urban fourth-graders increased by a statistically significant margin between 2002 and 2003. Reading performance among urban eighth-graders remained unchanged, the same finding as we saw in the state data. Conversely, the percentage of urban fourth-graders reading below basic on NAEP decreased significantly between 2002 and 2003.

These urban NAEP gains, moreover, came during a period in which the Nation showed little overall improvement in reading performance, meaning that city school districts were not being pulled upward by a larger national effect. They were doing this on their own.

The data from previous editions from "Beating the Odds" also suggest that improvements in urban school achievement, particularly in math, pre-date No Child Left Behind by a number of years. Reading gains, however, appear to be more recent. We saw signs in previous reports that we have done that the numbers of urban students approaching the proficiency bar in reading were increasing, but we had not seen them meeting or exceeding that bar until this most recent report.

In other words, "Beating the Odds" suggests that big city schools did not begin implementing No Child Left Behind from a standing position. They had a running start.

The question about what is producing these gains is difficult to answer. We suspect that the improvements are attributable to the standards movement and the changes it has triggered in urban

schools; to the hard work and commitment of urban school administrators, teachers, and boards across the country, and the hard work of others who want to see us succeed. We also give some credit to No Child Left Behind for focusing our attention more sharply on student achievement. It would be difficult, of course, to claim that the new law has had a direct effect programmatically in just 1 year, but the gains may be attributable in part to the increasing focus that No Child Left Behind has brought to student achievement.

The Committee should know that we understand that we have a long way to go to attain the goals that No Child Left Behind has set for us. Our performance is still way too low. Still, the data from No Child—from "Beating the Odds" present an emerging and promising picture of how America's great city schools are performing and strongly suggest that we are making progress.

More importantly, the data indicate that improvement is possible on a large scale, not just school by school. The public should no longer wonder whether urban education can be saved. It can. The public should no longer worry about whether student achievement can be raised. It will be. The question on the table now is, how fast. That we have changed the question is by itself a sign of the progress we are starting to make.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Casserly follows:]

Statement of Dr. Michael D. Casserly, Executive Director, Council of Great City Schools, Washington, DC

Good morning, my name is Michael Casserly. I am the Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this Committee on *No Child Left Behind* and its initial impact on student achievement in the nation's big city schools.

The Council is a coalition of over 60 of the nation's largest urban public school systems. Our Board of Directors is composed of the Superintendent of Schools and one School Board member from each city, making the Council the only national organization comprised of both governing and administering personnel and the only one whose sole mission and purpose is urban.

Our member urban school systems educate over 7.3 million students or about 15.0 percent of the nation's K-12 public school enrollment. Some 63 percent of our students are eligible for a free lunch and about 17.3 percent are English Language Learners. Approximately 77 percent of our students are African American, Hispanic or Asian American.

The Council of the Great City Schools supported the passage of *No Child Left Behind* and continues to support the Act today. We backed the bill knowing that it had numerous challenges for urban schools, multiple requirements, and some poorly-calibrated provisions. But, we believed that the legislation set the right goals and targeted the resources on the right kids—those too often left behind.

Mr. Chairman, I have been asked to focus my testimony on the findings of a report that my organization recently published—*Beating the Odds IV: A City-by-City Analysis of Student Performance and Achievement Gaps on State Assessments*—and to offer some perspective on the initial impact of *No Child Left Behind* on student achievement in the nation's big city schools.

Background

The Council published this report—*Beating the Odds*—in March 2004. It was the fourth edition of the study and contains detailed statistics on the percentages of urban students achieving at or above proficiency levels on each city's respective state test through Spring 2003. The results in reading and math were presented by city and year and compared with each state's trends. Additional data were presented by race, poverty, language, and disability status.

We have published this report annually since 2001 to—

- Make it clear to the country that our urban schools were strongly in favor of the standards movement and were committed to higher performance and greater transparency and accountability.
- Track our progress on the academic goals that the nation was setting for us.
- Better understand the effects of the reforms we were pursuing and to gauge what seemed to be working from city to city.

Beating the Odds IV

Findings and Scores

Our most recent report attempted to answer the question, "Have urban schools improved student achievement since *No Child Left Behind* was enacted?"

The answer appears to be 'yes.'

The evidence from *Beating the Odds IV* and other sources is that the nation's big city schools have seen important gains in reading and math since *No Child Left Behind.* Between the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 school years (the period since NCLB), the percentage of urban 4th graders scoring at or above proficiency levels on their respective state reading tests increased from 42.9 percent to 47.8 percent—an increase of 4.9 percentage points. (See table). The percentage of urban 4th graders scoring at or above proficiency levels on their respective state math tests increased from 44.2 percent to 51.0 percent—an increase of 6.8 percentage points.

The percentage of urban 8th graders, moreover, scoring at or above proficiency levels on their respective state reading tests remained at around 37 percent and the percentage of urban 8th graders scoring at or above proficiency levels increased from 36.4 percent to 39.4 percent—a gain of 3.0 percentage points.

Percentage of Urban 4th and 8th Graders Scoring at or above Proficiency in Reading and Math in 2002 and 2003[1]

	2001-2002	2002-2003	Change
4th Grade Reading	42.9%	47.8%	+4.9
4th Grade Math	44.2	51.0	+6.8
8th Grade Reading	36.8	37.9	+1.1
8th Grade Math	36.4	39.4	+3.0

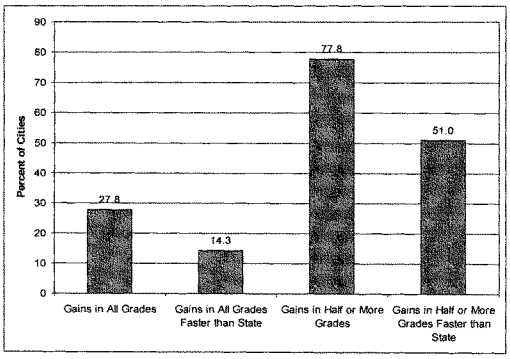
Improving Reading Achievement

[1] Data should be handled with caution since percentages are based on differing state definitions of proficiency, data from states using identical tests in both years, and the use of enrollment counts.

The Council also looked at the percentage of city school *districts* that had posted reading gains between 2002 and 2003. (See Graph 1.) The results showed that —

- 27.8 percent of urban school *districts* posted reading gains in *all* grades tested between 2002 and 2003.
- 14.3 percent of urban school *districts* posted faster reading gains than their respective states in *all* grades tested.
- 77.8 percent of urban school *districts* posted reading gains in *half or more* of the grades tested;
- 51.0 percent of urban school *districts* posted faster reading gains than their respective states in *half or more* of the grades tested.

Graph 1. Percentage of Urban School Districts Posting Increases in Reading Scores between 2002 and 2003



In addition, the report found that—

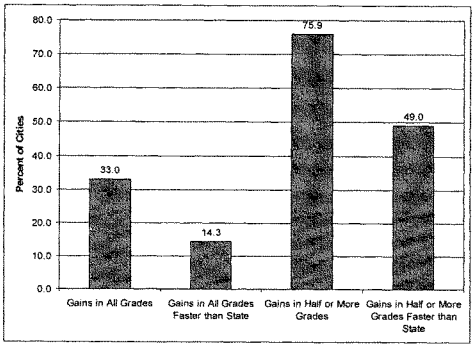
- 70.1 percent of all grades tested showed reading gains in the average performance of African American students; and
- 69.1 percent of all grades tested showed reading gains in the average performance of Hispanic students.

Improving Math Achievement

Finally, we looked at the percentage of city school *districts* that had posted math gains between 2002 and 2003. (See Graph 2.) The results showed that —

- 33.3 percent of urban school *districts* posted math gains in *all* grades tested between 2002 and 2003.
- 14.3 percent of urban school *districts* posted faster math gains than their respective states in *all* grades tested.
- 75.9 percent of urban school *districts* posted math gains in *half or more* of the grades tested.
- 49.0 percent of urban school *districts* posted faster math gains than their respective states in *half or more* of the grades tested.

Graph 2. Percentage of Urban School Districts Posting Increases in Math Scores between 2002 and 2003



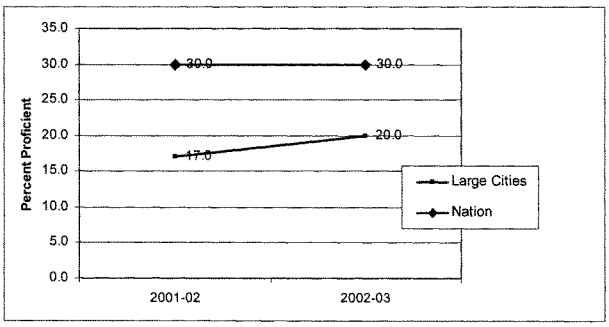
The report also showed that—

- 72.2 percent of all grades tested showed gains in the average performance of African American students; and
- 68.6 percent of all grades showed gains in the average performance of Hispanic students.

NAEP's Trial Urban District Assessment

Many of these findings from *Beating the Odds* are corroborated by reading data from the Trial Urban District Assessment—a test that the Council of the Great City Schools arranged with the National Assessment Governing Board to measure urban school progress. These National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data showed that reading performance among urban 4th graders had increased by a statistically significant margin between 2002 and 2003 (the only years available). The percentage of 4th graders in the 67 large central city school districts that form the NAEP sample who were reading at or above proficient levels improved from 17 percent to 20 percent over the one year period. (See Graph 3.) Reading performance among urban 8th graders was unchanged. (No trend data for cities are available for math.)

Graph 3. Increases in the Percentage of 4th Graders Reading at or above Proficiency on NAEP

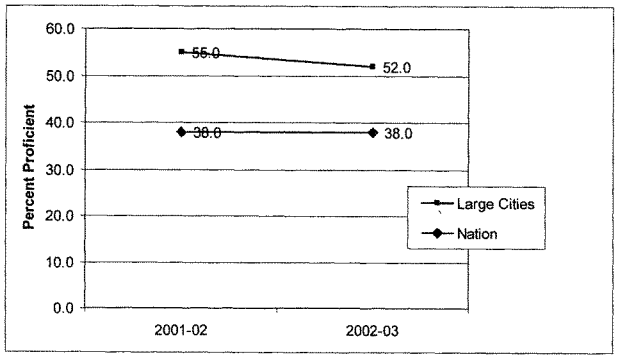


Conversely, the percentage of urban 4th graders reading below "basic" on NAEP decreased from 55 percent in 2002 to 52 percent—numbers that are still too high but which reflect a statistically significant drop. (See Graph 4.) The cities did not post any change in the percentage of 8th graders reading below basic levels of proficiency.

These urban NAEP gains, moreover, came during a period in which the nation showed little overall movement in reading performance. The percentage of 4th graders nationally who read at or above the proficient level remained unchanged at 30 percent between 2002 and 2003, for instance. And the percentage of 4th graders nationally who read below the basic level remained unchanged at 38 percent over the same period.

The significance of these differing trend lines is that city school scores were not being pulled upward by a larger national "effect." The cities were producing these gains by doing something different from what others were doing.

Graph 4. Decreases in the Percentage of 4th Graders Reading below Basic on NAEP



The data from previous editions of *Beating the Odds* also suggest that improvements in urban school achievement, particularly in math, pre-date *No Child Left Behind* by a number of years. Reading gains appear to be more recent. We saw signs in previous reports that the numbers of urban students approaching the proficiency bar were increasing, but we did not see large numbers meeting or exceeding it until this most recent study. Finally, data from previous reports suggested that racially-identifiable achievement gaps were narrowing in many cities.

In other words, *Beating the Odds* suggests that big city schools did not begin implementing *No Child Left Behind* from a standing position. They had a running start.

We can generally conclude from the data in *Beating the Odds* that—

- Reading achievement in the nation's urban schools has shown particularly strong gains over the last year.
- Math achievement in the nation's urban schools has been improving for some time.
- The rate of average increases in urban reading and math scores outpaces the states about half the time.
- Achievement gains in the nation's urban schools are far more significant at the elementary level than at the middle and high schools. Improving our high schools remains one of our most serious challenges.
- Student achievement in the nation's urban schools is generally below state and national averages.
- Racially-identifiable achievement gaps are showing some signs of narrowing.

The question about what is producing these gains is more difficult to answer. We suspect that the improvements are attributable to—

a) The standards movement and the changes it has triggered in urban schools. The movement has reminded educators—particularly those in cities—why we were in business and what we were being held accountable for.
b) The hard work and commitment of urban school administrators, teachers, and boards across the country. Urban educators are working harder and smarter than ever before.
c) The hard work of many others who want to see us succeed.

We also give some credit to *No Child Left Behind* for focusing our attention more sharply on student achievement. It would be difficult, of course, to claim that the new law has had a direct effect programmatically in just one year. Our reading gains, for instance, are probably not related directly to "Reading First" since most cities did not receive their "Reading First" grants until this school year. But, the gains may be attributable in part to our increasing awareness of the research, strategies, and programs on which "Reading First" and *No Child Left Behind* were built.

What Impacts Student Achievement

We have also learned from studies like *Foundations for Success*[2] what it takes to produce and sustain gains. Our research indicates that big cities making the greatest gains are often characterized by—

- A strong consensus for reform and city and district leadership working together over a sustained period on the same agenda to improve student achievement.
- Districtwide and school-by-school goals that are concrete, measurable, and disaggregated and are aligned with state standards.
- Strong accountability systems starting at the top.
- Uniform and sometimes prescriptive reading and math curriculum applied districtwide.
- Standardized professional development built around implementation of the curriculum.
- Regular system for monitoring the implementation of reforms at the school and classroom levels.
- Continuous assessment of student progress and data systems that allow decision-making about where to intervene and how to retrain.
- Clear sequence of reforms starting at the early elementary grades.
- Improved rigor of high school courses and strategy for boosting skills of students without basic skills.
- Clear strategy for boosting the performance of the lowest-achieving schools and groups.

Conclusion

The Council of the Great City Schools is now working to translate these broad lessons and the details behind them into technical assistance to urban school systems throughout the country that are struggling to raise student achievement.

The Council continues to support *No Child Left Behind.* We believe that it has important implications for the achievement of students who have not always been well-served by our schools. We do worry, however, that the Act's grand vision is being undercut by statistical manipulations of subgroup sizes and confidence intervals in a way that exempts a great many children as long as they are not concentrated in large numbers in the same districts, schools, and classrooms.

The Committee and the country should know that we understand we have a long way to go to attain the goals that *No Child Left Behind* has set for us. We have substantial challenges in front of us.

Still, the data in *Beating the Odds IV* present an emerging and promising picture of how America's Great City Schools are performing and strongly suggest that we are making progress in both reading and math. These results are preliminary but they are strongly bolstered by urban NAEP data.

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[2] *Foundations for Success: How Urban School Systems Are Improving Student Achievement and Closing the Gaps.* MDRC for the Council of the Great City Schools, 2002.

Some of our gains are coming from working harder and smarter, and squeezing inefficiencies out of every scarce dollar. Some of the gains come from cities doing what the research says and what the nation has agreed is likely to work—high standards, strong and stable leadership, better teaching, more instructional time, regular assessments, stronger accountability, extra resources, and efficient operations.

The data now indicate that improvement, however modest, is possible on a large scale—not just school-by-school. The key question for the public should no longer be whether urban education can be saved. We should no longer worry about whether student achievement can be raised. It clearly can be. The question now is, "How fast?" This change in perspective alone is important and worthy of note.

Summary of Findings from Beating the Odds
(2002 Compared to 2003)

Reading	Percent Change
% Cities w/All Grades Improved	27.8%
% Cities w/All Grades Improved Faster than State	14.3%
% Cities w/At Least 50% Grades Improved	77.8%
% Cities w/At Least 50% Grades Improved Faster than State	51.0%
% Cities w/At Least 50% Above State	14.3%
% Grades Tested Improved	67.1%
% Grades Tested Improved Faster than State	42.8%
% Grades Tested Declined	24.6%
% Grades Tested Improved for African Americans	70.1%
% Grades Tested Improved for Hispanics	69.1%

Math	Percent Change
% Cities w/All Grades Improved	33.3%
% Cities w/All Grades Improved Faster than State	14.3%
% Cities w/At Least 50% Grades Improved	75.9%
% Cities w/At Least 50% Grades Improved Faster than State	49.0%
% Cities w/At Least 50% Above State	10.7%
% Grades Tested Improved	70.0%
% Grades Tested Improved Faster than State	41.5%
% Grades Tested Declined	19.1%
% Grades Tested Improved for African Americans	72.2%
% Grades Tested Improved for Hispanics	68.6%

Chairman BOEHNER. Thank you.
Dr. Raymond.

STATEMENT OF DR. MARGARET RAYMOND, DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON EDUCATION OUTCOMES, THE HOOVER INSTITUTION, STANFORD UNIVERSITY, STANFORD, CALIFORNIA

Dr. RAYMOND. Good morning. My name is Margaret Raymond, and I am the director of the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University. I am grateful to be able to share with you the latest research done with my

co-author, Eric Hanushek, on the impacts of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) on student performance. I will describe our approach and summarize the findings. A copy of the full paper on which my testimony is based has been submitted to the record.

NCLB builds on existing state accountability policies which were adopted one by one over a period of years. States either adopted a report card system, which merely publicized performance, or a consequence system that included rewards and sanctions.

To isolate the effects of accountability, we estimated statistical models of gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), controlling for other possible influences on student performance. Since the thrust of accountability, and NCLB, is on low achievers, which include minority groups, we also examined the equivalence of impact on student subgroups.

An implicit assumption is that accountability, as revealed through mandatory disaggregation of performance by subgroups, will both close existing gaps and improve performance for all. To test this, we disaggregated the state results for whites, blacks, and Hispanics. The findings are as follows: First, students are better off with accountability. The evidence shows that introduction of accountability has had a positive impact on student performance. Students covered by systematic accountability systems gained an average of 3.6 NAEP points more than students in states without accountability. This is roughly a fifth of a standard deviation greater gains.

But we find that just using report cards does not influence performance. Consequences matter. Thus it seems important to include direct incentives rather than relying on indirect forces.

Second, accountability helps all students, but it helps some more than others. When we break out the performance of subgroups, Hispanic students are found to gain most from accountability, while blacks gain least. That is, accountability provides Hispanics an extra boost relative to white gains, but for black students the relative effect is negative.

In states with consequential accountability, the white-Hispanic difference in gains narrowed over the 10 years of state accountability, but the white-black differences in gains widened. This means that blacks still benefit from having accountability, but not as much as whites. And Hispanics benefit more than whites.

Accountability systems thus lead to overall improvements in student performance, but they do not uniformly meet the objectives of closing the achievement gaps. The well-known principle that it's generally not feasible to satisfy multiple objectives with a single policy instrument finds support here.

So what do the results tell us? Because NCLB called for each state to design its own system, and because most states keyed off of their existing systems, this analysis of the early impacts of state systems provides information about what can be expected with full implementation of NCLB.

The importance on focusing on improved academic outcomes cannot be overstated. Higher achievement leads to higher earnings of individuals and larger growth of the economy. To put the matter in context, if we could move the average achievement of students to what is today the 75th percentile, we would realize a boost in

future productivity and earnings that could fund the entire amount spent on K–12 public education in the United States just on that gain. Policies such as accountability can contribute meaningfully to such a result, and NCLB is doing that.

The most notable result from our analysis is that accountability is important for students in the United States. Across a wide range of designs, they have a positive impact on achievement. But that impact relies on attaching consequences to performance. So NCLB's use of consequences is supported by this analysis and suggests that other incentive mechanisms might be appropriate to try to further accelerate student gains.

The varying effect by student subgroups raises important policy questions. All students are better off with accountability than without it. But in relative terms, when the effect of the pre-existing achievement gaps and accountability are taken together, accountability seems to mitigate, but not reverse, a widening of the achievement gap. Thus there's no one answer that will lead to all the improvements that we desire. Additional policies are needed to realize the multiple objectives.

Finally, while we have not dwelled on it, the current state systems are not particularly strong. They lead to achievement gains, regardless, on the order of two-tenths of a standard deviation. If we get this effect size with such blunt instruments as we have today, it seems plausible to expect additional gains if the systems are refined.

The accountability premium, while not revolutionary, is notable when compared to alternative reforms that failed to yield such impacts on a broad or sustained basis. As accountability systems evolve, they are likely to have considerably stronger impacts if they can be moved toward more precise incentives for individual schools.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Raymond follows:]

Statement of Margaret E. Raymond, Executive Director, Center for Research on Education Outcomes, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, California

Abstract

The leading school reform policy in the United States revolves around strong accountability of schools with consequences for performance. The federal government's involvement through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 reinforces the prior movement of many states toward policies based on measured student achievement. Analysis of state achievement growth as measured by the National Assessment of Educational progress shows that accountability systems introduced during the 1990s had a clear positive impact on student achievement. This single policy instrument did not, however, also lead to any narrowing in the black-white achievement gap (though it did narrow the Hispanic-white achievement gap). An additional issue surrounding stronger accountability has been a concern about unintended consequences related to such things as higher exclusion rates from testing, increased drop-out rates, and the like. This analysis of special education placement rates, a frequently identified area of concern, does not show any responsiveness to the introduction of accountability systems.

Introduction

The cornerstone of Federal educational policy has been expansion of school accountability based on measured student test performance. The policy has been controversial for a variety of reasons, leading to assertions that it has distorted schools in undesirable ways, that is has led to gaming and unintended consequences, and that it has not even accomplished its objectives of improving student achievement.

The research completed with my co-author Eric Hanushek, provides evidence on the expected effects of NCLB not only on student performance but also on other potential consequences. Even though accountability policies are relatively new in public education, their controversial nature has stimulated an accumulating body of systematic evidence on their effects. The work covered here is consistent with earlier studies.

The findings show that introducing accountability systems into a state tends to lead to larger achievement growth than would have occurred without accountability. The analysis, however, indicates that just reporting results has minimal impact on student performance and that the force of accountability comes from attaching consequences to school performance. This finding supports the contested provisions of NCLB that impose sanctions on failing schools.

This testimony presents a brief description of the analytic approach, followed by a summary of the findings. A copy of the full paper, Does School Accountability Lead to Improved Student Performance?, has been submitted to the record.

Analytic Approach

NCLB builds on the existing state accountability policies, which were adopted individually over a period of years. States differed by whether they adopted a "report card" system, which merely publicized the performance results, and "consequence" states that designed rewards and sanctions into their policies. The pattern of adoption makes it possible to take snapshots of student achievement across states at different points in time and observe how the implementation of accountability policies affects the performance of student cohorts. Our approach uses information about state differences in mathematics and reading performance as identified by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NAEP offers a consistent yardstick nationwide of how much students are learning, something that individual state achievement tests do not provide. Because NAEP tests 4th and 8th graders quadrennially, the 4th graders in one test administration become the 8th graders in the next. So the differences in scores between the 4th and 8th grade tests track gains for a cohort in each state. NAEP has been around long enough that we have two cohorts to study for each Math and Reading.

To isolate the effects of accountability, we estimated statistical models that allowed for other possible influences on student achievement. We included explicit measures for major categories of time varying inputs: parental education, school spending, and racial exposure in the schools. We controlled for any other state policies that lead to trends up or down in student performance in each state. In related analysis, special education placement rates are used to examine if accountability leads to an increase in exclusions which would suggest that schools are attempting to game the results. Finally, for a variety of reasons, the effects of accountability may not be uniform. To identify differences by race or ethnicity, we disaggregate the state results for whites, blacks, and Hispanics. This approach also permits a deeper examination of whether the policy creates other unintended consequences.

Research Findings

Complete details of the results are presented in the full paper; here, we focus on findings in three key areas: 1) the impact of accountability on student performance; 2) differences in impact of accountability across racial/ethnic groups, and 3) evidence of systematic use of exclusions to improve aggregate results. Each is discussed separately.

1. Students are better off with accountability.

We find consistent evidence that introduction of state accountability has a positive impact on student performance. Specifically, states that introduced consequential accountability systems early, tended to show more rapid gains in NAEP performance, holding other inputs and policies constant. Students in states employing systematic accountability systems policies gained an average of 3.6 NAEP points more than students in states that had no accountability. This equates to roughly a fifth of a standard distribution greater gains.

Interestingly, we find that just using report cards does not have a significant influence on performance. Students in states that operate report card accountability policies do show slightly positive gains, but they are not significantly different from zero. Thus, it seems important that policies include direct incentives rather than rely on indirect forces operating through just information.

Other interesting findings of the model concern endowments for students and for schools. Large differences in per pupil funding did not influence scores. The pattern of NAEP scores across states is not explained by spending. The impact of aggregate state spending is consistently small and statistically insignificant. We also find that

test taking rates affect performance, but that differences in these rates across states does not affect our conclusions on accountability.

2. Accountability helps all students, but helps some more than others.

Much of the explicit interest in accountability and the federal legislation, however, focuses on low achievers. The differences in both absolute achievement and in rates of change by race and ethnicity are well known. Given the generally lower achievement by minority groups, an implicit assumption is that accountability—as revealed through mandatory disaggregation of performance for racial and ethnic groups—will simultaneously close the large achievement racial/ethnic gaps along with improving all performance.

Since earlier research had assumed that accountability was equivalent across all students, we examined the impact of accountability policies by race. When we look specifically at the performance of subgroups, we find that Hispanic students gain most from accountability while blacks gain least. That is, accountability provides Hispanics an extra boost relative to whites, but for Black students, the relative effect is negative. To be clear, all students benefit some from the presence of a consequential accountability system, but some benefit more than others. What this means is that blacks still gain a little from having accountability with consequences but not as much as whites, and Hispanics gain more than whites.

A summary of the effects of accountability on student performance by race is presented in the table below.

Table 1

The Impact of Consequential Accountability on State Growth in NAEP Performance
(values are NAEP scale score points)

White students	3.590**	Equates to .22 standard deviations
Hispanic students	6.559*	Equates to .40 standard deviations
Black students	1.180*	Equates to .07 standard deviations

* significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Accountability systems thus lead to overall improvements in student performance on NAEP mathematics and reading tests, but they do not uniformly meet the objective of closing achievement gaps. In states with consequential accountability, the white–Hispanic difference in gains narrowed in the 1990's, but the white-black differences in gains widened. This finding appears to be a single demonstration of the well-known principal that satisfying multiple objectives with a single policy instrument is generally not feasible.

3. Accountability systems do not appear to prompt gaming of results through exclusions.

Since the widespread introduction of accountability, a strong interest has been whether more rigorous and consequential accountability also leads to other, less desirable impacts. For example, does accountability lead to increased cheating, more classifications of students as special education, or undesirable narrowing of teaching? To address a subset of these issues, we analyzed the rate of placement into special education across states but find no evidence of reaction in this dimension. Other researchers have found that the levels of special education placement differed before and after the adoption of accountability policies, and therefore conclude that accountability influenced the rates of placement. Our study of the issue, focused on the period 1995—2000, captured the period of largest activity in accountability adoption by states and also the historical trend of rising special education rates. The findings show that neither having an accountability system nor the number of years one is in place significantly effect the general trend in special education placement rates.

Interpreting the Results

The importance of improved academic outcomes cannot be overstated. Higher achievement, as measured by the tests commonly used for accountability has been shown to have large impacts on the earnings of individuals and on the growth of the economy. To put the matter in context, if we could move the average achievement of students to what is today the 75th percentile, we would realize a boost in future productivity and earnings that would equal the total amount spent on K–12

public education in the United States. In essence, we could completely fund American public primary and secondary education from the growth it would stimulate. Policies such as accountability can contribute meaningfully to such a result.

We must use caution in drawing implications from the results presented here for No Child Left Behind. Because NCLB calls for each state to design its own system and because most states have keyed off of their existing systems, the analysis here of the impacts of state systems enacted prior to NCLB provides information about what can be expected with full implementation.

The most meaningful result is that accountability is important for students in the United States (and in a variety of other countries that are pushing for better performance measurement). Despite the heterogeneity of designs (and the flaws they contain), we find that they have a positive impact on achievement.

However, the impact holds just for states attaching consequences to performance. States that simply provide better information through report cards without attaching consequences to performance do not get significantly larger impacts over no accountability. Thus, the NCLB move toward adding consequences to accountability systems is supported by looking at the historic introduction of consequential accountability systems. These findings suggest that other incentives mechanisms might be appropriate to try to further accelerate student gains.

We find that the overall positive effect of accountability varies by subgroup, with Hispanics benefiting most and blacks benefiting least. All students are better off with accountability than without it. But in relative terms, when the effects of the pre-existing achievement gap and accountability are taken together, accountability is seen to mitigate but not reverse a widening of the achievement gap. This is because whites gain more than blacks after accountability is introduced, so the racial achievement gap with blacks actually widens after the introduction of accountability.

These findings, taken together, underscore the fact that there is no one answer that will lead to all of the improvements that we desire. The finding of differential effects of accountability raises a clear policy dilemma. A prime reason for the U.S. federal government to require each state to develop a test based accountability system involved raising the achievement of all students, particularly those at the bottom. It has done that, but not at the same rate across groups. We conclude from this that additional policies are needed to deal with the multiple objectives. Again, as is frequently the case, a single policy cannot effectively work for two different objectives—raising overall student performance and providing more equal outcomes across groups.

The movement toward stronger accountability in schools has also suggested to many that there would be adverse consequences—more exclusions, higher dropout rates, a narrowing of the curriculum, and the like. While some existing research supports these presumptions, the work presented here (and supported by our earlier work) suggests that these concerns are overstated. Importantly, many of the adverse effects that involve "gaming" the system come from short run incentives that are unlikely to be strongly present over time. Our analysis of special education placement rates indicates clearly that accountability has not had an overall impact through this form of exclusions.

Finally, while we have not dwelled on it, the currently available accountability systems are not particularly strong. A majority of the systems concentrates on overall achievement levels (with highly variable passing scores across states). Such systems do not generally provide clear signals about the value-added of schools. Instead they combine a variety of effects including those resulting from family background differences and neighborhood effects. As such, they cannot provide truly clear and strong incentives. Yet, even in the face of the rather blunt incentives from existing systems, the introduction of an accountability systems leads to achievement improvements on the order of 0.2 standard deviations. If we are able to realize this magnitude of effect with such blunt instruments as exist today, it seems plausible that we could get additional gains if the systems are refined. The benefits of accountability, while not revolutionary, are notable when compared to the failure to find alternative reforms that yield such impacts on a broad and sustained basis. As accountability systems evolve, they are likely to have considerably stronger impacts if they can be moved in the direction of more precise incentives for individual schools.

[Attachments to Dr. Raymond's statement have been retained in the Committee's official files.]

Chairman BOEHNER. Thank you.

Dr. Smith.

STATEMENT OF DR. ERIC SMITH, SUPERINTENDENT, ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

Dr. SMITH. Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be before you this morning. I'm Eric Smith, superintendent of schools in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. I would like to say that the changes that I have witnessed in Anne Arundel County, and previously in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, are certainly profound and very, very positive.

I'll start with some of the major impacts of the No Child Left Behind legislation on how we look at education in America, that we actually view the business of education differently today as a result of the legislation than we did before. And as a result of us looking at education differently, we're coming up with different answers and different solutions that I do believe will end up in sustained progress in the years ahead.

I'll point out one is a different view of our responsibility as educators, what we are in fact tasked to do. A shift from when I started in the business 32 years ago, from a view of pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade really having a function of sorting and sifting children then and helping to select those that needed to move on to higher education, to a view today of universal achievement at a high level. That shift is significant in how we view education in America.

The second is one—a view of our own capacity as educators. I truly believe, even today, there are many educators that don't believe that all children have the capacity to exceed and excel. Certainly, historically we have not demonstrated that we hold that belief dear. In fact, because of No Child Left Behind and the requirement of the legislation, we as educators are looking at the business of teaching and learning differently in our understanding and increasing our confidence in our capacity to have achievement success with children from all backgrounds.

I'll share also that the culture of education is changing, and these are some of the substantive issues that are bringing about a different result. We're moving from viewing education and the business of teaching as primarily an art form, that—whereas—that has success on a random occurrence—schedule—to one of more strategic planning and teaching as a science. And this shift has resulted in very strong performance.

I'd—result—I'll share with you this year's results from my current district. I cite two areas: one, third-grade reading. We made a 15-point increase in academic—in proficient or advanced level performance to 78 percent of our children proficient or above. For African-American children, it was a 16-point increase from—to 61 percent proficient or above. Hispanic/Latino, an 18-point gain to 61 percent proficient or advanced. At the cost of No Child, for white children, a 13-point gain to 83 percent proficient or advanced. And there was no subgroup that fell behind.

Let's skip then to fifth-grade mathematics. I want to share with you that we showed a smaller increase but nevertheless—excuse me, we showed a significant increase of 12 percent gain across the board to 76 percent of our children proficient or advanced. Again,

gains for African-Americans of 17 percent; Hispanic/Latino, 22 percent; and white students, of 10 percentage points. And again, no subgroup failed to make progress under the No Child Left Behind legislation.

There are key issues that I think are fundamental. One is the issue of belief. The belief system that is embodied in the No Child Left Behind legislation is critical, in my view, to this nation's future. It is the key issue holding firm to the fact that children can learn and learn to the high level. The question is, learn what and at what level they will learn and achieve, is the question.

The second is defining the work. What work do we expect our teachers to do every day in a classroom? One of the things we've learned from urban centers and other school districts across the country is that with lack of clarity as to what teaching and knowledge is to be imparted, we will not succeed. So the question for the nation—we look at NAEP results and others—are we moving our children to a competitive position as a result of this effort around No Child Left Behind? Again, are we asking our teachers to do the right work? I think it's becoming increasingly clear that our teachers have the capacity to deliver when they know what the work is that's to be done.

The third critical issue in school districts and in application is one of time. Time is a critical piece, how you manage time, allowing teachers the time to cover the material that needs to be covered.

Fourth area is the tools, and it's probably one of the biggest struggles that we have. How do we bring the right tools to the classroom so teachers can be successful? Our inability to get to good, clean, non-vendor-produced research around products—reading materials, math materials—that help our teachers succeed is a critical area that requires further work and further assistance.

And finally, allowing our classrooms and our schools to have good, clean data, so that we can make decisions in a timely fashion.

The final point—I can see the red light—the final point that I will share is, probably the most intriguing issue is around special education. I think that there are going to be strategies in the coming months and years that will help us to redefine the issue of special education and allow us to bring success to children that have historically been under-served, and see the same kind of gains with the special education population that we are seeing with other subgroups under No Child Left Behind.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Smith follows:]

Statement of Dr. Eric J. Smith, Superintendent, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Annapolis, Maryland

The recent renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, is vital to the long term educational, economic, and social health of our nation. Its' mandate that schools must assess student performance yearly, share these data about disaggregated student groups, and provide consequences for schools failing to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress, has highlighted the issue that I have focused on as the Superintendent of four different school districts—that each child's education is important. This law has fundamentally transformed the debate about public education in this country by changing the discussion from one about the lack of student achievement and issues beyond the control of schools and school systems to one about using research-proven strategies to ensure that each child can read, compute, and write on grade level. The meaningful dialogue that has been generated could not have come at a more important time

for our country. The changing demographics in our country have led to a more diverse student population; for example, students in my district speak over 60 different languages. With such diversity, it is important to prepare all children, recent immigrants and native born alike, to high standards so that they may fully participate in our society. Thankfully, in some schools we are making a difference, educating all students to high levels. This should not occur just in shining new suburban schools sitting on a hill, but in every school across our nation, and that is our singular goal in Anne Arundel County—creating the opportunities for an excellent education for all 75,000 students in our district. If you believe as I do that the quality of education a child receives impacts their entire life, then the accountability measures of the No Child Left Behind Act are an important component of the effort to reinvent American public education. Accountability, in conjunction with other factors such as clarity about what should be taught; providing teachers and students with the time to teach and learn; using resources efficiently and effectively to maximize their power, and providing teachers with professional development that enables them to grow as professionals, can lead to sustained growth for all students.

Clarity about what to teach

Anne Arundel County Public Schools has just received the results of its mandated state assessment in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. These results demonstrate the importance of accountability in my district. We knew that for the last year school, 2002–2003, 63.8% of all third graders were proficient and advanced in reading. Some might think it is great that nearly two-thirds of the district's third graders were proficient in reading, but it highlighted for everyone that more than one-third of our third graders were basic in reading. I refuse to accept that some students can learn at high levels and that some students can't. This is something that we were able to focus on and improve. For the 2003–2004 school year, 78.5% of third graders were proficient/advanced.

How were we able to accomplish this improvement? We were able to clarify what was to be taught. This clarity began with the state developing a curriculum that was aligned with the state mandated assessment. However, Anne Arundel County went further. We adopted the tenets of the state curriculum and constructed curriculum guides and pacing guides that provided teachers for the first time clear direction about what to teach and when they should be teaching it. These guides have reduced the need to spend teacher instructional time deciding what to teach. Our teachers can now spend more time deciding how to best engage students with the curriculum.

Another factor of clarity was the importance of providing teachers with a research based curriculum to teach reading and a structured math curriculum that would ensure that all students were given a solid foundation from which they could successfully participate in higher level courses. The use of both a published reading and math series has shown marked results for our students, with double-digit improvement in students' performance on statewide assessment. We have also increased the number of students taking and completing algebra I (a high school level course) in middle school to 21% of all 8th grade students, a substantial increase over the previous year.

Providing teachers and students with the time to teach and learn

An important step was the restructuring of the way our teachers and students spend their school day. In our elementary schools, we asked teachers to spend double the amount of time they previously spent on reading instruction. This was done to ensure that students were reading on grade level, but it also will assist our special education population because research shows that many of the students identified as learning disabled are students that were not properly taught how to read. In our secondary schools, we established a block schedule of four 90-minute classes per day on a rotating A/B day schedule. This schedule allows students at all achievement levels the flexibility to change their schedule to meet their individual needs. For example, a student who wants to participate in Advanced Placement chemistry and band now has a schedule that permits such action, while a student who needs additional support can also have an Advanced Placement seminar or other support class that will provide them with additional time to grasp key concepts covered in their regular class.

Using resources efficiently and effectively

In this age of heightened accountability, it is imperative that public schools demonstrate to the public at large that we are utilizing the resources that we are provided as efficiently and effectively as possible. While I recognize that there have been additional funds allocated as a result of the No Child Left Behind legislation, I believe that more resources used effectively will ensure that this landmark legisla-

tion has the intended impact in all school districts. In Anne Arundel County Public Schools, we use a management system called the Project Management Oversight Committee. This committee acts as a governing body to establish strategies, monitor progress, and resolve issues that would prevent cross-departmental cooperation. In this way, our system continually examines its practices, how it is spending its resources, and most importantly, the return on this investment.

One example of an initiative that went through this PMOC process is the building of a data warehouse. In Anne Arundel County, we have had to find a new vehicle for capturing, recording, and analyzing student achievement data. This will require the district to spend financial resources to fulfill this mandate, and yet these funds could also be used elsewhere. In this case, we recognize the impact that this new data collection and analysis system will have on classroom teachers and students, and we feel that the expense is justified, but again additional financial resources would be helpful.

Teacher professional development

The quality of the teachers in Anne Arundel County is second to none. I am awed by their ability, and the recent results of our state mandated assessments point to their knowledge, competence, and willingness to work with our students to increase student achievement. I feel that it is important to provide teachers with meaningful and ongoing professional development that will allow them to work with their peers and increase their content and teaching knowledge. We have instituted mentoring programs for beginning teachers and provide all teachers with a rich assortment of activities that seek to increase their effectiveness in the classrooms of Anne Arundel County.

Conclusion

The No Child Left Behind Act has transformed the debate about public education in America from blaming societal issues outside of schools' control to a focus on what we do control—our ability to teach every child to rigorous standards. This may be its central legacy. However the law is only the beginning. It requires a new level of accountability, but it does not provide all the answers or funds for what ails public education. I see it as a component of the plan that I have used in my tenure as Superintendent of Schools of Anne Arundel County—a plan that is beginning to demonstrate that all students can learn and achieve at high levels. I initially proved this plan when I was Superintendent of Schools in Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Schools. I focused on the achievement disparity between African American children and their peers and was able to reduce the "gap" as evidenced by the results of the Trial Urban National Assessment of Educational Performance. The improvements in all students' performances, but especially African American students, demonstrated to me that accountability is not the end result of public education reform. It is merely an integral component of a well-crafted comprehensive strategy for educating all students to high levels that requires clarity about what is taught, time to teach and learn, efficient and effective utilization of resources, and meaningful professional development for teachers. Given these components and accountability No Child Left Behind may accomplish what the name implies—that schools will indeed Leave No Child Left Behind.

Chairman BOEHNER. Thank you.

Mr. Vallas? Nice to see you. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF PAUL VALLAS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. VALLAS. Nice to see you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you—sorry about that. How's that? Thank you.

Like any broad and sweeping reform of its nature, the No Child Left Behind Act has certainly drawn a great deal of attention recently. Passionate advocates for and against the act have filled the airwaves, the newspapers, and sometimes their own backyards with rhetoric espousing its virtues and deriding its failures. While there is certainly room for debate on the pros and cons of the act, there can be little doubt—little debate about this fact: There is simply no time to waste when it comes to setting high expectations for

our children, providing the needed resources for children to meet these expectations, and holding adults accountable for achieving these expectations.

As head of America's sixth-largest school district, it's my belief that No Child Left Behind lays the groundwork for accomplishing the objectives. And we've made every effort to accomplish its mandates.

The chief objective of the act is closing the achievement gap between majority groups and minority groups. The greatest tool of No Child Left Behind to achieve this objective, and I suspect the greatest object of consternation among many of my colleagues, is the disaggregation of test scores by subgroup. For the first time, we're able to shine a spotlight on groups that have been historically under-served. With this recognition comes our obligation to correct this historic imbalance and to structure the act so that it provides an opportunity to do so.

Let me point out that 50 years after Brown versus Board of Education, at least over the last 20 years, the achievement gap is widening, and indeed, we've moved from segregated schools 50 years ago to entirely segregated school districts 50 years later.

The school district of Philadelphia has aggressively implemented all four phases of No Child Left Behind over the past 2 years. Those four phases are expanding comprehensive school choice options; providing intensive supplemental education services for the lowest-performing schools, for students who in effect don't have options to go anywhere else; implementing a rigorous corrective action plan for schools not making adequate yearly progress; and finally, aggressively recruiting highly qualified teachers.

The handouts that I provided provide you with a list of our initiatives in detail under each of those four categories, but let me just summarize a few of them.

Under expanding comprehensive school choice, you'll note that the district has 176 out of 263 schools identified as low performing schools, with over 45,000 children choosing to enroll this year in schools outside their neighborhood schools. Now the district has not only implemented the choice provisions mandated under No Child Left Behind, but we've expanded our choice provisions by creating charters and by magnetizing our neighborhood schools by putting exemplary programs, like International Baccalaureate programs, math, science, and technology academy programs—exemplary programs in neighborhood schools—and by breaking our large high schools, behemoth high schools into small neighborhood schools forming a neighborhood cluster, so you're creating school choice within individual neighborhoods.

Under the provision calling for intensive supplemental education services in low performing schools, the district has targeted assistance to over 40,000 K through 9 students performing below grade level and over 60,000 summer school children who are under-performing.

Now what we've done is we've created our own individualized unit, educational unit, qualifying for SES, Supplemental Educational Service, designation status, so the district, working through contract providers, can provide supplemental educational services in a very cost effective way. And I think our after-school

extended-day program costs us about $300 per student as opposed to $1200 to $1800 that many of the private providers independently are providing. Plus allowing us to serve all the children who are not performing at grade level, or at least to make those services available. Again, I have a handout that details that issue.

Third, under implementing corrective action plans in all of our schools, the district has developed mandatory rigorous and uniform K–12 standard-based instruction. Delivery models—we've really established an instructional, a managed instructional model that includes standardized curriculum, standardized intervention procedures, standardized professional development, an additional 100 hours of professional development for teachers, and has increased the amount of instructional time on task for children who are under-performing, so that they can close the gap by basically being provided with additional instructional time based in a quality classroom environment.

Finally, the district has wholeheartedly embraced the provision requiring aggressive recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers by doing alternative teacher certification, Teach America, Troops for Teachers, and by allowing retirees who reach retirement age to come back on contract and to continue to teach while collecting their—while being able collect their full pension benefits.

Again, the school district has moved aggressively to implement the acts. Obviously there are issues that need to be addressed: the full funding of special education, the full funding of the mandates. You know, the district certainly can use additional money so that we can invest in the type of curriculum instructional initiatives that truly make a difference. But the bottom line is, I think, our district has demonstrated that we can move forward with the additional resources that we've been provided, and that we can engage in the type of best practices that will, in effect, close the gap.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Vallas follows:]

Statement of Paul G. Vallas, Chief Executive Officer, School District of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Good morning. Thank you Chairman Boehner, Senior Democratic Member Miller, and other distinguished members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce for this opportunity to appear before you today. When Chairman Boehner asked me to testify here today on Philadelphia's implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, I was both honored and humbled to appear. And given the Committee's focus on raising student achievement in urban school districts, I was delighted to accept his offer.

Like any broad and sweeping reform of its nature, the No Child Left Behind Act has certainly drawn a great deal of attention recently. Passionate advocates both for and against the Act have filled the airwaves, the newspapers, and sometimes their own backyards with rhetoric espousing its virtues or deriding its failures. While there is certainly room for debate on the pros and cons of the Act, there can be little debate about this fact: there is simply no time to waste when it comes to setting high expectations for our children, providing the needed resources for children to meet these expectations, and holding adults accountable for achieving these expectations. As the head of America's sixth largest school district, it is my belief that the No Child Left Behind Act lays the groundwork for accomplishing these objectives, and I have made every effort to accomplish its mandates.

The chief objective of the Act is closing the achievement gap between majority groups and minority groups. The greatest tool that NCLB provides to achieve this objective—and, I suspect, the greatest object of consternation of some of my colleagues—is the disaggregation of test scores by subgroup. For the first time, we are able to shine a spotlight on groups that have been historically underserved. With this recognition comes our obligation to provide whatever resources we have to cor-

rect this historic imbalance, and the structure of the Act provides districts with the opportunity to do so.

The School District of Philadelphia has aggressively implemented all four phases of No Child Left Behind over the past two years. Those four phases are "Expanding Comprehensive School Choice Options," providing "Intensive Supplementary Education Services in Low Performing Schools," "Implementing a Rigorous Corrective Action Plan for Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress," and "Aggressively Recruiting Highly Qualified Teachers." The handout you have been given, entitled "School District of Philadelphia: Programming to Implement No Child Left Behind Legislation" details what we have accomplished under each of these phases, but I would like to draw your attention to a few highlights.

Under "Expanding Comprehensive School Choice Options," you will note that the District has 176 out of our 263 schools identified as low performing schools. With that, over 45,000 students chose to enroll this year in schools outside of their neighborhood schools. But the District went beyond the limits of "choice" as a decision to be made between your neighborhood school and a "higher performing school." In addition to meeting the choice mandates of No Child Left Behind, we have also formed innovative new school-by-school partnerships with universities, museums, private managers, and even companies like Microsoft to manage and assist our lowest performing schools. We have also seeded our schools with magnet programs, International Baccalaureate programs, honors classes, dual credit offerings, and advanced placement courses to provide real choice to our parents. The School District has enacted a 300% increase in the number of honors and advanced placement courses, because we believe that closing the "high achievement" gap is just as critical as closing the "remedial" gap for our children.

Under the provision calling for "Intensive Supplementary Education Services in Low Performing Schools," the District has targeted assistance for over 40,000 Grade 1–9 students performing below grade level in reading and mathematics through the implementation of a comprehensive extended day academic program in all district elementary, middle, and comprehensive high schools during the 2003–2004 school year. The District has also implemented a comprehensive mandatory six-week summer school academic program in reading and mathematics for over 58,000 Grade 3–10 students not meeting promotion requirements or performing below grade level. The District has contracted with Voyager, Princeton Review, and Kaplan to provide the curriculum and the professional development for these programs.

The second part of your handout deals specifically with Supplemental Education Services, and I feel it is important to draw your attention to one of the provisions of NCLB here and how the School District of Philadelphia implemented its requirements. As the briefing indicates, Pennsylvania has approved, and the School District of Philadelphia has contracted with, 20 providers of Supplemental Education Services. The District's Intermediate Unit (Pennsylvania's version of "Education Service Agencies" has also been approved as a provider, so services to low-achieving students through Voyager and Princeton Review can also receive funding under this provision. We fully support the provision that calls for parents to be able to choose between different providers for tutoring and support for their child, and I certainly support a free-market model that has these providers compete to provide the best services. But in order to serve the largest number of students with the limited amount of resources we had available, the District pursued the IU-provider model and contracted directly with private providers. Under this model, the District was able to serve 40,000 children for 160 hours of instruction at $300 per child.

Under "Implementing a Rigorous Corrective Action Plan for Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress," the District has developed a mandatory, rigorous, and uniform K–12 standards-based curriculum, instructional delivery models, instructional materials, and aligned professional development system for low-performing schools. We have also implemented a uniform district-wide assessment system to complement the results from our state assessment to provide yearly benchmarks for district and school accountability. As your handout indicates, we have provided a number of additional resources to provide support for our schools lagging behind in AYP. This includes changes in the management, structure, and organization of low performing schools that cannot demonstrate improved performance; 49 failing schools in Philadelphia were restructured with private and charter school management, 22 comprehensive high schools have implemented 9th grade academies designed to narrow the achievement gaps of students below grade level in reading and mathematics, and a number of failing middle schools have been converted into neighborhood K–8 magnet and high school programs.

Finally, the District has wholeheartedly embraced the provisions requiring the "Aggressive Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified Teachers." Under our Campaign for Human Capital, the District hired over 1200 new teachers this year

working with programs like Troops for Teachers, Teach for America, our retired teacher program, and aggressive recruitment and retention practices. Even in spite of a substantive class-size reduction in grades K–3, which necessitated the hiring of an additional 400 teachers, we met our hiring objectives and opened the school year with almost no teacher vacancies.

The School District of Philadelphia has chosen to aggressively implement the No Child Left Behind Act because its tenets are sound and its goals are clear: we must do all that we can to ensure that all of our children are reaching their full potential. There is certainly room for improvement, however. While no one should deny that meaningful increases in federal education funding have been achieved under No Child Left Behind (a 36% increase since 2001), providing more Title I resources, which can be used rather flexibly to support proven successful practices like reduced class size and after school assistance, should be a priority. Providing transportation resources for choice programs, which for Philadelphia has meant more than $7 million in additional costs, would be a welcome assistance. Moving closer to a 40% funding of special education versus the current 18% funding is critical as disaggregated data shows how woefully inadequate our special education resources are. And complementing a standards and accountability movement such as the No Child Left Behind Act with a desperately needed school construction assistance program would be a smart investment in districts like Philadelphia whose walls have sometimes fallen faster than our test scores in past years.

While we can't shortchange our children by failing to fund reforms, neither can we hold their futures hostage by waiting for a never-ending funding debate to resolve itself. The School District of Philadelphia has demonstrated that substantial education reform can be achieved by using existing resources to fund education priorities. In short, our philosophy is about sending all available dollars into the classroom. We will continue to use the tools provided us under the No Child Left Behind Act to accomplish this, and we will not allow excuses to get in the way of achievement. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comment here today, and I welcome any questions you may have.

[Attachments to Mr. Vallas' statement follow:]

SES Providers

No Child Left Behind guarantees that students from low income families who are attending low performing schools will have access to tutoring services paid for by the School District of Philadelphia. The Intermediate Unit's program was recently approved by the State as one of these supplemental providers.

	Number of Hours	Cost	Students Served
SES Providers (47 approved by state)	36-40 hours total	$1,815 per student	12,500
Extended Day (using state approved providers)	160 hours	$300 per student	Upwards of 40,000

- The District, as required by law, notified parents that they could choose to use the services of an SES provider by letter on October 24. The letter included a list of all the SES providers – as well as their phone numbers – that had submitted their paperwork to the District.
- This letter followed up and reinforced an aggressive advertising program launched by the SES providers themselves back in August.
- The SES advertising has been ongoing from August until today.
- **17,000 students improved their performance between the beginning of last year and the beginning of this year so that they have moved out of the bottom quartile, as measured by the Terra Nova.** However, these students are still encouraged to take advantage of the District's Extended Day program.
- Extended Day is being modified from last year to include an hour of instruction as well as an hour of enrichment activities Monday through Thursday. The curriculum for instruction aligns with state standards and directly supports the new standardized curriculum being taught in all classrooms throughout the District. The second hour, provided in conjunction with community based organizations, is optional.
- There are 30,500 3rd through 8th graders in the District that can take advantage of the Extended Day program. In fact, the first hour of Extended Day is mandatory for students in grades 3, 8 or 11 who are scoring in the bottom quartile, as measured by the Terra Nova.
- The objective of the District's Extended Day program is to provide high quality supplemental educational services to all the District's children.
- To ensure that parents know about that they have this choice, the School District is sending letters home with students in 192 schools. Pursuant to federal law, low income families at the 192 schools qualify for supplemental services.
- State approved providers have partnered with the District in order to provide the high quality Extended Day program. The providers include Voyager, Princeton Review and Kaplan.
- Extended Day – which began October 17 for grades 3-8 and will begin on December 2 for grades 1, 2 and 9 – is able to provide more hours of instruction and enrichment to more students than supplemental service providers can because they cost significantly less. For example, the average cost of Extended Day is about $300 per student for the 20 week program (up to 160 hours), while the law authorizes comparable supplemental services for $1,815 per student.
- While the District supports the spirit and intent of the federal *No Child Left Behind* law, it intends to enforce academic and fiscal accountability. This will ensure that as many children as possible can have access to services.
- Educational choice for parents and students is actually reduced when private companies are allowed to make unreasonable profits at the expense of students. Fewer students can be served and the quality of the program invariably diminishes.

School District of Philadelphia
Programming to Implement No Child Left Behind Legislation

1. Expanding Comprehensive School Choice Options

Expand the opportunities for students attending the 176 identified low performing schools (total number of district schools is 263) to transfer to higher performing schools…

- Over 45,000 students choose to enroll in schools outside of their neighborhood schools.
  - Sent 2003-2004 School Choice notifications to families of 127,499 students via mail; as well as posted information on the district web site, press releases, and public notices to the media.
  - Over 3,000 students will transfer from the district's lowest performing, highest poverty schools for the 2003-2004 school year.
  - Over 1,000 students transferred as part of a Regional Program for School Choice from the 10 lowest performing/highest poverty elementary schools during the 2002-2003 school year.
  - Over 11,000 students participate in the district's voluntary transfer program from 132 racially isolated low performing schools
  - Over 11,000 students are enrolled in district magnet programs in 13 high performing middle and high schools (*over the next five years a significant number of magnet programs will be introduced with as many as 15 added during the 2003-2004 school year*).

- ➢ Over 19,000 students are enrolled in 46 charter schools (*four new charter schools have been approved for 2003-2004, and an additional three new charters will open in 2004-2005*).

- Over 20,000 students are enrolled in the 70 identified new partnership schools (45 privately managed, 21 restructured by the district, and 4 new district charters) as part of the school reform process (*over the next five years the number of partnership schools will continue to increase, with 10 additional schools added in 2003-2004*).
- Within the next five years, 11 new magnet high schools will be constructed (*one in each academic region*); 14 large middle schools will be converted to small neighborhood magnet high schools (*during 2003-2004, 6 middle schools will begin conversions*).
  - ➢ Formed partnerships with universities (Drexel, Eastern, Holy Family, St. Joseph's, and Temple Medical School) to develop new management structures for low performing high schools.
  - ➢ Formed partnerships with private and public institutions to enroll high school juniors and seniors in high performing college preparatory and school-to-career programs.
- Within the next five years, 30 low performing smaller middle schools will be converted into neighborhood K-8 schools with open enrollment for students living in that region.

2. Intensive Supplementary Education Services in Low Performing Schools

Expand the opportunities for students attending low performing schools to receive intensified supplementary education services to significantly improve academic achievement…

- Implemented aggressively a school readiness campaign (Healthy Kids, Healthy Minds) for screening and health care support services for students prior to enrolling in the district's full-day Kindergarten program, and at appropriate grade levels in compliance with Commonwealth of Pennsylvania mandates *(during 2002-2003, 75% of students screened for vision, 2003-2004 projection: 95%; during 2002-2003, 12% of students screened for dental, 2003-2004 projection: 75%).*
- Targeted physical and behavioral health care support and case management services for elementary school students who are performing below grade level, i.e., establishment/verification of insurance coverage, medical and dental care homes, behavioral health linkages as needed, and timely resolution of identified health problems *(during 2002-2003, 72 % of students had documented insurance, 2003-2004 projection: 95%).*
- Implemented a rigorous district-wide promotion/graduation policy as a means of identifying and supporting students performing below grade level.
- Targeted assistance for approximately 30,000 Grade 3-9 students performing below grade level in reading and mathematics though the implementation of a comprehensive extended school day academic program in all district elementary, middle, and comprehensive high schools during the 2002-2003 school year.
- Contracting with PDE approved providers to administer extended school day and summer programs including Voyager, Princeton Review and Kaplan Learning, 21 community based organizations in 11 Beacon School sites (*serving over 1,300 students with 8 new sites in development*), and 17 private providers (*offering tutoring services to 4,538 students*).
- Implementing a comprehensive mandatory six-week summer school academic program in reading and mathematics for over 58,000 Grade 3-10 students not meeting promotion requirements or performing below grade level (*12,000 students participated in 2002*).
  - ➢ Providing summer programs for over 5,000 English Language Learners and Special Education students.

3. Implementing a Rigorous Corrective Action Plan for Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress

Develop and implement a rigorous accountability system that ensures academic improvement and sustained growth through a system of evaluating, monitoring, and providing assistance to low performing schools…

- Developed a mandatory, rigorous, and uniform K-12 standards-based curriculum, instructional delivery models, instructional materials, and aligned professional development system for low performing schools.
- Implemented a uniform district-wide assessment system to complement the results from the state assessment system (Grades 3, 5, 8, 11 in reading, writing, and mathematics) and provide yearly benchmarks for district and school accountability.
  - ➢ Over 128,000 Grade 3-10 students were assessed using the TerraNova in reading, mathematics, and science in the fall 2002 to set district, school, and individual student baselines for academic performance.
  - ➢ Over 157,000 Grade 1-10 students were assessed using the TerraNova in reading, mathematics, and science in the spring 2003 to measure district, school, and individual student progress for academic performance from the fall 2002 baseline.
  - ➢ Over 58,000 Grade K-3 students were assessed quarterly using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills to measure and track individual student progress in fluency, phonics, and phonemic awareness.
  - ➢ Over 58,000 Grade K-3 students were assessed quarterly using the Diagnostic Reading Assessment to measure and track individual student progress using running records.
- Developed a rigorous district-wide school performance index to complement the state NCLB Accountability Plan by tracking school progress using a variety of indicators including the PSSA, the TerraNova, student mobility (the district average is 35% annually for each school), student, attendance, teacher attendance, persistence rates (the percentage of students who do not drop out of school before graduation), and promotion and graduation rates.
- Implemented a rigorous school quality review process to evaluate the performance of the district's 85 identified lowest performing schools.
- Wrote corrective action plans with mandated timelines and implementation strategies for the district's 85 identified lowest performing schools (*this includes privatized, charter, and district restructured school models*).
- Designed and implemented a uniform process for school improvement planning for the 2002-2003 school year for all the district's 263 schools, based on the findings from the school quality review process.
- Developed procedures for changes in the management, structure, and organization of low performing schools that cannot demonstrate improved performance.

- ➢ Pre qualified up to 5 new private companies to manage additional low performing district schools.
- Restructured 49 failing schools by implementing proven privatized and charter school models (*over the next five years the number of privatized and charter schools will continue to increase, with 14 additional schools added in 2003-2004*).
- Restructuring failing middle schools by converting schools into neighborhood magnet K-8 and high school programs (*during 2003-2004, 3 middle schools begin conversions*).
- Restructuring failing high schools by implementing a rigorous reform movement that includes converting schools that do not demonstrate improved performance into neighborhood magnet programs (*during 2003-2004, 22 comprehensive high schools will implement 9th grade academies designed to narrow the achievement gaps of students below grade level in reading and mathematics).*
- Facilitated the implementation of the Accountability Review Council in cooperation with the School Reform Commission to meet the requirements of the district reform partnership agreement between the city and state governments (*the ARC will certify the district's reform results and produce annual report cards measuring the progress of reform*).

4. Aggressive Recruitment of Highly Qualified Teachers

Institute the Campaign for Human Capital, a blueprint for the recruitment, retention, and renewal of a highly qualified teaching staff…

- Utilizing alternative recruitment strategies including Teach America and Troops to Teachers (*resulting in the hiring of 145 new qualified teachers*).
- Implementing an aggressive strategy to recruit qualified mathematics and science teachers through partnerships with local universities such as Drexel University and the Transition to Teaching Program.
- Expanding the Reduced Class Size model from K-2 to K-3 classrooms to increase the district's pool of highly qualified elementary school teachers.
- Preparing emergency certified teachers for the Praxis examination by offering classes at Holy Family, Temple, or using an on-line Praxis preparation course.
- Expanding the district's pool of highly qualified elementary school teachers by assigning former literacy interns who have become certified to serve as stand alone teachers (*it is anticipated that 250 new teachers will come from this pool*).
- Developing a competency profile made up of characteristics commonly possessed by the highest quality teachers as found by a variety of research methods, including surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.
- Implementing an aggressive marketing campaign to target segmented groups of high need teacher candidates (*African-Americans, males, critical needs subject area candidates*).
- Implementing a training program to build the capacity of the recruitment team by exposing them best practices.
- Designing "Leadership for Retention and Renewal" professional development program — that will equip them with the skills and strategies necessary to support all teachers (*rookie, novice and veteran*) in their schools.
- Implementing a tuition reimbursement program for teachers beginning their second year in the district to continue professional development, thus providing an incentive for ongoing professional growth.
- Implementing a comprehensive mandated pre-service training program all new teachers must attend to ensure their preparedness for entering our classrooms.
- Establishing the position of New Teacher Coach to support newly hired at teachers at a 10:1 ratio.
- Expanding the district's current incentive programs to attract highly qualified teachers to include a Teacher Ambassador Program called "Every Teacher, an Ambassador" which will provide a monetary incentive for identifying certified teachers and teachers in hard to staff positions.
- Increasing the number of student teachers by offering a series of incentives to the student teacher as well as to the cooperating teacher.
- Creating for the 2003-2004 recruitment season a "Roll Out the Red Carpet Campaign" strategy that will attract college juniors and seniors from our regional colleges and universities to learn about the benefits of teaching in our schools and living in Philadelphia.
- Testing of all instructional paraprofessionals has begun and will continue until all paraprofessionals meet the requirements of the statute.

Chairman BOEHNER. Thank you.
Dr. Newsome.

STATEMENT OF DR. MARCUS J. NEWSOME, SUPERINTENDENT, NEWPORT NEWS COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA

Dr. NEWSOME. Good morning. Good morning. My name is Marcus Newsome, superintendent of Newport News public schools. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this morning regarding the achievement gap in public education.

This is a real problem that must be solved if the dream of equal opportunity is to become a reality for all children in America. Our school division has 130—I'm sorry, 33,000 students, which is considered a moderately sized urban school district. Forty-five percent of our students qualify for free or reduced federally subsidized meals.

I was very pleased that the successes of our school division: four of our five high schools were recently identified as among the best high schools in America based on its performance on AP and International Baccalaureate programs, again, identified by Newsweek magazine. Eleven of our schools have been identified as Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence by the Federal Government, and this is the largest number of schools of any school system in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

For the seventh consecutive year, our school system has been selected by School-Match for What Parents Want Award, and the School-Match is a national recognized service that helps corporations and employees and families locate schools that match the needs of their children.

And we have a program called Pair Schools Model, where schools that have made the leap from good to great are paired with other schools that have not yet made that leap. And this model is receiving national recognition. In fact, we have 17 schools from Bristol, England, that have adopted this model.

We have challenges, just as other school districts around the country. This year is the first year that Virginia has required exit exams for students to receive a high school diploma. When I came to the school district in August of 2003, 30 percent of all seniors were in danger of not getting a diploma because they had not yet passed all six exit exams. But with the commitment of the staff and a focused process, we developed individualized academic plans for every single senior. And we are proud to say that as of last Friday, we reduced that number from 30 percent of our seniors who were in danger of not graduating to 1 percent. And so when we have a focused effort and the appropriate support, then we can accomplish the goal.

In 1999, only one school met full accreditation by the Virginia Standards of Excellence—of Learning, I'm sorry. And in 2003, we have 26 schools. And unofficially, all high schools will be fully accredited when the results come out this school year.

We often, as school systems, talk about our accomplishments, but unfortunately too many of our students are not being successful. Nationwide on the SAT exam, on the verbal portion of the exam, there's a 95 percent gap between white students and black students. And in the mathematics portion of the exam, there's a 108-point gap between white students and black students.

According to the Educational Trust, the average African-American student in the twelfth grade is reading on an eighth-grade level. Only 7 percent of the students nationwide are enrolled in advanced placement courses and—statistics—are black students. The graduation gap is real also. In Virginia, the graduation rate is 64 percent for black students, 77 percent for white students; and yeah, it's still too low.

No Child Left Behind has focused our efforts on improving the quality of education for every student and accountability. And I think accountability is what we must focus on. This year we had an independent auditor to come in, Phi Delta Kappa, to conduct a curriculum instructional audit of our school system. And while they found that we had people who were working hard, they have a formula called Years to Parity, and they said if we continued to do business as usual, our minority groups would never reach parity in all of our schools. But, again, we are encouraged by the success that we see now.

I would like to close by sharing the success of one program in our school system called An Achievable Dream Academy. It has the highest level of poverty in our school system. Ninety-eight percent of the students qualify for free or reduced federally subsidized meals. Ninety-eight percent of them are minority. Yet they have exceeded every standard. They have met full accreditation. They have met AYP. And they have done this because we have a community partnership.

Rod Paige visited the school last week and he deemed it as one of the models for America. The Mutual of America, which is a Fortune 500 company, identified it as the most outstanding partnership program in the country from more than 700 entries, because these students achieve. The businesses, the military, the city government, local universities support the students in this school. They go to school 2 hours a day longer than their counterparts, 6 days a week, year-round. And these businesses provide $2000 more per year per student and guarantee every child a college scholarship.

So I think the model is it needs to be a collaborative partnership, and in closing I would say, in the words of Jim Collins, who was the author of the best-selling book "From Good to Great," if we expect schools to be great, we should also expect government to be great. And businesses to be great. And churches. And most importantly, families.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Newsome follows:]

Statement of Dr. Marcus Newsome, Superintendent, Newport News County Public Schools, Newport News, Virginia

Introduction: Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about the achievement gap in public education. This is a real problem that must be solved if the dream of opportunity is to survive and flourish in America. I am Marcus Newsome, Superintendent of Newport News Public in Newport News, and I face many of the same challenges as my colleagues in larger school systems. NNPS is a moderate size urban school district that educates approximately 33,000 students, pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Fifty-five percent of the student population is African American, 35 percent is White, and four percent is Hispanic. Forty-five percent of the student population qualifies for free or reduced-price federal meals.

Overview of School District: Newport News is an award winning school district. We have 28 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, 5 high schools, 3 early childhood centers, and 2 alternative schools. Four of our five high schools were identified as among the best high schools in America by *Newsweek* Magazine as a result of the high percentage of students taking rigorous courses like Advancement Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB). The schools listed in the ranking have the strongest AP or IB programs in the country and are in the top four percent of all American high schools measured with the Challenge Index. Last month we administered over 3,000 AP examinations.

Eleven Newport News schools have been the recipient of National Blue Ribbon School award. Newport News has more Blue Ribbon schools that any other school district in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

For the seventh consecutive year Newport News Public Schools has been selected by *School-Match* for the 2004 "*What Parents Want Award*." School-Match is a nationwide service that helps corporate employee families locate schools that match the needs of their children.

Challenges: The challenges of urban education are profound, regardless of district size. Reforming and improving education is complex, with no simple answers. As you well know, the Achievement Gap is real. Results from the College Board indicate that on the verbal SAT, White students out perform Black students by 95 points. On the math SAT, the gap expands to 108 points.

The Opportunity Gap is also real. Only 4 percent of AP exams nationwide are taken by black students. Only 7 percent of students nationwide in AP Calculus and Statistics are Black. The Graduation Gap is also real. In Virginia, the graduation rate is 64 percent for Black students and 77 percent for White students. Both are too low.

Achievement gaps also exist between children of high-income and low-income families, between English-speaking and non-English speaking students, between males and females, and among many other categories.

I support the tenets of the No Child Left Behind Act. It speaks to equal opportunity for children and accountability for educators. It has been instrumental in helping school districts identify the many gaps that exist among student groups in America. It has helped focus attention on this very real problem and requires us to create solutions for closing the gaps.

However, NCLB most be fully funded. Among the great challenges for urban school districts is aging buildings. We need more flexibility with spending to provide adequate space to accommodate public school choice, and expanded opportunities for pre-school, all day kindergarten, and lower pupil-teacher ratios.

Accountability: We will not consider our schools successful until all of our students are achieving. NNPS is taking a systemic approach to closing the achievement gaps, one which is be based on a comprehensive curriculum and instruction audit performed by Phi Delta Kappa International at our request. This audit, which looked at every educational program, policy and process in our school district, identified a series of shortcomings that auditors say will prevent our schools from ever eliminating the achievement gaps. We reported these findings to the public and the media to assure external accountability.

The audit indicated that in Newport News, as in too many schools districts across the country, academic achievement can be predicted in large part by the income and education levels of a student's parents. The correlation is called "Socioeconomic Determinism" by Phi Delta Kappa. In essence, Socioeconomic Determinism is an indictment of the status quo. To paraphrase Albert Einstein, the definition of insanity is belief that one get different results by doing the same thing over and over.

Solutions: We are taking the wisdom of Albert Einstein to heart, and are evaluating programs to determine what works for our children. We believe that instructional programs, student effort and family involvement should be a better predictor of achievement than socioeconomic status. And we are determined to ensure that the next time we audit our schools, a child's grades will not be determined simply by looking at the bank account or educational levels of his parents.

How are we going to do this?

- First, we will continue to offer a quality preschool for students so that we "front-load" success rather than "remediate failure." A strong foundation is essential to later success.
- We will continue to fund programs such as AVID, a middle school study skills program proven to boost achievement levels of students whose parents have not graduated from college.
- We will continue our commitment to open enrollment in rigorous coursework. Newport News Public Schools has led the way in promoting achievement by low-income and minority students by eliminating

barriers that once kept many students from being able to take Advanced Placement and other rigorous courses.

Despite the success of these programs, our school division has not been successful in eliminating the significant gaps that exist in achievement levels among racial and socioeconomic student groups. To combat the "Socioeconomic Determinism" identified by this data and the audit, the school division is adopting a systemic approach for improvement that will:

- Develop a curriculum that will reduce the correlation between socioeconomic status and academic achievement. Lead Phi Delta Kappa auditor Dr. Larry Frase has shown that a strong curriculum can overcome socioeconomic factors. We are going to make that happen in Newport News.
- Boost enrollment in AP courses to continue raising the bar for effort and achievement
- Include algebra as part of the middle school core curriculum as a means of eliminating the "gate-keeping" that happens to high school students who have not taken algebra.
- Ensure that students master the basics, "reading, writing and arithmetic," by providing literacy and math teams for targeted schools.

Schools aren't the only player in this equation, however. We recognize that parents are the first teachers, and we plan to fully engage them in this systemic effort to close the achievement gap while increasing performance of all students. We must have strong parental and family involvement; students must learn to value learning and hard work; and parents and family members must be equipped to fully participate in the education of our young. We also plan to engage other aspects of the community. Businesses, faith-based organizations, civic groups, legislators and other all have a role to play.

Will this be easy? No. But by identifying and exposing the gaps in student achievement, we believe that these groups will be motivated to join forces in the effort to transform public education in the United States. It is an effort that I believe is essential to the health and prosperity of communities across the United States, and one that our communities will support. The following example shows that, with commitment, time and money, it can be done.

- **A Model for Success:** In Newport News we have a nationally recognized model for success. It is called An Achievable Dream Academy. The academy is a public school supported by private businesses. It has the highest poverty index in the city with 98 percent of the students qualifying for federally subsidized meals, and 98 percent of the students are African American. Yet this school has closed the achievement gap and exceeded all expectations. It has met the Virginia standards for "Full Accreditation" and it has also met the standards for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB.

  Last week Secretary of Education Rod Paige visited An Achievable Dream Academy and proclaimed it as a model for other schools across the nation. Last November, Mutual of America, a Fortune 500 Company recognized An Achievable Dream Academy as the most outstanding partnership in the nation, from more than 700 programs reviewed. The students at An Achievable Dream attend school 8 ½ hours per day, six days, a week and 220 days a year. Their partners include businesses, city government, the military, and universities. They support the academy by raising an additional $2,000 more per student, per year above the public school's funding. Every student who completes the program is awarded a college scholarship by An Achievable Dream Foundation.

In closing I would like to quote Jim Collins, author of the best selling book, From Good To Great. He says that we can not expect schools to be great unless we expect government to be great, and communities, businesses, churches, and families to be great as well. It takes all of us to close these achievement gaps.

Chairman BOEHNER. Thank you, Dr. Newsome, and thank all of our witnesses for your excellent testimony.

I've got so many questions I want to ask, I don't know where to begin. Let me ask the three school chiefs that are here to identify for me the biggest change that you've made over the last several years that have led to better test results, the biggest change you've made and the biggest challenge that you have in terms of what we can be helpful with you all.

Mr. VALLAS. I think the biggest change in that has brought about the strongest gains, the strongest improvement has been establishing a managed instructional system.

If you look at all the research, if you look at the districts that have shown great success—and the counselors in grade schools a number of years ago did a wonderful study of large urban districts like Charlotte-Mecklenberg and others who had great city schools

in New York that had wonderful success. And if you look at individual schools within larger districts that have had great success, there are some common characteristics. They have a very well managed instructional system. They have high academic standards. They have curriculum and instructional models that are aligned with those standards. What is done at every grade level is aligned with what's done at the next grade level. They provide intensive professional development on the curriculum instructional models. To close the gap, they increase the amount of instructional time on task, after school, extended day, summer school for children who are academically struggling as opposed to dummying down the curriculum in every grade level. They do things like class size reduction when they have the resources. But those commonalities exist in all school districts that have shown significant success.

So the problem is only until recently have districts begun to really focus on where they need to focus to improve instruction and that's the classroom.

For years, we did everything but managed instruction in the classroom. So a managed instructional system is I think absolutely critical to advancing academic performance.

Now the greatest challenge we face is parental involvement, because when you look at the gap—you may look at high performing, high poverty schools, but a lot of times when you look at the level of parental involvement in those high poverty schools, particularly these open enrollment magnet schools that seem to do very well, yet, they don't set minimum academic requirements for enrollment, you see parents immersed in their children's education.

So the greatest challenge that we face, and you're seeing it more and more, is the statistics that you see about children starting school in kindergarten, children in first grade, second grade, engaging in the type of bad behavior that you would normally expect—well, hopeful not normally expect, but you would not be surprised that many of the older children engaging in. There clearly is a parenting problem that needs to be addressed.

So the biggest challenge we face as a school district is coming up with the support programs to get parents more engaged and more involved and more supportive in their children's education.

Chairman BOEHNER. Dr. Newsome.

Dr. NEWSOME. I think the biggest change is the focus on strong curriculum, the alignment of that curriculum with the expected outcomes and assessments and the accountability that goes along with that.

I can't get past the comment that was just made, the concern about parent involvement. That is essential to the success of our schools. But because that's already been said, I will speak to another challenge and that's teacher quality. Once the children leave the home, come into our schools, we have a critical shortage across this nation with qualified applicants. And with the upcoming retirement of many of the baby boomers, we are even more concerned about the shortage.

The No Child Left Behind legislation has now established, certainly in many states, an even higher threshold for qualifications. To me, it's intriguing that we are now asking teachers to have this level of qualifications in terms of their licensure, but we aren't ask-

ing the college professors and those people who train the teachers to have that same level of accountability in terms of providing quality instruction for our students, and to make sure that we have quality training for these teachers.

Chairman BOEHNER. Dr. Smith.

Dr. SMITH. I'd just add, again, the key issue is clarity of the work, what do we expect our teachers to do. And for—we historically just have not done that well in our classrooms. We have viewed teaching as an art form where great people are allowed to work with kids and do marvelous things and on occasion it worked. But the clarity of what is expected, what does a third grader need to know to be a proficient reader, to understand and be competent in mathematics, to excel at an expectable level in high school classrooms?

What is the standard and how do we decipher that? And the challenge to do that is incredible, that historically what we give teachers, 22 year old teachers when they begin the job, a mound of documents from state departments that confuse the best of us and descriptions that are too brief to re-explain to the teachers the nature of the work. And it's that definition of the clarity of the work—and what the Nation needs to worry about is that as we work, as systems work to clarify what teachers do every day is that clarification at that level we expect as a nation.

Are we asking, in fact, enough? And my fear is that perhaps even the standards we have today are still too low, that we have to expect more of our kids even though we are having difficulties reaching these.

The critical point—biggest challenge I see, and I try to focus on the things that I think I have at least some vague degree of control over. I'm not going to make a big difference in the nature of the homes. I'm not going to make a big difference in the workforces coming to me. The issues that I'm really concerned about is our ability to access tools that are going to be productive for teachers.

There are too many be it textbooks or other strategies that are promoted that have absolutely no basis and fact in terms of helping children to excel, and weeding them out, sorting that our as superintendent of schools, is extraordinarily difficult. The inability for superintendents to tell their community the best way to teach mathematics and not have good research behind it is to me shameful, that we need to move to the point where we can explain that and have good strong research behind it.

Chairman BOEHNER. I thank all of you. Dr. Casserly, go right ahead. Sorry.

Dr. CASSERLY. I'd just like to reiterate what the superintendents have indicated. As far as we're concerned at the Council of the Great City Schools, they are right on target and one of the reasons they're getting the kinds of gains that they are getting.

This issue about clarity of purpose and alignment of the work and accountability for the work and managing the work rather than it being quite so haphazard and fractured is really more important than people have understood over the last few years.

Chairman BOEHNER. I found that out when I worked in an urban school district near me that doesn't have a uniform curriculum in their early and middle schools. That's just beyond my imagination.

You've got a high mobility rate amongst the students and, yet, they don't have a uniform curriculum from one building to the next at the same grade level. Now this is about educating our kids. I can't understand what people are thinking.

Dr. CASSERLY. Well, we did a study a couple of years ago that Mr. Vallas made reference to, a study called "Foundations for Success," where we took a look at throughout common factors amongst the faster improving urban school districts and then tried to contrast it against the practices of the slower moving districts.

And one of the things that was really common in addition to the factors that they have already articulated is what you have articulated, and that is they had a more common, cohesive, coherent and sometimes prescriptive reading and math program that didn't send every school off in a different direction. As we started to take a look at school districts like Washington, D.C. and St. Louis, both of whom have had our organization into study their instructional program to make recommendations for how it is they could improve, what we found in both of those cases and in other cases was a situation as you have indicated where every school was pretty much doing whatever they wanted to do, and the system was hoping for the best. And it was clear to us that the system itself couldn't hit its targets with everybody aiming in a different direction.

Mr. WU. Would the Chairman yield just for a moment?

Chairman BOEHNER. I'd be happy to.

Mr. WU. Mr. Chairman, I share your concern about maybe different classrooms doing different things, but I've heard a phrase a long time ago that in France, the Minister of Education on every given day knows from Paris what page of the textbook every child in France is on. Surely the Chairman is not suggesting that level of standardization for American schools.

Chairman BOEHNER. No, but I do think that having clarity—we've got state standards. So we know on a grade level what states are expecting to learn. Most districts have designed curriculums, most, that fit the standards. How it is taught, frankly, ought to be left to the ingenuity and the creativity of the teachers. How it's taught, how that information is passed on. I don't think we need to know what page every student is on, but when it's not clear, from a third grade level in one building to a third grade level in another building what's expected or what the—no semblance of curriculum between the two schools, and given the mobility rate amongst high poverty students, they don't have a chance.

Mr. VALLAS. You know, I was going to say in large urban districts where you have 35 percent mobility rates or in some schools where you have a 50 percent mobility rate, the lack of a standardized curriculum is an unmitigated disaster.

But, you know, there's not one single curriculum—make sure that the schools are all using a quality curriculum, or not one curriculum but a series of curriculum instructional models including your interventional curriculums, and make sure that those curriculum instructional models are aligned to the standards.

Again, there are a number of reading curriculums that are very effective. There are number of math curriculums that are very effective, yet, different schools using those different curriculum mod-

els are having great success. Where they're having great success it's not because of the specific model as much as it's because the model is aligned with the standards and the teachers are taught and trained on their curriculum instructional model.

We provided this year 100 hours of professional development on our curriculum instructional model. It did two things. First of all, it got everybody on the same page so to speak, and it improved the level of instruction, not only because it improved the quality of instruction on the part of the teachers. Because even if you had a teacher teaching out of their area of certification, if they have talent and they're smart and they're aggressive and they work hard, and you provide them with the superior curriculum instructional model and you provide them with 100 hours of intensive professional development on that model, you can take an ordinary teacher and turn them into a superior teacher.

We address this issue of the teacher deficiencies or the fact that we have so many teachers that are not certified. Well, equip that teacher for the classroom. When we send our troops into Afghanistan we equip them with high-tech machinery, high-tech training, state-of-the-art weaponry. Up until 10, 15 years ago, when we would send a new teacher into the classroom—I remember when I taught my first time, I got a science textbook. I think the last science event was Sputnik and I was not that old when I was teaching. It was not that long ago, it was the 1970's. No curriculum instructional models, no clear defined standards.

So I think there's no substitute for the managed instructional system. Our business is to teach in the classroom, to instruct, and if you don't manage your instruction in that classroom, you're not going to be successful.

Chairman BOEHNER. Mr. Miller.

Mr. MILLER. This is a battle this morning, but it started out as the question of whether you think teachers can be creative when teaching in the classroom. It would seem to me if children can learn to read at grade level and be proficient in second, third, and fourth grade, they will have additional time available to them for a lot of other activities that aren't taken up in remedial activities or catch-up activities or all the rest of that.

I'd like to just address a question here, and I think, Dr. Raymond, I'd like you to cover this, too. You talked about gains from accountability, and then you suggested that the way you could enhance this, the gains, you said the precise incentives to schools. I'm not quite sure what you mean by that, but let me ask the broader question, but maybe that's the place where you could enter the discussion here.

What is it we can do to enhance the chances that we can sustain these gains? Now, ideally I assume that if we did a good job in second grade, we're going to give the third grade teacher in Chicago or Philadelphia or Charlotte—we're going to give them a better chance of having success with that third grader, and that third grader is going to have a better chance of doing well as a fourth grade on a fourth grade exam. I don't know if it quite works at that continuum.

So what is it we can do to enhance this 12-year quest for increased proficiency for these children? And then, sir, what are the

impediments that come to mind to getting that kind of sustained continuous improvement. And Dr. Raymond, if you want to comment or start.

Dr. RAYMOND. I'll take the first crack at that and then pass it along to others to fill in with their experience.

My sense is that the incentives need to actually be evolved all the way to the school levels so that we actually tie rewards and sanctions to performance at the individual school level.

Mr. MILLER. An example of that would be what, if others can provide.

Dr. SMITH. If I could, you know, in my experience in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, this predates No Child Left Behind legislation. We did have a statewide performance pay program that would reward full schools if they met the state growth requirements in achievement. And I found that to be extremely successful. And it wasn't simply an issue of monetary reward, it was more an issue of recognition for accomplishment, that the work of teachers is being noted within a building. But I did find that the monetary reward was, pay for performance, was in my view at this point is a critical component if we're to achieve the mandate of No Child Left Behind, that it will be done with performance pay as a part of the package.

Mr. VALLAS. I was going to say if you want to sustain instruction, and the research will show you, not only in the Council on Great City Schools but research that has been done by others elsewhere is you have to come up with a curriculum instructional plan and you have stay with it. You have to stay with it not for 1 year but for multiple years. That's No. 1.

No. 2, all of your professional development has got to revolve around training the teachers to the curriculum instructional models that they are using in the classroom. We're not talking about—everyday math is not rote instructional math. Everyday math is one of the most creative, most innovative math models that are used. Some people think it's too difficult for the kids and too difficult for the teachers, but it simply goes beyond math basics. But you've got to have your curriculum and professional development constantly train your new teachers and your existing teachers to the curriculum instructional models that they use in the classroom.

And the third thing is you close the gap by increasing the amount of instructional time on task. If you have a quality curriculum instructional plan, if everybody is on the same wavelength, if the data is driving instruction, if you're making adjustments in your instruction—every 6 weeks in Philadelphia we make adjustments in instruction because we're evaluating how the children are performing every 6 weeks. Are they hitting the benchmarks? Who's falling behind? Who needs additional help? Who's moving ahead? Who needs additional enrichment?

But if you have the children in a quality instructional program, if they are being provided classroom instruction, if you increase the amount of instructional time on task for those children who are behind or those children who are caught in that so called academic abyss, so to speak, you can in fact close the gap. Those type of things sustained over an extended period of time will result in a consistent improvement in academic performance.

Dr. NEWSOME. I'd just like to add one thing to that, and that is the leadership component. We have to make sure that we have a consistent sustainability effort and leadership training, and that leadership training should start in the classroom and be consistent throughout the school district.

Another component of that leadership is the governance or the governance bodies. We have—they are frequently elected boards, school boards who change, and with the change of elected boards we also have the change in focus sometimes. So our national organizations and our state organizations that work with the governance issues need to be part of this process as we look at making sure that we are sustaining the success that we experience on the classroom level.

Mrs. BIGGER. [presiding] The gentleman yields back. I will recognize myself for 5 minutes, since I'm next in line.

I would really like to say how happy I am to see Mr. Vallas here. We really miss you in Illinois in the Chicago schools. You were always a role model I think when we were doing No Child Left Behind, and I know Chairman Boehner and Mr. Miller got really tired of hearing me say, "Well, this is what Paul Vallas did in the Chicago schools, and that was very successful." But you did a great job, and we miss you. And I know that Philadelphia is very lucky to have you. And with that, I have a couple of questions.

First of all, one of the things that I know that you did in the Chicago schools, among many of the innovative ideas, but one when there was a school that was not performing, you didn't really take the students out of the school but you took the management, the administration and the teachers. Are you still involved in that, and is it working if you could—

Mr. VALLAS. Yes. I like to think we've refined the art of reconstitution. And there's different types of reconstitution, but in Philadelphia some schools have been placed under private management, as you well know the celebrated private management cases. A number of schools have been converted to charters, and a number of schools have had simple upward leadership changes. So we're still doing that.

Obviously, the level of intervention is really tied to the degree of underperformance in the schools. Because, you know, one of the things that we do is we try to go beyond the simple test score to evaluate and assess schools. We try to use a value added assessment approach to evaluating how schools are performing so that say if a school is not in AYP but that school is showing growth and improvement, the prescription for intervention may not be as radical as the school that simply is dead in the water. But we're still reconstituting schools, changing management, changing leadership in some cases, going much deeper and changing personnel in the schools, in some cases phasing out existing schools, and depopulating those schools as a way of gradual reconstitution. So yes, we're still doing it in a much more refined manner, though.

Mrs. BIGGERT. You talk about the partnerships with the private and other public institutions that you established. Can you talk a little bit more about how the high school juniors and seniors are operating under that, and are they able to—I think you have them enrolling in college preparatory programs. And has this partner-

ship allowed more of the disadvantaged students have access to additional options after graduation?

Mr. VALLAS. It has. In a single year, we actually increased the number of students in AP honors advanced placement and what we call our college programs from less than 1,000 to over 4,000. The old adage being "if you build it, they will come."

We were assisted—we're very fortunate in Philadelphia that there is in the Philadelphia Metropolitan area there are over 80 colleges and universities most of whom are eager to partner with schools, Drexel, University of Penn, whatever. So what we've been doing is a number of the universities have actually taken over management responsibilities over the schools. In the case of Temple and University of Penn, they're actually managing the schools. They are their schools. They hire the principals, they do the staffing, they provide the professional development, they run the schools.

In other cases, like Drexel, University of the Sciences, they're management partners. But all of those programs consist of what we call our college goods program allowing juniors and senior to enroll in universities for dual credit, those students who meet the minimum qualifications.

So what we've been able to do is to enrich the curriculum instructional offerings by these types of relationships. So, for example, if you're going to the University of the Sciences, you can take courses at Drexel University. If you're going to Sayer, which is converting a middle school or phasing out practically all of our middle schools so that we would be a K–8 9–12 system, but Sayer is partnering with University of the Sciences, and their juniors and seniors will be able to take university courses at University of the Sciences for dual credits.

So these type of relationships have allowed us to dramatically enrich the curriculum—the course offerings in the high schools at really very modest expense.

Mrs. BIGGERT. And then just one more question. You were very involved, I think, in bringing the parents into the schools and worked very hard starting with the parent councils and having the parents have to come and pick up the report card and things. And then I think that you did also establish mandatory summer school for those that were not being promoted.

Mr. VALLAS. Right.

Mrs. BIGGERT. And now I think that in your district you have mandatory summer programs for students in math and reading.

Mr. VALLAS. And reading. Any child grades 1 through 8 who is not reading or computing at grade level is provided an additional 6 weeks of instruction about 4 hours a day, two meals a day, enrichment in the afternoon. So we get more people signing up than—this year we're actually turning kids away who don't have to be there but want to enroll.

We do the same thing with extended day. There's mandatory extended day for about 26 weeks, and it goes October to April. It provides the kids with at least another hour of additional instructional support and a second hour of enrichment should they choose to participate. But we're doing something a little different this year in summer and extended day. We're actually not just doing ex-

tended day and summer school remedial. And incidentally, everything that's done in extended day and summer school is tied to the curriculum instructional models.

So it's simply like an extended school year and extended school day for underachieving. But what we're doing for the children who do not have to go to summer school, we're offering after school extended day honors, advanced placement. We're offering summer school honors advanced placement accelerated so we can expand the diversity of our offerings. But it is mandated for children who are not academically at grade level.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Thank you. My time has expired.

The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you very much, Madame Chairman. I'd like to thank the panel for outstanding testimony. In particular, I'd like to thank the superintendents who were here for the important work they're doing every day with these students.

I'm very encouraged by what I read and hear, and it is to your credit and those who you work with, your teachers and staff and obviously parents and students deserve this credit.

Mr. Vallas, I particularly want to say how pleased we are in the Delaware Valley with your work in Philadelphia. About a third of my constituents work in Philadelphia, many of them work for you, and the health—

Mr. VALLAS. We take care of them.

Mr. ANDREWS. That's right. And the health of the Philadelphia school district is very important to all of us in the region, and you are a very healthy development—your arrival.

I want to ask about AYP and evaluation of IDEA students. I want to say for the record, I believe and I think each of us up here believes that there should be no artificial limitations on the achievements of IDEA students. They should be able to go as high and as far as quickly as they possibly can. I think there have been such arbitrary limitations in the past, and we ought to abolish them.

Having said that, I am very concerned about the Department of Education's interpretation of the AYP rules that seems to be holding fast to the notion that there can be no variation or no discretion with any real meaning in the evaluation of IDEA children as opposed to non-IDEA children.

I'd like to ask the superintendents who were here this morning how you're approaching this problem. Are you giving IDEA children the same tests that you are giving the other children? If so, how's it going? If not, what are you doing? And do you think that we should consider changes in the way we evaluate the progress of IDEA children.

I want to say again for the record, because this is such a volatile issue, to me changes in evaluation would not mean abandoning evaluation. It would not mean lowering standards. It would not mean in any way isolating or discrediting these children. But I've heard from so many of my educators that this is a problem, I wanted to hear from each of you.

Dr. SMITH. If I could, it's a critical issue for us and is one that will continue to push—beg for an answer as to how to proceed in

this nation with IDEA students and one that we've been wrestling with in my district a great deal.

I think that—this is my quick answer is that what is currently in law with No Child Left Behind the requirements for academic success of IDEA children should stay the way it is. There shouldn't be any modification of our current posture, that—and it is creating extraordinary pressure out there in school districts across the country as to how to make the kind of gains that are required under No Child Left Behind with children with special needs.

I am of the—I am very confident that because of that pressure we're going to find that many of the things we've historically done to serve the needs of this population have perhaps even been misguided or misapplied, that in fact in many cases we've set up a class of young people that we do in fact expect less of, and as a result, performances are reflective.

Mr. ANDREWS. Can you tell, though, Dr. Smith, are you administering the same tests to the IDEA children as the other children?

Dr. SMITH. Yes.

Mr. ANDREWS. And what's the performance been?

Dr. SMITH. The gap in performance is the largest of any of our subgroups between children with special needs and other students.

Mr. ANDREWS. I would say I would invite everyone to supplement the record with a written answer. I realize I asked a long question.

Mr. Vallas, how about you in Philadelphia?

Mr. VALLAS. Yes, we test. We test. We're required to test. Obviously, we disaggregate that data.

Let me point out that, again, our own experience as well as a lot of the research will show that when you have a quality managed instructional system with all the things that I took way too long explaining in my earlier answers, you will see improvement and sometimes significant improvement in special education children.

I agree with the doctor, I think we need to be very cautious before we go in and do some significant altering of that mandate.

As a student who was formerly a special education student, and not because I wasn't smart but I had a learning deficiency, but because my stuttering and stammering and my vision problems, which weren't identified until seventh grade, were interpreted as basically being characteristics of an underachiever, I will tell you there are far too many children being classified as special educational for no other reason than we just haven't taught them how to read, or they have perhaps neurological obstacles to learning that can be corrected through programs like Fast Forward.

A number of years ago in Chicago we decided 1 year to not only test but to screen every eighth grader who had failed and were facing retention, and 30 percent of the children failed their screening, and two-thirds of those children failed their eye exams. So 4 years later, we have purchased I think close to 30,000 pairs of eyeglasses. So maybe that was the reason their reading scores went up 6 years. It had nothing to do with the curriculum, it was the fact that we had a large number of kids who suddenly could see the blackboard.

I agree with my fellow superintendent here. I think we have to be very cautious before we go in and we lower that.

Mr. ANDREWS. I'd quickly ask Dr. Newsome to answer, then my time is up.

Dr. NEWSOME. We, too, administer the same standards for our students with special needs, but I would like to say that I believe in this area. We entering and exploring some unchartered territory. We have never before as a nation placed this level of expectation on all groups, and we need to understand some of the challenges.

And if I may share one example on our state exam. I went into a hearing impaired classroom this year, and the students were preparing for exams. And the teacher had shared that the previous year's students were asked to respond to eight questions the asked them to identify the words that sound the same, an impossible task for these students.

So as we venture into this unchartered territory and we have set these high stake mandates, we need to be aware of the challenges that come because these students are placed in these programs because of special needs.

But again, I do believe, as we have heard Mr. Vallas say, too many students may be inappropriately placed. There's certainly a disproportionate number of students who live in poverty and minority groups involved in special education.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I would just like to say I appreciate what you've done in this area.

Chairman BOEHNER. Dr. Casserly wants to remark.

Dr. CASSERLY. I agree with all of my colleagues who've spoken on this. I think we're concerned in urban education about the evaluation procedures for students with disabilities as well and are trying as best we can to use the same evaluation tools with these students as we do for all other students.

The Committee might want to attend to another issue that's related to this, though, and that's kind of an emerging practice of using different end sizes for this particular subgroup and for all other subgroups, that is, the larger the size the less likely it is students would be evaluated or that one has to be accountable for that. But there appears to be now more and more states that are using one end size for disabled kids and another end size for other students.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Chairman, if I may, I think to build on the work that you and Mr. Miller and others have done, the consensus that I'm increasingly hearing is that we should maintain this mandate so that we can elevate the level of educational quality for these children and lead to the kind of screening that several of the witnesses talked about so we're not misidentifying children.

We also should look at rigorous but meaningful forms of evaluation and not a one size fits all as Dr. Newsome just talked about. I think it's very important that we give children a fair test. Thank you very much.

Chairman BOEHNER. If the gentleman would yield—

Mr. ANDREWS. I would.

Chairman BOEHNER. You know, we're in the midst of a huge paradigm shift when it comes to the expectations for children with special needs, and as we move to expect results for special needs children, how we assess them and assess their progress is going to be an issue that we're going to continue to discuss. I do think the

department in their revised regulations have, in fact, given districts and states more flexibility over how these special needs children are assessed, and I think this discussion will go on for some time.

Mr. ANDREWS. If just briefly again if I may, I stand with the Chairman and his belief that this paradigm shift is appropriate and overdue and one that I will defend.

I also appreciate his willingness to talk about the means by which we achieve the paradigm shift. Thank you.

Chairman BOEHNER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Gingrey.

Mr. GINGREY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to maybe direct this question at least initially to Dr. Newsome in regard to the achievable dream academy.

Dr. Newsome, in your testimony, under the solutions you say that student effort and family involvement should be a better predictor of achievement than socioeconomic status.

I might tend to agree with you, but it's certainly true that children who are like the ones in the academy, 98 percent are free and reduced lunch, almost by definition they're from homes where in many instances there's maybe one parent who's working two jobs or possibly they're of limited English proficiency and there is a high transient rate. I mean the two are so closely connected, almost joined at the hip that it's I think very difficult to achieve that and to say that despite this lack of socioeconomic wherewithal that you can still achieve what you've done at the Achievable Dream Academy. And I mean, it's—I commend you. It's fantastic. It sounds wonderful.

My question is, though, in taking that the group of students that you recruit to come and start in the ninth grade—I'm assuming this is a high school.

Dr. NEWSOME. No.

Mr. GINGREY. K–12?

Dr. NEWSOME. This is a K through 8 program.

Mr. GINGREY. The ones that you recruit to do that, to go eight and a half hours a day, 6 days a week, and of course the carrot is the college scholarship if they complete the program, and I think that's fantastic. But what percentage of students that enter the program are actually—stay in the program. Because if they all—if 98 percent of them are from those type backgrounds that I would envision, that I do envision of youngsters on free and reduced lunch, they're economically disadvantaged. I just wonder if your success rate is pure and is true as it is if you'd give us the numbers of students that may drop out of the program.

Dr. NEWSOME. First of all, in my written testimony I use a term called social economic determinism, and this was a term introduced to us through the Phi Delta Kappa international organization in their audit. And their research found that 70 percent of a student's performance on standardized tests can be attributed to what happens before they get to school and for the most part based on family income.

And the testimony further goes on to say that through a strong curriculum, strong alignment, strong delivery of instruction, that we can reduce that percentage of influence. And so in the Achiev-

able Dream Academy, we do have students who do spend more time in school than they do at home compared to their counterparts.

At this point I did not bring the statistics with me, but I can certainly provide them for you. I do know that one of our seniors that I spoke with this past week has shared with me that she's one of six siblings and all have gone or are in the process of going to this school, and we do have a waiting list. Again, at this point, I do not have the rate of turnover and will be happy to provide that for you.

Mr. GINGREY. Thank you.

Chairman BOEHNER. I think Dr. Raymond wants to comment, as well.

Dr. RAYMOND. I would just like to amplify the comment that Dr. Newsome made with some research that does not appear in my testimony but comes to my head because we're talking about it.

We've actually looked at what the relative contributions to student learning are from teachers and tried to suggest that teachers contribute in different ways to, in different magnitudes to student learning. And what we've been able to determine is that if you had teachers in all classrooms with low socioeconomic students who were capable of producing at the national distribution of teachers at the 75th percentile, in other words that they would produce student gains at the 75th percentile of all teachers who produce gains, you could actually in 3 years' time wipe out any disadvantage of socioeconomic background.

And that, to us, suggests that the critical factor that we have to have in protracted sustained school reform efforts is teachers who do produce outcomes.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I know my time is up, but just for one last comment going back to what Dr. Newsome said. He was quoting the author Jim Collins and I really, really agree with this. If we expect and indeed demand that schools be great, then we need to look at churches, communities, government, business, families, and they need to be great as well. I think that was a great point, and I really appreciate you bringing that to us.

Chairman BOEHNER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Bishop.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all of the panelists for your testimony this morning.

I want to pick up on something that Dr. Casserly said and ask the three superintendents. Dr. Casserly said that we have made improvements, that we have a long way to go, but that improvement on a large scale is possible.

And my question to the three superintendents is do you have what you need to make the next leap? Do you have the instructional resources? Are you able to offer class size that's appropriate? Do you have a sufficient number of well qualified teachers?

I'm assuming you agree with the comment that Dr. Casserly made, so my question is can you get to the next level?

Dr. SMITH. I'd be happy to respond. Yes, we can get to the next level. I think there are issues that are going to over time prove challenging to us. One, again, I come back to the point I made before is the question of appropriate resource. How do we—when we get—when we continue to move numbers up, be it special needs

children or other categories, accuracy and the kind of intervention that we bring to the classroom, how do we move to the next level and really perform at a high degree with all kids.

The appropriate tool, the effective tool is a major challenge for us, and you'll see it across the country. You'll see school districts or schools that choose an ineffective reading strategy and they flounder and fail, and you'll see others that choose successfully. It's not just a matter of one vendor or another, some things in fact work and some things just don't. The efficacy of strategy is huge.

The second piece is the quality of the workforce. As we continue to expect more and really a different kind of teacher than we've had in the past, a teacher that is strategic in how they think, that can manage and manipulate data, that can think fluidly about how to transform their teaching strategies over the course of a week to make sure that children don't fall by the wayside, and conversely so that we continue to challenge those at the high end, calls for a different kind of a talent than maybe we have seen in the past.

So the need to do some retooling of our Universities and our teacher preparation programs and to continue to try to drive for a higher skill level with our workforce is going to continue to be a major challenge and simply to deal with the turnover that we're having, the retirements, those that are leaving the profession, is huge and in my view one of the other major challenges we have.

Mr. VALLAS. Well, I certainly agree with everything that's been said. Let me add a couple of things, though.

I think we really have to begin focusing—put a focus on making a big commitment to early childhood education. When you look at school districts, at least from my experience now in two districts, when you look at school districts that are improving, where the instruction clearly is improving, you see a couple of common characteristics. One is both reading and math are improving, but math seems to be improving much faster because there are fewer language barriers so to speak and sometimes cultural barriers to the learning and mastery of math.

But you see a second characteristic, and that is at every grade level the children seem to be doing better. At every grade level the gap seems to be narrowing. Certainly my experience in Chicago, where the eighth grade test scores I think are now the highest than they've ever been, yet, significantly higher than the third grade test scores. At every grade level the test scores seem to be improving.

But the problem is the gap is so wide by the time the kids hit third grade that you never quite get caught up driving home the point that you have got to—we've got to begin to invest considerably more resources in early childhood education. We've got to start reaching the children and the parents of the children before the children are born.

We adopted a—we established a program called "Cradle to the Classroom" in the city of Chicago. We've extended to here. It was actually founded by a former welfare mother who is now affiliated with Georgetown University, Virginia York. In fact, Congressman Davis knows her well, from his district.

What they did was they set up a program where they identify every pregnant teen in the high schools, provide the pregnant teen

with a parent trainer who would work with the pregnant teen and make sure the baby is born healthy, put the baby in daycare and preschool. Keep the pregnant teen in high school.

I think over a period of 4 years they had graduation rates of like 90 percent. At least through my first 6 years there, I think only two or three of the pregnant teens who had gone through the programs, and there were I think close to 3,000 had gotten pregnant a second time, one of the pregnant teens, it's my understanding, was admitted to Harvard last year.

The bottom line is—and the performance of the children in those programs who had been in the Cradle to the Classroom program, they are now entering kindergarten, first grade, second grade, it's my understanding has been much greater, a significant difference, the gap significantly narrower.

So, you know, I think we've got to begin to focus on early childhood education. As I pointed out earlier, when you look at this phenomena of disruptive student behavior that is beginning to—the problem of disruptive behavior among young children, first graders, second graders, third graders, engaged in the type of violent acts or the type of disruptive behavior that wouldn't have been imagined five, six, seven, 10 years ago. That's not a problem that the school created. That's not a problem that was result of deficiencies at the school. The children are starting school not ready for school. So clearly I think we have got to focus our attention, because I think the things that we've talked about, a managed instructional system, with all that that entails will drive us to the next level, but we've got to close that gap before the children ever start school because in some cases the gap is too wide to be closed.

Dr. NEWSOME. Thank you for the question, and I will be very brief. Teacher quality, early intervention, resources have all been addressed. One of the challenges in urban school districts is as we reduce class size and as we provide more opportunity for early intervention with all day kindergarten and preschool, we don't have space. Many of these grants provide the resources and pay for funding for teachers and resources, but we cannot use funding to provide space for them.

A significant number of our students are attending school in portable trailers because there is no space in the main building. And so I think we may need to look at the flexibility in the expenditures for some of these grants.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BOEHNER. I think Dr. Casserly wants to remark on it a little.

Dr. CASSERLY. Just let me add two additional things that we are still struggling with and need additional help with, and I agree with all the other panelists here, is that we continue to need help with the reform of high schools in the cities. We're getting terrific gains at the elementary grades and kind of modest gains, spotty gains at the middle grades, but our high schools still need considerable reform.

In addition to that, there still needs to be considerable work done devoted to the instruction of English language learners. We've got a long way to go on that front, and we're not making the kind of progress with that population of students that we really need to.

Chairman BOEHNER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska, Mr. Osborne.

Mr. OSBORNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for being here. I'm sorry I missed your earlier testimony. We had some other hearings scheduled at the same time.

What I'd like to ask about is something I guess that had to do with myself. I used to be in a lot of city schools, inner city schools and living rooms, 30 or 40 a year, in large cities, and I noticed that parental involvement was a big factor with a lot of transcripts. And it wasn't a one-to-one correlation but it was a pretty heavy correlation. And I know a lot of the things that you're suggesting here, the summer school, longer school days, better teachers, but those all cost money. Then you're going to have some people say yeah, we'd like to do that but we don't have the money to do it.

Do you have any strategies for involving parents at a higher level without necessarily doing some of these things which are very expensive? I know that's a difficult question, but I thought I'd just throw that out to you.

Mr. VALLAS. Let me start out by saying that there are a number of things you can do, and what we've tried to do is tap into Medicaid money, TANF money, transitional assistance to secure additional funds to finance these initiatives. I'm speaking as a superintendent of a school district where about 85 percent of the children live in homes that are at or below the poverty rate. So clearly a very significant amount of children are coming from challenging environments.

Our approach has been to do the following, to make sure that all of our schools, first of all, have locally elected parent councils so that you're developing a cadre of parent leaders in that school.

Our second approach has been to—I inherited a school district that had to lay off its truant officers, that had gotten rid of a lot of the critical support staff. When we go out and we hire our truant officers or when we hire our community patrols, when we recruit our in-school patrols, they're our parents. So again, building a cadre of parents. Every school has a parent help desk. Every school has a parent patrol. Every school, hopefully by September of next year, we'll have a parent council.

Come September, there will be close to 2,000 parents who are working in the schools in a variety of support capacities. Now let me point out that many of the parents who are working in the schools are what we call transitional assistance parents. These are parents who are meeting their TANF obligations, their welfare to work obligations by participating in the schools. So the objective here is to build a cadre of parents who can help the school be more accessible to the parents and the community but can also help the school reach out to that disengaged, uncommitted parent.

I mentioned all of our truant officers are parents. Our home instructional program for preschool youths, which is our home preschooling for children who are not in preschool, is run and administered by parents, parents visiting the home of other parents. So the objective here is to build a cadre of parents in each of the schools who can be exemplary role models.

A lot of those programs are funded through basically nontraditional sources like Medicaid, the transitional assistance, the TANIF money, many of the social service money.

Another thing that we're doing to get parents more involved—and let me point out that all the parents who go through these programs are also provided continuing education. So we're upgrading their skills as they move along, upgrading their capabilities.

But we're also partnering with community based organizations, particularly faith-based institutions in very aggressive ways, so that not only do you have a cadre of parents working in those schools to reach out to the less engaged and the disengaged parents and sometimes to provide a buffer between the schools and those parents who the child can do no wrong, and if my child is disciplined or suspended it's the schools fault, whatever, because some schools need the parents to serve as a buffer.

But working through the faith-based institutions in a very aggressive way, the faith-based institutions have become vehicles for mobilizing even greater parental involvement and greater community involvement in support of the schools.

So those are two very cost-effective ways of engaging our parents.

One final thing that I want to mention is we are—every aspect of our curriculum instructional programs and our disciplinary program has a parent training component, so the curriculum instructional models all have parent components, parent homework guides. The report card has a parent checklist. Some parents—some people have referred to it as a parent report card. I refer to it as a parent checklist.

When your children are disciplined, parental counseling is required, so the parents have to come particularly in the primary grades. And if a child is persistently disruptive, additional parental involvement is mandated, you see.

So again, those things are not that expensive to do. So those are just some examples of our attempts to institutionalize parental involvement.

Dr. SMITH. If I could just add one comment. One of the things that—the basic premise we operate with is that parents of all backgrounds, regardless of affluence, race or other factors, tend to be involved when they see their children coming to school and being successful, and it's the parent that tends to see the child not engaged, not successful in school that kind of separates themselves from the school environment.

We also—in my work in Charlotte, North Carolina as superintendent, I spent a lot of time working with pre-kindergarten and studying how we bring families into the K–12 program, families that perhaps have had as children themselves had bad experiences with schooling.

We found a couple of factors. One, with pre-kindergarten—and I'd say the same holds true with Head Start—is that, one, the nature of the early intervention programs, be it Head Start or be it pre-kindergarten programs operated within a school district is that they absolutely have to have as their core a pre-literacy focus. They have to be preparing students to enter kindergarten as confident readers. And the gap really needs to be worked to be eliminated by the time they enter kindergarten.

And with that, with families seeing their 4-year-olds and 3-year-olds being successful as early readers, there needs to be some very directed conversation with parents about parenting, and we were able to do this successfully with parent contracts, with mandated regular parent meetings as a group, not in a punitive way but in a positive way, coming together to celebrate the work of their children, to share in the work of their children, to talk about ways that they can read with their children at home, and providing supplies and materials.

But important we found was to start that process as a successful process as a family as children come into the K–12 or first grade through 12th grade operation and plant that seed that each parent's children are successful in our schools. They tend to buy in and learn to be a part of it more down the road.

Mr. OSBORNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe my time has expired. Thank you.

Mr. CASTLE. [presiding] Thank you, Mr. Osborne. Mr. Tierney is recognized for as long as he wants, as long as it does not exceed 5 minutes.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, my friend. Thank you all for your testimony here this morning. It has been very helpful. Let me see if I can go through a couple of questions in my allotted time.

First of all, the transfer aspects of No Child Left Behind where—would you comment on that for me in terms of whether you think that's a good policy or bad policy as it's practically able to be applied with your systems.

Dr. SMITH. I can speak to that. I think the transfer policy is a good policy, and we're managing it. I think that we have an obligation to educate children, and when we're having difficulty with that task, we have an obligation to give parents some choices. So again, we have found ways to make it work and support it.

Mr. TIERNEY. Maybe I should have some people in my district contact you for those ways. We're running up against a problem of finding out too late, you know, whether or not people are going to have to have that money—setting aside money for periods of time then finding out only too late the parents don't opt for the transfer and then not be able to allocate for those funds, and also difficulty with finding a place for them to transfer to. Our schools are full. But you're apparently not running into any of that or you've found some solution for it.

Dr. SMITH. I'd just follow up. I'm not saying we don't have technical challenges with this, but it's challenges that we're willing to work through.

Certainly the date of notification when a school needs to provide this opportunity is a problem. We're working through that right now this year as we speak. And so those issues, finding a seat available and what that does for capacity of other schools is a challenge for us. But again, in terms of the concept and learning to adapt to the requirements, I think, again, we're finding ways to do that and have not been stopped at this point in doing so.

Certainly with some districts, the challenge becomes almost absurd, distance, capacity issues, availability of adequately performing schools becomes challenging. And again, I think that cer-

tainly needs to be noted, and we just need to find a rational way to work through some of those details in the law.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Doctor, you wanted to say—

Dr. NEWSOME. I would agree that the notification date is a tremendous challenge for us. The national rate of public school choice transfers are approximately 2 percent. And if the rate remains at 2 percent, I think we'd be able to adequately accommodate this. But as more parents become aware and more schools are identified as eligible or required to provide choice, then I see that this potentially will be a greater challenge for us.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Mr. VALLAS. We haven't had any serious problems for us.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Mr. VALLAS. We haven't had any serious problems even with the timing of the letter being sent out. We've—again, larger districts have fewer problems because they tend to have more options where smaller districts are sometimes at a disadvantage.

Transportation reimbursement is a headache and it does take away from other critical funds, but the bottom line is we haven't had any serious problems.

To deal with the issues of choices, we're creating more choices. We have 51 charters in Philadelphia, incidentally, subject to the same No Child Left Behind standards that the public schools are subjected to. So everyone is on the same accountability mandate.

What we're also doing is we're magnetizing neighborhood schools by putting magnet programs in neighborhood that then are open enrollment programs, like the international baccalaureate programs or advanced math, science and technology academy programs so on and so forth. So we haven't had problems expanding the number of options too.

But one thing has happened. We mail out over 100,000 letters a year, yet, maybe 3,000, 4,000 elect to even contemplate taking advantage. Once the schools have after school extended day programs, once the schools are seemingly moving in the right direction, even if those schools are not AYP, even if those schools are schools that are designated as schools in corrective action mandating, those letters you'll find very few parents electing to take advantage of those choice options.

Parents are very patient as long as they feel the school's moving in the right direction.

Mr. TIERNEY. I think—

Dr. CASSERLY. We did a major study of the choice options in the major cities across the country earlier this school year, and we did find that this school year there were about three times as many parents who availed themselves of various public school choices this school year compared to last school year.

But the overall demand has been indicated still remains relatively low. And because the demand is relatively low, we're not having as many problems as we may have in the future with capacity if that demand continues or would continue to arise.

This issue about late data from the state is a serious one. Many of our school districts are simply not getting the data back from the states on which school have been identified for adequate yearly progress and, thereby, we can't notify the parents in a timely fash-

ion to give them an adequate opportunity to make an intelligent decision about whether or not they want to transfer their kid.

Mr. TIERNEY. Looks like I can sneak in one last question. It would be about the small schools concept with high schools. I know Mr. Vallas, you mentioned that you're going from K to 8 and 9 to 12 again, as I think a number of schools are.

What has been your experiences with making the—using the small schools program in high schools, and has that been a favorable experience, and should we keep moving in that direction?

Mr. VALLAS. Small schools are preferable to large schools, but if you don't have a managed instructional system, then, you know, a small school can be as big a failure as some of our failing large high schools.

But generally when you downsize the size of the schools—we're building a number of new high schools. None of them will—and the middle schools that we're converting to high schools, none will have more than 800 students.

So we try to keep the schools at a manageable size so that they're small enough to be more intimate, greater familiarity, faculty can have a staff meeting in a classroom instead of the auditorium, things of this nature. Much more intimate. So you can recognize students when they're walking down the halls.

But we also want to keep the school sizable enough so it can provide a diversity of offerings, the neighborhood- based magnet programs, offer the course offerings that are needed.

But we found that when schools are smaller, they are much more manageable and it creates—again, it's another factor combined with other things can improve the level of—can make the environment more conducive to learning.

I do have to make one comment, though, related to the No Child Left Behind mandate that students be allowed to select other schools, school options. One of the things we do not do in Philadelphia is I will not make a school overcrowded if—to meet the mandate. And I will not increase class size to meet the mandate.

Two of our goals is to keep our schools at a manageable size in terms of the overall enrollment and to reduce class size. And a lot of times there's pressure to put 37 kids in a classroom because this is a AYP school and you need to find a place for the children. Well, you know, you put 37 kids in that classroom, and that's not going to be an AYP school for long.

So we have clear guidelines. We are not going to undermine the quality of the schools that have achieved AYP because they've been reducing class size, because they're of a more manageable size in addition to all the instructional reforms that they've instituted in order to comply with the mandates.

So within those parameters we're very comfortable with the mandate. Of course, that could change if next year 25 percent of the kids decide to participate. Then I may be singing a different tune.

Mr. CASTLE. Thank you, Mr. Tierney. Mr. Ehlers is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two questions to ask of each of you, and particularly the superintendents. The first one is, under No Child Left Behind in 2007, 2008 we begin testing

for science, and the schools and the states are supposed to be preparing standards.

So the first question is is your state and your school beginning that process, and are you encountering any problems with it?

The second question is related to the Chairman's comment earlier about a paradigm shift that we're undergoing, and he referred to education of special students. But I think there's been a paradigm shift in the legislation period. And I'd be interested in how that has affected the Great City Schools. In other words, are you better off now than you were under the previous legislation or not?

Do you see us solving the many problems that arise whenever you introduce new legislation? Or are you seeing problems that really need attention?

So first question, science. Second, are you better off or worse off as a result of the paradigm shift.

Dr. SMITH. I'll talk about science. We are in Maryland and our district beginning the work on the science initiative. We're in the very early stages, however, and I really couldn't give you much detail as to how this is going to play out.

I will share that as we've focused on the issues of reading and mathematics in grades K–8, time is becoming the key factor, and we're finding that we have a very, very busy school schedule when you run a traditional 6 hour 15 minute—six hour 30 minute school day over 180 day school year, which is pretty much standard across the country. What we have done is we have shifted the resource of time to reading and math. So if you come to our district today, you will find 90 minutes of reading and 90 minutes of math being taught in our middle schools and in our elementary schools.

I think some of the big challenges that we have not addressed yet is how do we find now more time for science as well, and what does that do for the rest of the curriculum.

So again, there are some important decisions that certainly will surface in my view as we move into that new phase. What about the arts? What about issues of physical education and technical training and so forth that are critically important for our young people? And is there enough time to accomplish all these tasks and do them at the level of proficiency that we expect I think are some of the unanswered questions right now.

Dr. CASSERLY. On the paradigm shift, let me give you a short answer. I think we're better off with a paradigm shift than we were before. I think there still is lots of technical problems that we need to resolve in "No Child Left Behind," but in general the larger emphasis on student achievement, on closing the achievement gap, and being accountable for the results is a shift that has been important to us. And we can see the result of that shift not only in our increasing emphasis on student achievement and now some of the results we see emerging because of that, but in the attitude change in many urban school leaders across the country and their focus now on student performance. It's really something that we have not seen in quite the same way.

This paradigm shift obviously is embodied in No Child Left Behind, but it is a shift attitudinally that has been going on for some time, but it's an important one. And I think we're better off because of it.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you.

Mr. VALLAS. We're excited about the science mandate. I think science has long been overlooked. And you look at the gap that exists, it's not an achievement—it's an achievement cap at all levels, high achievement, honors, advanced placement, science, mathematics.

Also you'll find when school districts begin to focus seriously on math and science, sometimes those scores improve much faster than the reading scores because again, there are fewer barriers to mastering those areas.

Next year, our school district—it's my second year in Philadelphia, and we've standardized the math and reading curriculum, the managed instructional system. Next year we're adding science and social studies. We will literally spend—we spend 120 minutes a day on reading and 90 minutes on math, not to count extended day. Next year we'll be spending 45 minutes a day on science. And again, it follows the curriculum instructional models that we're using in reading and math. And we supplement it with science clubs, programs like the—high achievement programs like the Odyssey programs, extended day science, summer science. Science is offered as a summer school enrichment course.

So again, we're happy that science is being included, and we certainly welcome the mandate.

In so far as the paradigm shift, I agree with Mike. The paradigm shift for us began in the mid 1990's because many things we were doing in Chicago that were very controversial at the time have now become embodied, incorporated into No Child Left Behind. So I think the paradigm shift began for us and for many large urban school districts, as Michael has pointed out, really in the 1990's, and I think we've—so we welcome this.

And certainly I think No Child Left Behind, with its strong focus on accountability, has I think accelerated that shift more dramatically, but many of us were involved in this early on when some of the things like standardized curriculum were equated with lobotomizing teachers. So I think we've gone beyond—the paradigm shift really began for us much earlier.

Chairman BOEHNER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I want to thank you for a very informative and insightful hearing. And I also want to thank all the witnesses for their comments.

Paul, it's good to see you again, as always. I still say that Philadelphia's gain was Chicago's loss. And from everything that I hear, you're doing an outstanding job there.

Dr. Newsome, let me begin with you. Ever since reading something in an education digest about 35 years ago called the Banneker Report that talked about the work of a Dr. Sheppard in the Banneker School district in St. Louis, Missouri, which was the poorest district in the area, reading scores were low, things were in disarray, and he sort of became the pied piper of education for that community and formed a partnership between the school and the community.

I've been convinced that in low income, low-performing communities, the most effective way to raise the standards and raise edu-

cation achievement is to have a serious partnership. So I'm intrigued by the Achievable Dream Academies. Could you talk a little bit about how those were put together and how the concept emerged?

Dr. NEWSOME. I think it takes individuals and ordinary people who want to do extraordinary things. And this began long before I became superintendent in Newport News. As a matter of fact, I think some of the credit needs to go to Dr. Smith here, who was probably in Newport News when this was started. And our good Congressman Bobby Scott was very much involved as well.

But there was a gentleman named Walter Siegeloff who was a businessman who became frustrated when he had applicants who could not fill out an application and young people who could not interview. And this one businessman joined with other businessmen and worked with the school system.

And I think what's unique about Newport News is it took a brave superintendent to say I'm going to give up some of my authority and some of my autonomy and share it with the community.

Too many school systems aren't willing to do that and, thus, I think they lose out on opportunity for business and community partnerships.

One last thing. There is an educational foundation in Newport News that consist of business leaders throughout the community, and they have made education as their No. 1 issue. And so this shared partnership and this desire to give up some of the autonomy, to link up with those people who would support education I think was the foundation to the beginning of the Achievable Dream Academy.

Mr. DAVIS. And I couldn't agree with you more. I mean I believe that if a community determines that education is the highest priority for that community, I don't care how low the income or what kind of community it is, where it's situated, that they'll find a way in concert with the educators for children to achieve.

Paul, I've been spending a lot of time looking at this whole notion of problems that African-American males are experiencing with education achievement, more so than many other components of the population.

It is my belief that one of the problems is that there are so few males in early childhood education that they come into contact with, that many of them grow up with the idea that education really is not for them, that it's a female thing, that it's a girl and a woman thing.

Do you—would you believe that maybe some heavy emphasis on finding ways to recruit trained minorities to become early childhood educators might have some impact on this problem?

Mr. VALLAS. You know, getting men into schools in general is—we have elementary schools where you don't have a single man or the only man in the school might be the custodian. And so just getting men into elementary education would make a big difference, particularly in early childhood education.

Our approach has been to aggressively recruit in the worthy—where the male educators are, particularly African-American male educators. And so we have a very strong working relationship with the historic black colleges. Or course Congressman Reverend Dr.

Gray is obviously a prominent citizen of Philadelphia, so he certainly assists us in that endeavor. So we've been moving aggressively to do that.

We've also been aggressively doing alternative certification through programs like Teach America, which has had phenomenal success. This has also enabled us to target—to go out and recruit males, African-Americans from other professions who then—who have the content area mastery, but they obviously need the instructional experience. So that's enabled us to increase the number of males, in particularly African-American males in the schools. But, you know, having those male role models and those male mentors in the schools, either in an instructional capacity or at least in a support capacity is critical.

That's why the partnerships with the faith-based institutions are so important. And these are not traditional partnerships. We encourage our faith-based institutions to set up gospel choirs, after school programs, bible clubs, as long as it's voluntary and there's no expenditure of our funds. We also have in the state of Pennsylvania a law called Faith-Based Release Time that allows children to participate in faith-based services 36 hours during the regular school year, during the regular school day. And we actively encourage them to participate in those areas.

And then, of course, when the faith-based institutions have that opportunity, they come in and they set up the passage programs, the mentoring clubs, their peer mentoring clubs, and these things establish a much larger male presence in the schools, and it has much greater benefit particularly to the young African-American males, who, again, need to have the role models in the schools, value in education.

I do want to mention one more point very quickly. I'm a time eater here and I apologize, Congressman. Mayor Street and Chaka Fattah have embarked upon a program called Last Dollar. And under this Last Dollar program, we provide every high school senior a scholarship designed to make up the difference between what they can get in financial aid and what they need to attend college.

For a lot of parents—for a lot of children who come from families whose parents who have never gone to college and view college as financially beyond their means, the signal that we're sending to that incoming freshman is at the end of the day at the end of 4 years, you will be able to financially afford college and university. All you have to do is stick around to get the prize so to speak. And we think that that's going to have a profound impact too.

So we think, again, that that image that somehow college—it's not only no one in my family has ever gone to college, but there's also this perception that college may be beyond their financial means. So programs like Gear Up, which is Chaka Fattah—Congressman Fattah's program, and programs like Last Dollar are designed to basically eliminate that psychological obstacle that somehow schools are never going to be—college is never going to be financially affordable.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I know my time has gone, but if the other panelists could just respond quickly to the male involvement question, I'd appreciate it.

Dr. SMITH. I agree with your point. I think one of the critical issues is in trying to develop strategies within a district. Being keenly aware of some of the social and developmental factors that children go through, that young people go through, and being keenly aware of the fact that it's not just, as we all have advocated, a strong managed instructional program, but it's the other half of it. It's what the child brings to the classroom, and it's the social context that they bring to the classroom.

One of the strategies that I have found to be very, very successful in Newport News, in Charlotte, and again now in Anne Arundel County is a program called AVID, Advancement via Individual Determination, where we actually work to cluster young people and kids that are "traditionally average" that all of a sudden start doing some pretty extraordinary things; where you have a group of males that are academically oriented and they rely on one another and develop a social fabric around academic settings and it's OK. It's OK to pick up the phone and call each other and ask each other about your math assignment.

But those kinds of relationships and that kind of a social structure don't normally come into existence in our middle schools and our high schools. Quite often it's the social fabric that says to do the exact opposite.

And so again, we do have to design and actually strategically design strategies to counter that and to build another kind of an expectation whether it be through adult role models or peer role models.

Dr. RAYMOND. I was just going to add that we are just starting to look at the performance in a few schools that are single sex public schools, and it seems that the gains that we're seeing in the male public schools are actually outstripping the gains in the female public schools. So I think that there is something to the point that you were raising that there's a sociology that we could think about creating in schools that would be attractive to engaging males early on and keeping them engaged through their education.

Dr. CASSERLY. A number of our cities are having pretty good luck with a series of mentoring programs like in conjunction with 100 Black Men and other organizations in the community that provide mentoring and personal support services. And I think those are often proving to be enormously helpful with many of our kids.

Chairman BOEHNER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Delaware, the Chairman of the Education Reform Subcommittee, Mr. Castle.

Mr. CASTLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a great panel. Let me ask my question, then I'm going to do a little talking, and then you can answer the question while I give you a minute or two to think about it.

My question is going to be how would you change No Child Left Behind? This could be a general answer. You don't have to cite statute numbers or anything like that. But I mean if we were to make changes in it, and I would assume that come January of next year when the elections are over with, there are probably going to be some changes. I'd be interested in any thoughts you have, but you can expand beyond that. If there's other Federal education pol-

icy if you aren't sure where it all falls, I wouldn't mind hearing that, either. Think about that for a moment.

Just a couple of comments.

Chairman BOEHNER. I think the gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. CASTLE. Thank you very much.

[Laughter.]

Mr. CASTLE. On the early intervention that Dr. Smith talked about, that pre-literacy component is absolutely essential, and sometimes I think we have trouble selling that even here. Frankly, we do have trouble selling it to the groups who come before us in the Federal involvement in these early intervention programs.

I'd also just like to say generally that I just think in the community, all the way from the home, the church, the organizations, whatever, we just need more education. And culture is the same thing. I mean I never see anything on television that seems to sell the value of education, even the economic value on it, and then the coverage of education in general from a press point of view.

If you take a poll, it's usually second-highest to the economy other than perhaps Iraq right now. And yet, you look around this room and you have the ubiquitous C-Span cameras but you don't have other cameras here. They're probably covering a rock star someplace talking about something else like the environment or something like that.

The print media I think is good about this, but it's not a subject that sells easily. And somehow or another I don't think the value of education comes home to roost at home, and that just bothers the heck out of me too. How to get around it, I don't know. I'll leave that for a later day.

So my only question, do any of you who want to take a stab at it, is there anything at the Federal level that we as a legislature should be considering dealing with legislation?

I'll give you an example. I don't like the fact they call—if you don't make out on yearly progress, they call it failed schools. To me, somehow the classification system ought to be somehow structured differently so they can't—the media can't assume that any school that doesn't quite make it is a failed school.

Chairman BOEHNER. Now, the gentleman knows that, if he'll yield, that since 1994 the ESEA refers to schools in need of improvement, and that same language was incorporated in No Child Left Behind. Now how people decide to refer to it is obviously far beyond our control, but we don't—there's no terminology in No Child Left Behind or the rest of the ESEA that refers to failed schools.

Mr. CASTLE. Absolutely. I mean I couldn't agree more. The Chairman is absolutely correct about that. I mean, you read it and it just isn't there. Yet, they call them failed schools. Somehow we have to do it in such a way that they can't do that. I guess we can't legislate it out of existence, but it's something that I would like to address.

But in any event, I'd like to hear your thoughts about No Child Left Behind or Federal education policies from a legislative point of view that we might consider, if any of you want to take a stab at it.

Dr. CASSERLY. We haven't developed any detailed list of changes that we want to see made in No Child Left Behind. We assume that many of those specific recommendations will start to be discussed by Congress in earnest next year.

I think there is going to probably need to be additional conversations on how it is the AYP system is calibrated. We may want to take a look in a little more intensive way on various growth models in measuring student achievement to see whether or not that isn't a good way to assess progress rather than being quite so fixed on getting over these bars.

I suspect that we're probably going to have to recalibrate a little bit the choice and supplemental service provisions, maybe even resequence how they are done rather than—there's been a lot of discussion about maybe choice ought to come behind supplemental services. I think that's a legitimate conversation to have. We're probably going to have to revisit this issue about capacity and revisit the issue about end sizes as well.

I think broadly the thing that we're probably going to have to drill down on a lot besides these various technical mechanics of the legislation is in part what we've been trying to deal with in this panel, and that is how it is we use the law as a mechanism for driving student performance forward and ensuring that the law simply doesn't become a mechanism for an exercise in compliance, but it is in fact a driver of student performance. And I think that whole broad conversation is going to have to be back on the table when Congress decides to discuss it.

Dr. RAYMOND. I'd like to jump in and focus on a place where I see the incentives of the legislation being slightly out of alignment, and that's in the area of highly qualified teachers.

When I think about what drives student performance, it's a teacher who can create learning gains in their students. And yet, when we look at the regulations around what we use to define highly qualified teachers, I don't see anything that relates to the effects that a teacher can create in learning in their students, and I'd like to see that alignment tightened up. I think that would go a long way to pushing the incentives down into the classroom in ways that I think will accelerate performance.

Mr. VALLAS. I would just comment, I provided a—in my remarks I provided an attachment that talks in detail about supplemental education services. And rather than spend a lot of time on that, I think that's an area where we need to take a close look at because the—the theory behind the supplemental education services is if children cannot exercise choice, they need to be provided with supplemental education services at the school that they're at. And they're entitled to those services, and those services are supposed to be provided by private providers.

The problem is, and I'm not so sure—I don't know if this is as much a national issue or a state issue. Maybe it's the subject of state interpretation. But the act, the way it's structured, actually reduces competition rather than increases it, and it puts you in a position where providers can come in and say look, this parent's entitled to 30 hours of supplemental education service instructional support, and I'm going to charge them $1800. So there's no price competition. It's almost as if the price and the hours are fixed.

What we did as a solution, and to the Department of Education's credit, they were supportive or at least they did not oppose it. Our state approved it. Reorganize the school district into a supplemental education service unit, and then we contracted out with private providers to provide services. So we were able to provide 160 hours of after school instructional support for $300 per pupil.

But if you look at the memo as I laid out, that's an issue that needs to be tweaked a bit. And I don't know if it's as much a national problem in terms of the rules and regulations involving the No Child Left Behind Act or whether or not it's more a subject of state interpretation. It's still a little unclear.

Also, many of these issues we've talked about, for example, the—what constitutes a fully service teacher or a highly qualified teacher? A lot of that's dependent on the rules and regulations that the state adopts. I don't know if giving the states more latitude or less latitude is good or bad, but clearly our battle is to improve the act. And again, I'm a big supporter of the act. The accountability provisions in the act are long overdue. But to continuing to improve the act may be as much a statewide effort as it is a national effort to actually change the Federal act itself.

Chairman BOEHNER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Kildee.

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Michael, you expressed that No Child Left Behind's grand vision is being undercut by statistical manipulations that exempt a great many children as long as they are not concentrated in large numbers in the same district, school or classroom.

How extensive is this? And how can we in Congress address this problem?

Dr. CASSERLY. Well, as you know, Mr. Kildee, this end size issue—the end size referring to the size of the subgroup in order to count its various test scores for your AYP calculations. I think that an emerging practice amongst some states of enlarging that end size or making the end size one size for one group and one size for another group undermines the act and essentially sends the signal that a great many children can be left behind as long as they're not concentrated in large numbers in the same districts, the same schools, the same classrooms and the like.

I think the Department of Education has just started to review various applications for modifications to end sizes. I think there are seven states that have asked for that change in their end sizes. But these end sizes now are different in I believe seven states for disabled children than they are for other students and for English language learners in a number of states. And the end sizes can range as large as 100 to 200 in a couple of states.

And I think it's probably worth the Committee taking a look at this, because what it suggests over the long run is that you get these end sizes up to a certain level, you're likely to start exempting large swaths of school districts, particularly smaller school districts that don't have an end size large enough to be calculated under these end size provisions, and then letting large numbers of schools and school districts kind of off the accountability hook when—and a lot of kids left behind if Congress doesn't attend to this a little bit more vigilantly.

Mr. KILDEE. That's somewhat gaming the system, isn't it, when you—

Dr. CASSERLY. Well, I think it is—you know, I don't want to characterize the motives of any individual state, but it certainly has the effect, when this is done, of letting large numbers or could have the effect of having large numbers of schools and school districts out of AYP accountability and leaving many of those subgroups in those school districts without any measurement or accountability to the state or to the Federal Government at all.

Mr. KILDEE. We can—disaggregating of data, then, would it not—actually, we started in No Child Left Behind but it started back in '92, wasn't it?

Dr. CASSERLY. Well, I think this question about end size does undercut the whole notion disaggregating data because you're essentially saying once the data are disaggregated, it doesn't necessarily count unless the end size or the subgroup size of that disaggregated group is large enough to form a critical mass in somebody's mind in order to justify their inclusion in the accountability system.

So in some ways it undermines I think the broader intent of the act, and it undermines the Congress' intent, rightful intent to insist that the data be disaggregated and then insist on people being accountable for the performance of those groups.

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you. Dr. Newsome, you mentioned the need for better school buildings. Probably about 25 years ago I introduced a bill for Federal participation in school construction. The Federal Government has actually spent more money helping state and local governments build prisons than it has school buildings by far in my 28 years here in Congress.

How do inadequate school buildings make it more difficult to carry out your responsibilities under No Child Left Behind?

Dr. NEWSOME. Thank you for the question. In some cases schools systems may actually have to return dollars that have been allocated for specific programs because there is not the space available. For example, we have used local dollars to supplement state dollars for preschool programs. This year the state is now going to support that funding, and we have used Title I dollars to supplement it in the past. Now we can reallocate those Title I dollars in a different manner. But some of the restraints that we have regarding how we can spend those dollars may prohibit us from including as many students as are eligible to participate.

Right now we have approximately 2000 students who are eligible, and we are educating about 900, and space is certainly a significant challenge. In some cases, we might have to eliminate some programs.

When I was in Prince George's County and we began the all day kindergarten program, we began to eliminate computer labs. So we are competing with—you know, what is going to get us the greatest gain. And we certainly had to make sacrifices. And I think school systems across the country are making sacrifices. Certainly in the urban school systems many buildings are just outdated. They have roofing problems, and heating and air conditioning problems, and a number of other problems that I think certainly negatively impact our instructional programs.

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

Chairman BOEHNER. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from California, Ms. Woolsey.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because I've been such a marvelously patient person here, I think you'll patient with me, because I think my questions will take a little more than 5 minutes, but I won't go on and on.

But I have two major questions, and I would like to ask you to either answer one or both or comment or not at all. But here's what happened today in one of my major newspapers. I represent the districts two counties north of the Golden Gate Bridge, suburbia at its best, by the way. But here's the headlines. "School standards law under fire. State lawmakers are taking on the heavily criticized No Child Left Behind Act in a seemingly well-orchestrated effort to exempt California from provisions of the Federal education law, which they charge duplicate long established standards of accountability in the state's public schools and unfairly punish schools with large, low income and minority enrollments. This resolution passed the assembly 71 to 1 on Monday. It's supported by the state superintendent of schools, the California Teachers' Association, the California School Board's Association and Small School District's Association."

My question on this one, and then I'll go into my second question, is how do I address this? I mean they know that I'm not real keen on No Child Left Behind.

Now, first of all, thank you very much for your testimonies and your patience. We very seldom have a hearing that lasts this long. The interest is really great from the members of this Committee.

It sounds to me like you've been saying small schools, small classrooms, independent learning plans for students, parental involvement, quality teachers, and oh, yes, indeed, healthy, nourished children who are ready to learn when they enter the classroom. I mean, that's what we need.

My question to you is why aren't we making that happen? Why do we have to go, you know, identify schools and say you're not good enough and not make what we know—we celebrate charter schools, we celebrate public—private schools who are able to meet these goals because they do exactly what we know we should be doing in the public school environment. OK?

Mr. VALLAS. I'll start out by saying you've got to have accountability. The reason that we've moved as far as we have, large districts, smaller districts, is because someone has demanded accountability. We didn't start to move in Chicago until we demanded accountability, accountability of the schools for performance, accountability of the principals, of the teachers. Indeed, we're moving into greater accountability of the parents as difficult sometimes as that is.

So, you know, just—more money. Look, we need more money for early childhood education. The state needs to, the Federal Government needs to get into the business of helping districts construct new schools and rehab existing schools. We would love to have more Title I money. The special ed mandates need to be fully funded. But, you know, all that will not be—will only go so far if you don't have accountability. If you—

Ms. WOOLSEY. Excuse me, but—

Mr. VALLAS.—have an act that doesn't have teeth in it, you know, what—

Ms. WOOLSEY. But where is our accountability? Our accountability is the state legislators that are against this in my state, or on the Federal level. We know that we will have more male teachers if we actually pay a competitive wage, salary, for these important people in our children's lives. Where's our accountability on this stuff?

Dr. CASSERLY. Good question. I'm not sure how—thanks, fellow panelists, for looking down here.

I'm not sure how in the world we answer your question about the California situation. Any number of state legislators across the country have passed one resolution or another about No Child Left Behind. I think you're obviously seeing in California, like you see in a lot of states, kind of the early frustration with what Mr. Ehlers characterized as a paradigm shift.

You don't see as much pushback on this legislation in large cities and urban communities, in part because we understand how important it is to improve student achievement in the cities and to close our sizable achievement gaps.

And we understand that oftentimes outside of the big cities you haven't had quite the focus or attention on disaggregation of results or being accountable for results that you've often had in the urban areas. So it's causing something of a pushback. But I think there are enough kind of good stories to tell about some of the important gains that people are making in student achievement to give us and give this Committee and give Congress some hope and encouragement.

The act, in its broad scope, is on the right track. We haven't got all of the details calibrated just right. There's lots of technicalities that we're going to have to work out in the years ahead, but the overall emphasis, priority and intent of the act was the right one.

Dr. RAYMOND. I would like to speak to the California issue, because it's my home state and because I spend a lot of time looking at California schools.

My understanding is that particular legislative initiative was actually not coming out of the urban districts but it was coming out of the suburban and the rural districts. And the concern was, I think, grounded in a failure to embrace the paradigm, because it is in fact the case that if you look at the progress of a large number of California suburban and rural school districts, they are not making the grade. They are not adding to the learning curve that their kids have and, therefore, the likelihood of them hitting their AYP goals goes down, and they're very upset about because all of a sudden the light is being shined on them instead of on the big, ugly, urban districts, which everybody is very happy that take the limelight in the media.

So I think the initiative in California is slightly displaced because we do, in fact, believe that every single child should make academic progress. And if you've got a cozy, comfortable district that's not making it, it's going to be very uncomfortable for them to confront that. And so I think you'll see a lot—what I see in this legislation that I've been following in the last couple of weeks is

that the people who are really pushing that are not the urban districts, it's the ones that are getting the spotlight for the first time.

Dr. CASSERLY. And that's why this conversation about the end size is so important because you see in a lot of cases a lot of these districts that are finally facing the scrutiny for the very first time kind of welcoming this increase in the end size. But in many ways what it is is a way to get out from under the accountability systems that they have really not been accustomed to in the past.

Chairman BOEHNER. If the gentlelady would yield, in my opening statement I talked about the aggregate scores. Especially in suburban and rural districts, aggregate test scores have been going up for a number of years.

But when we agreed to disaggregate the data to shine the light on the dark corners of what's happening in schoolrooms, you'll find that it was easy to hide some children in overall school aggregate numbers. But when you have disaggregate the data for LAP students, special ed students, it makes especially suburban schools and some rural schools very uncomfortable because they were always able the hide behind the aggregate numbers.

It was one of the most significant changes in ESEA because the aggregate scores had to be reported under the '94 Act. When we begin to disaggregate to get to every child, it becomes very uncomfortable for some.

Mr. KILDEE. I'm glad you corrected me. When I said '92 it was '94.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Anybody else?

OK, then—

Mr. VALLAS. I want to make one comment. A number of years ago, not too long ago, Michael—I remember this study was done in Illinois that looked at—this was before the act was passed—that looked at performance of minority students not only in Chicago but across the state. And one of the things they discovered was that minority students did far better in Chicago than they did in the suburban districts, many affluent districts, many districts with very high test scores where 80, 90 percent of the kids are meeting or exceeding state standards. And that would have—and this was before the mandate that that date be disaggregated.

Some of the biggest critics of this act just happened to be superintendents in some of the most affluent districts. As my colleagues and others from the Committee have states, the disaggregation of data has kind of, you know, shown all the deficiencies that exist in both large urban districts, suburban districts, rural districts.

I'm supportive of the act not only because of the disaggregation of the data, but it's kind of put us all in the same boat now so that we can look at our problems collectively, because the bottom line is you have many affluent districts that have been doing not only not a more effective job but in some cases a much less effective job with the very at-risk students that not only is the act attempting to address but Brown vs. the Board of Education attempted to address with its historic ruling 50 years ago.

Dr. SMITH. I'll just add again, I spent 6 years in North Carolina. Some of the most dramatic shift in demographic populations of school age children were in the rural portions, smaller, rural districts in North Carolina with huge swings in demographic percent-

ages. And for those communities and those districts, their survival depends on public education, the ability to adapt and to shift and to deal with the challenges of No Child Left Behind to adapt to the new population that they're serving for the state's survival.

Now I'm serving at a school district that is much more suburban than Charlotte, North Carolina, and the paradigm shift that Dr. Casserly speaks about is very real and very difficult and very painful, where the vast majority doesn't necessarily see the need. But it is a journey that is also very rewarding at the end once all educators in the community embraces the fact that we can be successful for all and need to be responsible for all.

So again, it is the early stage of the shift in thinking about education in America.

Mr. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, panel.

Chairman BOEHNER. Mr. Kildee.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, since you're going to keep the record open for—

Chairman BOEHNER. Fourteen days.

Mr. KILDEE.—14 days, there are some questions which Mr. Hinojosa would like to have answered by the panel.

Chairman BOEHNER. So ordered.

Let me just thank our panelists for their excellent testimony and their insight. I have to say this was one of the best hearings we've had during the almost 4 years I've been Chairman. It wouldn't have happened without all of you.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:10 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

[Additional material submitted for the record follows:]

Statement of Hon. Dennis J. Kucinich, a Representative in Congress from the State of Ohio

While the results of the recent Council of the Great City Schools report, "Beating the Odds," found some progress being made in our nation's urban schools, schools cannot be expected to consistently provide quality learning environments without adequate funding. Yet again this year, the President's budget underfunds the No Child Left Behind Act. Title I of the law, which provides funding to schools in the greatest need, is especially hard hit in this shortfall. The administration has requested $13.3 billion for the fiscal year 2005 in Title I funding, which is over $7 billion short of the promised level. This is simply unacceptable.

The effects of education underfunding on the federal level are far reaching. When local schools don't get the resources they need, our children suffer. Because of failed federal policy and extreme state budget cuts in Ohio, just this week, the Cleveland city schools have had to cut over 600 teaching positions and 1,400 total employees. Administrators expect that class size will increase anywhere from five to seven students per class. In addition to staff layoffs, the board has also been forced to reduce funding for extracurricular programs and textbook purchases.

It is wrong to champion the importance and significance of academic gains being made by students and then refuse to take the actions necessary to further those gains, but this is what the administration has done. We must work to ensure full funding of the No Child Left Behind Act and live up to our responsibilities to the children of America.

Response from Dr. Margaret Raymond to Questions Submitted for the Record

Questions from Hon. Ruben Hinojosa

I would like to thank the witnesses for their testimony. I would like to see this committee take a more active role in monitoring the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. There is too much at stake for us not to engage in an on-going

dialogue with the Administration and other stakeholders on the implementation of the Act.

One of the Aspects of the No Child Left Behind that needs additional attention, especially in our large urban schools is the issue of graduation rates. Numerous reports have come to the same conclusion that roughly one-third of our high school students fail to graduate with their peers. For Hispanic and African American students, that figure hovers around 50 percent. In our urban schools, graduation rates can be 50 percent or sometimes even lower. Under NCLB, our secondary schools are not getting the support they need to turn this around. In fact, NCLB does not even hold secondary schools accountable for high school graduation rates disaggregated in the same way that math and reading test scores are. That is why Congresswoman Susan Davis and I introduced H.R. 3085, Graduation for All Act, to target resources to our secondary school to improve their graduation rates through a focus on adolescent literacy, individual graduation plans for the students most at risk of not graduation from high school, and increased accountability for graduation rates. I am interested in hearing Dr. Newsome's and Dr. Raymond's views on the need for this kind of legislative effort.

The Congressman raises an important question: while the details of NCLB at present focus on academic performance, an implicit assumption is that academic attainment should follow directly.

The lessons from our research suggest that simply asking states to report their graduation rates will not create the incentives that are needed to drive change. Even if we had uniform definitions and data collection practices about graduation rates—a much needed reform in and of itself—it would be necessary to consider what impact a mandatory rate would have on schools. My fear is that we would see a repeat of the New York experience where the Regests diploma (which used to be tied to rigorous academic standards) has been devalued for the sake of raising the statistic.

This topic is one that would lend itself well to the kind of public-private partnership that Mr. Vallas described yesterday. The idea would be to keep the focus on academic performance via the legislation and other policies, and then attempt to create personal incentives for students to reach the graduation point because they have a chance at higher education. An alternative would be to target some of the Pell dollars to specific schools or geographies on a merit basis.

Our urban schools have large limited English proficient populations, yet none of you directly addressed the achievement of this sub-group of students in your testimony. Could you please share with us the progress you are making with LEP students and how you are implementing NCLB with respect to this population?

The data we used did not have enough historical data on LEP to permit a full analysis of progress.