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Goals 2000 and the Standards Movement

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AMERICA FINALLY HAS a national education strategy. That strategy is called standards-based reform. Virtually every state in the union has developed, or is in the process of developing, new academic standards that specify what students are expected to know and be able to do in the core academic subjects at key grade levels; assessments that measure progress against those standards; and accountability systems that, at a minimum, provide annual public reports on school and district performance. Although enormous variation is evident in the quality of state standards and assessments and in the sophistication of state thinking about implementation, we believe that a broad enough consensus exists across the states on the core elements of this strategy to warrant our characterization of standards-based reform as America's de facto national education policy. Even within the states that have experimented most boldly with choice, charters, and vouchers, these initiatives are playing out in the context of a broader standards-based strategy. The injection of competition and market pressures may make state standards and accountability even more necessary to track the use of public funds in different settings.

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To what degree, if any, is the emerging national education strategy a product of federal policy? In virtually every other developed nation, this question would be incomprehensible. Most everywhere else, national governments, even in federalist systems, are clearly responsible for setting national policy; that is what education ministries do. In the United States, where education is among the unenumerated responsibilities left to the states under the Constitution and where more than 90 percent of education funding derives from state and local tax revenues, the federal government's role has historically been carefully circumscribed. Education has only fitfully been seen as an issue worthy of serious national attention. The current reform period, generally acknowledged to have begun with the release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, is striking for several reasons, not least for its staying power. Education reform has not only remained on the national radar screen for most of this period, but it also has now moved to the very top of the domestic political agenda.

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the centerpiece of the Clinton administration's education reform program, provides a fascinating case study of the challenges facing an activist administration in trying to craft federal legislation that can provide national direction and leadership in a highly decentralized education system. Goals 2000 represented a very different federal strategy than ever seen before. Despite the relative modesty of its funding, especially when judged against large categorical programs such as Title I, it was audacious not only in proposing to use federal funds to leverage whole system reforms at the state level, but also in creating new national structures to guide the states toward a national strategy. Although the nationalizing elements of Goals 2000, especially the role originally envisioned for the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC), never came into being, the funds provided for state and local systemic improvement under Title III of the act have played a significant role in many jurisdictions in helping education leaders move forward with the standards agenda. In the main body of this paper we will review the available data about how Goals 2000 funds have been used by states and localities as well as the evidence about impact. Our principal interest, however, is in examining the lessons to be learned from the demise of the nationalizing aspects embodied in Title II of the act, for that story might help bring an understanding of under what conditions, if any, federal policy can bring about a more coherent national strategy for improving the performance of America's schools and students.

The Evolution of Goals 2000

Goals 2000 had an unusual political and legislative history. It began not in Washington, D.C., but in Charlottesville, Virginia, at the 1989 National Education Summit, with the creation of the first-ever national education goals. While President George Bush convened the Charlottesville summit, the impetus for the creation of national goals came from the National Governors' Association (NGA). Even before the release of *A Nation at Risk*, education-minded governors, especially in the South, realized that without a comprehensive strategy to improve the knowledge and skills of their young people, their states' long-term economic prospects would be bleak. In releasing *A Nation at Risk*, President Ronald Reagan asserted that the poor performance of the education system imperiled the nation's economic security, but that this was the states' problem to fix. The states accepted the challenge, and over the next six years an unprecedented flood of education initiatives emanated from virtually every statehouse in the nation.

Fourteen months after the release of *A Nation at Risk*, the Education Commission of the States issued a report on new state legislation and policy aimed at education renewal. *Action in the States* identified forty-four states that had raised graduation requirements; thirty states that had developed new regulations governing learning outcomes, curriculum content, and frameworks; forty-five states that had strengthened teacher certification and evaluation requirements; and twenty-seven states that had implemented initiatives to provide more instructional time. More than 250 task forces were helping forty-six states develop comprehensive state action plans to improve educational outcomes of students.¹

By August 1986, when the governors gathered in Hilton Head, South Carolina, for their annual meeting, virtually every governor, regardless of his or her initial interest in education as an arena for policy action, had been compelled to place education reform at or near the top of the state's political agenda. That summer's NGA meeting, hosted by Governor Richard W. Riley of South Carolina and chaired by Governor Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, focused entirely on education. Organized principally around the release of a report that was the product of seven gubernatorial task forces on such topics as school readiness, leadership, teaching, technology, and parental involvement and choice, the meeting provided an occasion for the governors not only to talk with one another

and with such national leaders as Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers and Secretary of Education William Bennett about their efforts to stimulate reform in their own states, but also to propose collectively to their education communities a new public bargain. *Time for Results*, the report released at Hilton Head, was important for its message to the education community—"We will let up on regulating inputs and give you more flexibility and control over resources, in return for your commitment to be held more accountable for results"—as well as for its public message that the nation's governors had now come center stage on education.² The number of state leaders from both parties who could speak knowledgeably and passionately about education issues and who had initiated significant enough reform programs by 1986 to lay claim to the title of "education governor" was substantial, and that list was to grow even longer by the end of the decade.

Hilton Head was in a sense a trial run for Charlottesville three years later. *Time for Results* demonstrated the ability of the governors to work together across party lines on education issues and to speak with a unified public voice. As activist governors worked on reform initiatives in their own states (and discovered, incidentally, that being an "education governor" was good politics as well as good policy), the idea of creating some kind of national framework within which states could focus their efforts began to take shape.

Bush's invitation to the NGA to join him in an education summit in late 1989 provided the occasion for the governors to advance the idea of national education goals. Governor Terry Branstad of Iowa, who was chair of the NGA at that time, had earlier asked Governors Bill Clinton of Arkansas and Carroll Campbell of South Carolina, who had succeeded Richard Riley, to cochair a task force on national goals, and their work drove the agenda of the summit.

The idea of national goals for education emerged first from a bipartisan group of governors, not from Washington, and the proponents of national goals saw them principally as useful guideposts for state action, not as a stimulus for new federal initiatives. Eight years of Reaganism had so diminished state expectations about the federal role in education that the principal anxiety expressed by governors of both parties at Charlottesville was that Bush's "read my lips, no new taxes" pledge during the 1988 campaign would make it politically difficult for them to ask their own electorates to continue to finance ambitious state reforms. There was virtually

no expectation at Charlottesville of significant federal help; the policy statement issued by the governors and president spoke only about the need for more regulatory flexibility in existing federal programs.

A year after the summit, Bush brought new leadership into the Education Department, which lost little time in bringing forth a bold new proposal to provide national leadership for the implementation of national goals. America 2000, announced in April 1991 and carefully labeled a national strategy instead of a federal program, had four principal features: (1) a grass-roots organizing component, designed to promote the development of community-level support for achieving the national goals; (2) “break-the-mold” New American Schools, whose design and development would be supported by a new privately funded corporation, but whose implementation in each congressional district would be federally funded; (3) demonstration grants to support school choice through tuition vouchers; and (4) voluntary American Achievement Tests at grades four, eight, and twelve. The voluntary national tests were to be based on world-class standards, the model for such standards presumably being the widely acclaimed standards published two years earlier by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.³

In retrospect, three things are striking about the America 2000 package. First is the care taken to protect the administration from attacks from the right, with the inclusion of vouchers, strong private sector participation, and the disclaimer about the federal role (a strategy, not a program). Second is the focus on communities as the locus of activity instead of states, and the concomitant reluctance to acknowledge or connect with the systemic reform efforts already under way in the states. Third is the courage displayed in advancing the idea of national achievement tests. As John F. Jennings noted in his detailed account of the legislative history of the standards movement, this feature of America 2000 was the domestic equivalent of President Richard Nixon’s trip to China. It legitimized the idea of national standards and tests as a public policy issue, and it enabled grateful Democratic advocates of national standards such as Albert Shanker and Claiborne Pell, senator from Rhode Island, to endorse the bill.⁴

The legislation submitted by the Bush administration did not seek legal authority from Congress to create new standards and tests, instead taking a backdoor route of merely notifying Congress that discretionary funds would be used for this purpose. While this tactic proved effective in

helping the administration jump-start the work of professional associations in developing national standards, it increased friction within Congress as it considered the America 2000 legislation. The final bill so watered-down the administration's original legislation that even the bill's authors were less than enthusiastic. Democrats remained skeptical about the standards and testing strategy; Republicans worried about an expanded federal role; and administration officials were unhappy about the lack of support for the New American Schools. In the last days of the congressional session, a filibuster in the Senate, led by the most conservative Republican senators, killed the America 2000 legislation.

The congressional response to America 2000 was a reminder of just how difficult it is to craft a federal leadership role in education that can generate broad bipartisan support, especially when the focus shifts from programs targeted to specific groups of students in need of federal protection to a strategy aimed at raising the achievement of all children. The very components of America 2000 designed to insulate the administration from criticism from conservative Republicans (for example, choice and break-the-mold schools) raised alarms among the liberal Democrats on the House Education and Labor Committee, and both groups looked with some suspicion on the proposal for national tests. (As the Fordham Foundation president Chester E. Finn Jr. noted wryly when the Clinton administration's national test proposal ran aground, "Republicans don't like 'national,' Democrats don't like 'test.'") Perhaps it was never in the cards for a Democratic Congress to enact a Republican president's education agenda, especially heading into an election year, but some of the political dynamics that stalled America 2000 were still in play two years later when President Bill Clinton introduced his own program to help the country move forward to meet the ambitious goals set in Charlottesville.

Clinton's proposals were significantly influenced by the 1992 report of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST), a blue-ribbon group initiated by Secretary Alexander, authorized by Congress, and cochaired by Governors Roy Romer of Colorado and Campbell of South Carolina. Its charge was to advise the federal government on the desirability and feasibility of establishing national standards and tests. It recommended moving forward with national standards and a national system of assessments (not a single national test). These recommendations, however, were arrived at after very tough and contentious debates, revolving around two key issues. The first was the question of whether

there should be standards for schools and school systems as well as for students, and, if so, where they should be set. The council finally resolved that both school delivery standards and system performance standards were needed. Unlike student content and performance standards, however, these should not be set nationally; instead, they should be “developed by the states collectively from which each state could select the criteria that it finds useful for the purpose of assessing a school’s capacity and performance.”⁵ This Rube Goldberg–like solution foreshadowed the difficulties Congress was later to have in addressing this issue (now re-named opportunity-to-learn [OTL] standards) in Goals 2000.

The second contentious issue stemmed from the council’s attempt to reconcile its recommendation to create voluntary national standards with its recommendation for a voluntary system of assessments that would respect the ability of individual states (or groups of states) to design or select their own tests, all of which would somehow be linked to national standards.

To make such a mixed system of centralized standards and decentralized assessments work, some kind of central coordinating structure was necessary. NCEST recommended that the National Education Goals Panel, established by Bush and the governors in 1990 to monitor progress toward the goals, be reconfigured to assure bipartisan balance and that a new council be created under the panel’s jurisdiction that would certify both standards and criteria for assessments. This new entity, the National Education Standards and Assessment Council (NESAC), would be appointed by the goals panel to give it some political insulation, while still making it accountable publicly. NESAC’s membership would be one-third public officials, one-third educators, and one-third other citizens.

As the recommendations of NCEST moved to the White House and then to Congress, and ultimately got fought out in the course of enacting Goals 2000, the political challenge of fashioning a federally created council to provide national coordination and quality control on standards and assessment proved virtually insurmountable, and this crucial feature of the NCEST report never came into being.

Despite the surface similarities between America 2000 and Goals 2000—similarities the Clinton administration played up in seeking Republican support—Goals 2000 represented a fundamentally different vision of educational reform and of the federal role in stimulating and leading that reform. What were the primary influences shaping that

vision? First, and probably most important, virtually all the key administration players brought a strong orientation toward the leadership role of states and a shared belief that, without coherent state policy grounded in high expectations for all students, the nation would be unlikely to make much progress in improving student performance. Second, a clear conception of what coherent state policy might look like had begun to emerge, drawn both from a series of influential articles by Marshall S. Smith and Jennifer O'Day of Stanford University and from the reform strategy unfolding in California under the leadership of State Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig. The Smith and O'Day articles on systemic reform argued for a much stronger alignment between goals for student learning and curriculum, instructional materials, assessments, and teacher preparation and professional development programs. They called for clear, high academic goals and stronger instructional guidance from the top of the system, coupled with substantial decentralization to schools and communities to determine the best means of accomplishing those goals.⁶ California's ambitious curriculum frameworks, its use of statewide adoption policies to push the textbook publishers to produce aligned texts, its creation of a statewide network of content-based professional development centers to help teachers implement the frameworks, and its development of challenging new assessments to measure student learning against the frameworks—these elements constituted an unfolding existence-proof that American states might be able to create the kind of coherent, aligned educational policies associated with more centralized European and Asian systems.

In the Goals 2000 legislation put forth by the Clinton administration, the states were the locus of standards and assessment, with national standards serving only as exemplars to guide the development of state standards and benchmarks against which to judge them.⁷ In contrast to America 2000, national standards were to have no independent weight at the community level, for no national tests would be derived from them.

In this spirit, the heart of Goals 2000 was its state grants program, designed to provide support both for such state-level activities as standards and assessments development and for district-level planning and implementation of standards-based reform. The legislation acknowledged that many states were already well launched on systemic reform and encouraged the states to use the new federal funds to help implement reform plans and programs already under way. The legislation required no

regulations and granted the secretary broad waiver authority, again to signal the administration's conception of Goals 2000 as a vehicle to facilitate the implementation of a state-defined reform strategy, not as a new free-standing federal program with its own rules and regulations. As long as states bought into the underlying principles of standards-based, systemic reform and committed to a broad-based planning process, virtually no strings were attached to the use of Goals 2000 funds.

The flexibility deliberately built into the design of the state grants section (Title III) of Goals 2000 made it extremely hard to attribute results to the expenditure of federal dollars. Unlike the typical federal education program, Goals 2000 addressed neither an identifiable target population (for example, children whose first language is not English) nor an identifiable problem (for example, safe, drug-free schools). Its purpose was to help states raise academic expectations and improve academic achievement for all students. In this sense, it was path-breaking legislation, for it asserted a national interest in improving the performance of the whole enterprise. Given how circumscribed the federal role in education has been historically, and the modesty of the federal share of education funding, any attempt to take a much more prescriptive posture than that adopted in Goals 2000 about how federal funds should be used in support of state-based reforms would probably have been doomed to failure.

That Goals 2000 was finally enacted in 1994 is largely a consequence of the broad support it enjoyed from virtually every major education and business organization, the bipartisan congressional interest in creating a role for itself in the national education reform movement sparked by the Charlottesville summit, and the fact that Democrats controlled both houses of Congress. Congress addressed the anxiety about a broadened federal role by including language explicitly prohibiting federal mandates and control and reaffirming the responsibility of the states and communities for setting educational policy.

The legislation aimed to define the elusive federal-state partnership first envisioned by the governors during the 1989 National Education Summit. In exchange for flexibility and minimal regulation, the states would be held accountable for improvements in student performance. Within a standards-based reform context then, Goals 2000 attempted to channel federal resources in support of state-driven systemic education reform.

Supporting State and Local Education Systemic Improvement

The core of Goals 2000 is Title III, through which states received funds to realign their systems, as they saw fit, to achieve the national goals. The funds would help states and local communities through a transition phase as they improved their basic services and engaged in restructuring and realigning their systems around emerging standards. Compared with long-standing federal formula-grant programs, Title III employed a number of innovative approaches to refashion federal support for state reform initiatives. First, multilevel planning grants were made to both states and their local districts, and they were designed to encourage a combination of top-down and bottom-up planning. In the first grant year, states could use up to 40 percent of the funds to support state-level system building activities, with 90 percent of funds in subsequent years designed to support competitive grants to local districts and schools to implement state standards.⁸ Second, the federal funds were designed to be “responsible block grants,” a term coined by Secretary Riley. While the law designated a broad use of funds for coordinated improvement activities, it allowed states to develop their own criteria, ones that presumably reflected state priorities, for awarding subgrants. Third, Goals 2000 also included an experimental program, the Education Flexibility Partnership, that extended to six states (expanded to twelve states under the 1996 amendments) the secretary’s authority to temporarily waive regulations in nine federal programs.

State-Level Grants

Since 1994, states have received more than \$2 billion in formula-based Goals 2000 grants for education reform activities. For the most part, congressional appropriations for Goals 2000 steadily increased from the initial \$92 million in 1994 to more than \$490 million by 1999. Allocation levels dropped slightly under the intense scrutiny of the 104th Congress, from \$358 million to \$336 million, as conservative Republicans incorporated the Goals 2000 program into their broader strategy to reduce deficit spending and eliminate avenues for federal intrusion in school-level decisionmaking. By 1997, however, in the wake of the public backlash against the federal government shutdowns, Goals 2000 allocations sharply rebounded to \$471 million. After some initial resistance from a

handful of states, virtually all are now participating in Goals 2000, with annual federal grants ranging in size from \$370,000 to Wyoming in 1994 to \$54.7 million to California in 1997.⁹

The most systematic, though largely descriptive, review of how states used their Goals 2000 funds comes from a 1998 study by the General Accounting Office (GAO), *Goals 2000: Flexible Funding Supports State and Local Education Reform*. The GAO reported that, between 1994 and 1997, collectively states used about \$109 million for state-level reform activities to help plan and build the key components of a new standards-based system. Specifically, about 44 percent of these state-level funds supported personnel to manage the states' subgrant programs as well as other state-sponsored education reform activities. States also used about 28 percent of these funds to contract with state and national experts to help develop new standards and assessments, to devise new curricula aligned with new standards, and to conduct necessary research and development activities. About 9 percent of funds supported training and conference costs associated with state education improvement panel activities and the training of teachers and administrators.¹⁰

These broad categories of state activity mask the multiplicity of ways that states were able to weave Goals 2000 funds seamlessly into their respective reform strategies. Each state's story is different, but Texas provides an illustrative example of how a large state employed Goals 2000 funds to advance its own standards-based reform agenda. Between 1994 and 1997, Texas received about \$102 million in Goals 2000 funds with more than \$6 million supporting state-level reform activity. Texas explicitly connected its support of Goals 2000 with the statutory assurances that barred any federal intervention in state affairs. Upon joining, the state refashioned Goals 2000 as Academics 2000, an administrative two-step to avert a conservative backlash for accepting federal dollars.

The seeds of current reform efforts date back before Goals 2000 to 1983, when the Texas state legislature first directed the state Board of Education to develop essential elements of instruction by course and grade level for each content area in the state's required curriculum. Academics 2000 supported the development of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), which the state board adopted in 1997 to replace the essential elements for English language arts and reading, mathematics, science, and social studies, among other subject areas. Texas employed an exhaustive and iterative public outreach effort to develop TEKS, with

fifteen subject-area teams, two public comment periods, state board of education review committees as well as Internet, newsletter, and regional education service centers for dissemination during the process. The state began implementing the new essential knowledge and skills in 1998–99 through textbook adoption policies, state assessments, and professional development activities.

In 1996 Goals 2000 funds helped establish two statewide educator development centers for training and professional development in English language arts and social studies. These centers help districts and schools implement TEKS and disseminate models for exemplary instructional strategies and effective staff development. An important part of the Texas accountability system, though not supported by Goals 2000 funds, is the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), first administered in 1993. The TAAS forms the basis of the state's Academic Excellence Indicator System, which tracks school performance and reports data by student race and poverty. Under the new Professional Development Appraisal System established in 1998, teacher evaluations are linked with schoolwide student performance, and schools and districts are rated and accredited based on performance indicators. Clearly, Goals 2000 cannot be credited with having built Texas's systemic reform strategy, but its funds supported the development of essential building blocks, without which the state's progress would likely have been much slower.¹¹ Because Texas had a clear education reform plan, it was able to use its Goals 2000 funds strategically. Texas presents just one example of the many approaches states employed in building their standards-based systems.

District-Level Grants

Most Goals 2000 funds supported reform efforts at the district and school level. States distributed these funds through competitive processes based on their own criteria, focused on three broad categories of activity established by the law: local school improvement, preservice teacher education reform, and professional development. From 1994 to 1997, more than one-third of the 14,367 school districts nationwide received a Goals 2000 subgrant. Because states had discretion in determining the size of district grants, the average size of awards varied, ranging from \$10,000 to more than \$200,000.

Goals 2000 subgrants paid for a variety of education improvement activities, which the GAO found to be aligned with the state education reform strategy as intended. Two-thirds of subgrants supported local education reform activities, such as developing improvement plans, updating curriculum frameworks, involving parents and communities in reform efforts, and professional development. About 10 percent supported technology acquisition. The remaining funds, less than one quarter, supported preservice training for college students who plan on becoming teachers, efforts to align local curriculum with standards and select appropriate assessment systems, and a mixture of activities that cut across these categories.¹²

Texas also serves as an example of how states were aligning the local subgrants with their own improvement priorities. Through its Academics 2000 program, Texas awarded a total of \$96 million in competitive grants to 833 districts between 1994 and 1997.¹³ To meet its goal that all elementary students exhibit grade-level performance by the end of fourth grade, Texas strategically dedicated its subgrant program to improving early childhood and elementary student achievement. The first two years of subgrant awards addressed proficiency in reading, English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science, with the last three cycles of awards targeting elementary reading improvement to complement the Texas Reading Initiative. In addition, Texas was one of the first Education Flexibility Partnership states, with one of most active waiver programs in the country. According to a 1998 GAO report on the Ed-Flex program, between 1995 and 1997 the Texas education agency issued eight statewide waivers from federal record-keeping and administrative requirements, and another forty district waivers, some of which allowed for more targeted use of teacher training funds. Texas expects all districts receiving waivers for Title I monies to show annual gains in test scores so that in five years 90 percent of all students will pass the state's assessments in reading and mathematics.¹⁴

What Is Known

While a broad sense exists of how states and districts used their Goals 2000 monies to further their systemic reform plans, little evidence is available by way of student performance to indicate whether such activity improved student learning. Given Title III's flexibility and its goal of

seamless integration with state improvement activities, it may be impossible to link Goals 2000 dollars to any concrete state outcomes. Nonetheless, a review is instructive of what systematic information is known on the general and, where possible, specific effects of the federal program on state and local reform efforts.

The 1998 GAO study of Goals 2000 commended the Title III state and local grants program, reporting to lawmakers “that in its present form, Goals 2000 accomplished what Congress intended.” Because most states had begun their state education reform strategy before 1994, Goals 2000 funds provided an “additional flexible resource for promoting coordinated improvements in state and local education systems.” According to GAO, some states reported that federal funds accelerated the pace of reform. For example, an official in Nevada characterized Goals 2000 funding as a “catalyst” that sparked the development of content and performance standards in each grade, stating that his state did not even have the terminology for standards-based reform before Goals 2000. Missouri officials claimed Goals 2000 was the “vehicle that got schools and universities talking for the first time.” In other states, officials thought Goals 2000 monies helped to improve the quality of key standards components under development. An Oregon official reported that Goals 2000 funding made the difference between “doing it and doing it right,” explaining that the state might have settled for standards only half as good without the additional funds to bring in experts and to partner with colleges to create institutes for helping teachers use the content standards. Other states found Goals 2000 funding valuable because it enabled their state to respond quickly to evolving problems and opportunities. One New York official explained that “it allows you to change the tire while the car is moving.”¹⁵

Beyond the GAO’s broad review of state activity, however, a dearth of research exists around how Goals 2000’s flexibility and multilevel grant process have contributed to widespread use of standards as the new systemic building blocks that support improved teaching and learning. Available research comes from Education Department–supported contracts with research and policy analysis firms—surveys of state and district officials and annual analyses of state progress reports submitted to the Goals 2000 program office—designed to gather baseline information on state and district reform activities.

In 1997 Policy Studies Associates (PSA) conducted a survey of state officials and federal program directors to collect information on the early

implementation of Goals 2000 and eight other programs reauthorized under the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA). Survey results, reported in *Living in Interesting Times: Early State Implementation of New Federal Education Laws*, suggest that the policy framework and emphasis on flexibility for results proffered by Goals 2000 has helped reduce policy fragmentation and increase coordination across federal and state programs. Cross-program communication and consolidated planning were widely present at the state level and growing in acceptance at the district level. State officials reported that the new consolidated plan option "had sparked new ideas" about how formerly disparate programs might work in tandem, including the integration of so-called monitoring activities.¹⁶ Most Goals 2000 coordinators reported that states were also actively reviewing their own laws and regulations to identify those that might impede reform or serve as barriers to local flexibility.

A more cautious finding from the PSA survey reveals that program administrators were slow to embrace the student performance orientation promoted by the Goals 2000 policy framework. While states reported that they were actively dismantling their old monitoring systems, few state administrators were sending a strong message to their districts that accountability for student performance would replace the compliance monitoring of the past. With the exception of Title I directors, less than 20 percent of survey respondents used student performance data in ways that helped to focus attention on student performance to improve program quality. This contrasted sharply with the 91 percent of directors who reported that such student data were in hand. In terms of technical assistance, rather than actively assessing local capacity to respond to new legislation, many administrators were relying on districts to know when they needed help. Many waited to be "invited" in, with only 13 percent of program managers reporting visits triggered by information about student performance. According to PSA, "technical assistance remained largely responsive to program-specific issues, rather than a cross-cutting agenda of standards, assessment, whole-school improvement, and data-driven decision-making."¹⁷ These findings were confirmed in a separate report to the department summarizing state Goals 2000 progress reports, 1995–97, by Policy Studies Associates. Forty percent of the state progress reports did not include information on student performance at the state or local level. Of those that did, about one-third reported aggregate data from all districts receiving Goals 2000 funding or reported

grant purposes, such as number of teachers trained and partnerships facilitated.¹⁸

The 1997 Urban Institute study *Reports on Reform from the Field: District and State Survey Results* represents the first systematic feedback from the field on the state of reform, broadly construed, since the passage of Goals 2000. For the purposes of the discussion here, it provides a snapshot of how states and districts are struggling with both planning and initiating standards-based reform. Through surveys of fifty state officials and twenty-seven hundred district administrators, the Urban Institute collected information about state and district views on reform, their progress, and their technical assistance needs.¹⁹ Survey findings indicated that state and district improvement efforts appeared to be working in concert, as intended under standards-based reform, with both state and district officials reporting a clear and strong influence of state-level policies on district-level progress. Districts that were located in states that either were early leaders in standards-based reform—Kentucky, Maryland, and Oregon—or had received a Goals 2000 subgrant reported a “high understanding of the elements of standards-based reform” and that “reform would require greater change on their part.” Compared with districts in other states or those that had not received a Goals 2000 grant, these districts have a “clear understanding of what reform entails.” Early reform districts and Goals 2000 districts were also more likely to report greater progress than other districts. Districts in early reform states appeared to have a closer and more helpful relationship with their states. Districts not in early reform states or receiving Goals 2000 subgrants appeared slightly behind in planning for and implementing standards in schools and classrooms.

The study revealed additional challenges. Both district- and state-level administrators reported issues associated with assessments and accountability as those that would require the greatest change on their part, in which they are making the least progress, and where they needed the most help. They also reported a need for information about how to provide effective technical assistance to districts and schools that are not making adequate progress in student performance.

The Urban Institute survey found that size and poverty level were important factors in determining the level of district understanding of, and engagement in, standards-based reform. Districts with the greatest poverty reported substantial difficulty in establishing standards and align-

ing curricula. While high-poverty districts appeared well connected to helpful sources of assistance regarding federal programs, they did not seem to have the connections needed to help with standards-based reform. High-poverty districts also reported needing a great deal more assistance in a number of areas, but particularly in providing technical assistance to schools not making adequate progress. In addition, the study found that smaller districts appeared disadvantaged as well, reporting significantly lower levels of understanding of the various elements of reform and less progress. They also did not appear well connected to helpful sources of information and assistance, which may stem from having smaller, less specialized staff that can attend to reform.

Districts reported that state agencies, professional associations, and education publications were the most helpful sources of technical assistance for standards-based reform, with the federal government being the least helpful. However, state officials found federal sources of information and assistance very helpful in their reform efforts, thus affirming the underlying design of Goals 2000, which channels federal resources through states, not districts. The study characterized the department's technical assistance efforts as "transparent" and recommended its continued support of education reform partnerships and consortia as mechanisms for disseminating information and providing technical assistance.²⁰

The GAO report on Goals 2000 also included site visits to ten states. State officials applauded the design of Goals 2000 with its emphasis on broad functions rather than specific programs. One state official reported that such flexibility allowed districts and schools to work together on designing comprehensive, coherent implementation strategies, ones free of the "stovepipe" mentality of previous disparate programs. While it is no surprise that state officials endorsed the flexibility of the grant, they did resist the idea of block grants, welcoming instead some degree of broad guidelines. Their resistance stemmed from concerns that any attempt to combine Goals 2000 funds with other federal funding into a more general block grant would increase the risk that resources would not support education reform. They did not want unencumbered funds, preferring instead the clear but broad parameters used in Goals 2000.²¹

While the several Goals 2000 reports discussed in this paper provide a sense of the sheer number of educators, policymakers, and parents who have become mobilized around developing standards-based systems and improving teaching and learning, they reveal little about whether the

federal funds have contributed to the creation of state and local systemic reform policies and programs that are likely over time to lead to substantial improvements in student performance. For states such as Texas that made strategic use of Goals 2000 funds to advance a coherent reform agenda and are now seeing significant student learning gains, it is relatively easy to declare the program a success. But in the vast majority of states, where as yet little evidence is seen of substantial progress in student performance and there is a less coherent reform strategy, anecdotal reports from satisfied state and local officials constitute an unacceptably weak indicator of program effectiveness. Absent some federal mechanism for exercising quality control over the systemic reform work of states, “responsible block grants” look little different from revenue sharing. Goals 2000 as enacted contained an important provision that was designed to provide some measure of quality control over the setting of state standards, the foundation piece of any systemic reform strategy, but that provision never became operational.

National Education Reform Leadership, Standards, and Assessments

The most problematic and controversial component of the Goals 2000 was the national leadership provision outlined in Title II of the act. This title authorized two federally funded entities to provide leadership and technical assistance to states engaging in voluntary systemic reform. The law codified the existing National Education Goals Panel and created a new National Education Standards and Improvement Council. With the establishment of these two relatively modest, broadly based, quasi-governmental organizations, lawmakers hoped to promote “coherent, nationwide, systemic education reform.”²² That only one of these entities exists today, the National Education Goals Panel, illustrates the governmental tensions and political pitfalls in formalizing federal leadership functions around strategic planning for national education reform.

Because the goals panel had already been in existence since 1990 and had a carefully circumscribed mission—to report on state and national progress toward meeting the national education goals—the decision to incorporate it along with the goals in the new legislation was relatively straightforward. Its membership was expanded to ensure a bipartisan

balance among its governors, congressional representatives, and state legislators, and its mission was made proactive; it was to work “to establish a system of high academic standards and assessments” and to help build “a national, bipartisan consensus to achieve the Goals,” as well as to report annual progress. One could argue that its reporting function could have gotten it in trouble, especially with low-performing states, but the annual data on state performance against the goals were sufficiently weak and inconclusive in the early years to obviate this danger. Consequently, the panel’s work suffered more from public inattention than from controversy—hardly a fatal disability in the eyes of Congress.

Unlike the existing goals panel, the proposed National Education Standards and Improvement Council was designed to break new ground. Its purpose was to promote the development and use of high-quality national and state standards and assessments, support research and development work where appropriate, and provide, at the request of states, a review and certification of state standards and assessments. The law also provided for NESIC to develop national opportunity-to-learn standards and to certify such standards from states, if voluntarily submitted. Although independent, all NESIC decisions could be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the goals panel. Together these two entities would provide the necessary technical and political leadership for state and local reform efforts.

Dramatic shifts in party power at the federal level between 1993 and 1996 complicated the creation of the NESIC as policymakers and interest groups gained new opportunities to pursue alternative agendas and redefine problems related to education. The 1996 amendments to Goals 2000 withdrew authorization for NESIC, even before its members had been appointed, thus removing any levers for quality control available to the Department of Education or to Congress. Without an entity such as NESIC, the sole national leadership functions were left to the goals panel and to the department’s capacity to leverage programmatic funds and to use its education bully pulpit.

The Rise and Fall of NESIC

NESAC, the national council first proposed in the 1992 NCEST report, was to be nonfederal, nonduplicative of existing entities, bipartisan, representative of government at all levels, and accountable to the public. The council would coordinate a national system of standards and assessments,

issue guidelines, ensure technical merit, and certify state and national products with a “Good Housekeeping seal of approval.”²³ Its powers, particularly around the controversial concept of opportunity to learn, were strategically limited, however. While NESAC could develop “national school delivery standards,” it could not certify them, thereby defusing the potential litigation that concerned conservative congressional leaders. The provision also eased liberal Democrats’ concerns that any system that included testing would address students’ opportunities to learn the standards. As conceptualized and designed, the proposed NESAC appeared a viable bipartisan structure that would help guide the emerging national interest in standards-based systemic reform.

The NCEST report’s recommendations quickly infiltrated the ongoing congressional and public debate over Bush’s America 2000 proposal. Shortly following the report’s release, a group of four dozen prominent educators, scholars, and civil rights leaders issued a joint statement aimed at “hitting the brakes” on the drive to create a single national test—a stand that reinforced the NCEST recommendation of a national system of assessments while condemning the president’s plan. The signers were prestigious education leaders and experts, including Gregory R. Anrig, president of the Educational Testing Service, James Comer of Yale University, Marion Wright Edelman of the Children’s Defense Fund, and Marshall Smith of Stanford University, who also served on NCEST, among others.²⁴

Lawmakers in the Democratically controlled Congress expressed reservation at NCEST’s endorsement of a national system of testing and a coordinating body that would facilitate its development. Their misgivings stemmed from concurrent debates over the reauthorization of federal education research programs and a widely circulated report from the Office of Technology Assessment that called for more research on high-stakes testing. The report reinforced liberal Democrats’ concerns about the negative consequences of testing for disadvantaged populations and under-resourced schools. Consequently, as a condition for receiving federal funding under America 2000, liberal lawmakers wanted to elevate service delivery standards to the same level of importance as content standards. Encouraged by an election-year push, they added an amendment to Bush’s education bill that required any assessment of student learning to also include assessments of school resources. The Bush administration vowed to veto the bill, calling it a “federal recipe book” that would dictate

to local school boards “day-to-day decisions about curriculum, discipline, teacher training, and textbooks.”²⁵ The growing conflict over the role of national assessments and system delivery standards led to a legislative stalemate, and Bush’s education bill was allowed to die quietly in the Senate.

A political window opened for the national goals effort when the 1992 presidential election swept Arkansas governor Bill Clinton into the White House, for the premise was that a Democratically controlled Congress would be eager to move from confrontation to cooperation with the White House on education legislation. As a key participant in the Charlottesville summit, Clinton was strongly committed to the governors’ 1989 collective pledge to achieve the national goals. Drawing directly from the NCEST recommendations and his vision of a new federal-state partnership, Clinton incorporated NESAC into his Goals 2000 legislative proposal, with council members to be appointed by the goals panel.

The president and his education secretary, Richard W. Riley, quickly learned just how brief their honeymoon would be. Democratic lawmakers, frustrated by twelve years of jousting with a Republican White House, were not about to roll over and enact an education bill that many perceived as a warmed-over version of America 2000.²⁶ The House Education and Labor Committee chair immediately declared Clinton’s proposal a “non-starter” and sent it back to the White House for revisions. Administration officials dutifully redrafted the legislation, renaming a somewhat repositioned version of NESAC, now called the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC), to minimize conflict around any mention of testing. The composition of NESIC changed as well: Appointment authority shifted to the president, with the goals panel reduced to offering nominations alongside the Speaker of the House and Senate majority leader. These changes would provide the Democratically controlled Congress and, to a lesser extent, the White House more control over NESIC. Clinton’s initial proposal called for the council to be comprised of “eminent Americans.” The revised proposal allocated the twenty seats on the council principally to representatives of interest groups: five professional educators, five representatives of business, labor, and postsecondary institutions; five public members such as participants in advocacy groups, civil rights, and disability groups, or state and local policymakers; and five education experts. The Senate version of NESIC was similar but composed of nineteen members.²⁷

The contentious debate in the previous Congress over opportunity-to-learn standards was re-ignited in the early deliberations of Goals 2000. Representative Jack Reed (D-R.I.) attached a controversial amendment to the Goals 2000 bill that required states, as a condition of receiving federal funds, to take corrective action if opportunity-to-learn standards were not implemented in local school districts. Representative William D. Ford (D-Mich.), chair of the House Education and Labor Committee, followed with a demand that such standards be “equal to or slightly ahead of any testing or standards.” Furthermore, the House bill authorized a national commission to develop national opportunity-to-learn standards that NESIC would then certify. These actions sparked conservative anger; if NESIC could certify OTL standards, it would pave the way for federal control in schools and fuel lawsuits from civil rights groups. This would mark the first step on a “slippery slope toward federal control of education and serve as the basis for new unfunded mandates directed at states.”²⁸

At this stage of the national debate, the governors were well invested in education reform and were particularly watchful of congressional actions. They were skeptical of the numerous “voluntary” provisions emerging in the bills. They believed that such mechanisms for content standard certification could, by a turn of the wrist in Congress, quickly become mandatory. In a letter to Secretary Riley, Governor Campbell blamed Congress for destroying the new vision of a federal-state partnership that would support flexibility for results. He wrote that “throughout the [legislative] process, the pressure has always been to prescribe more and more federal requirements, and to switch performance based accountability to accountability based on inputs.” From his perspective, the House bill came “dangerously close to derailing our hard-won emphasis on student achievement.” Furthermore, by giving the power to NESIC it “leads us inevitably toward a federalization of what has been, until now, a pact that recognized and respected the preeminent role of states in education reform.”²⁹

The governors’ displeasure increased as Congress authorized the national goals. Two additional goals regarding parent involvement and teacher professional education were included, extending the original national goals from six to eight. Although neither was controversial, their addition illustrates how control of the goal-setting process, as well as its implementation strategy, had shifted from the governors to the federal government, specifically the interest groups that surrounded the legisla-

tive process. As the Goals 2000 bill went to conference, Governor Campbell called upon the president to pull the federal government “out of the goals/standards movement because the federal government cannot seem to contribute without wanting to control.” He reasoned that “governors and parents should not have to fight for their rights in a very complicated subject area every time Congress passes an education bill.” These protests proved moderately effective. In the final version of Goals 2000, NESIC was authorized to develop voluntary national OTL standards but given no authority to certify those standards, and the state requirement to develop OTL standards was dropped. Multiple sections of the law assured the voluntary nature of NESIC’s review authority.

With the passage of Goals 2000, Congress and the executive branch, not the governors, would control the standard-setting process. After repeated attempts by both President Bush and the governors to exclude congressional participation, Congress was hesitant to lose NESIC. Access to any goals-related entity presented a long-sought opportunity to institutionalize its role and interests. As a result, lawmakers kept the panel and designed it to secure channels of influence and future policy choices. Now the dominant group in Washington, the Democratic 103rd Congress structured NESIC to maximize input from current Democratic leadership. Congressional leaders altered the composition of the panel so that majority leaders of both the House and Senate could make nominations. And they shifted final appointment authority from the goals panel to the Democratic president, reducing the goals panel’s role to simple veto power over NESIC’s decisions. A generous sprinkling of the term “voluntary” throughout the legislation seemed to placate conservative fears about NESIC’s authority, particularly in reference to NESIC’s certification powers over standards and assessments.

But the new nomination process for its nineteen members required a complex formula: seven from the secretary, and twelve from the Speaker of the House, majority leader of the Senate, and the goals panel. These elected policymakers would have to make nominations based on a set of appointment categories that clearly represented organized interests: professional educators; education experts; representative of business, labor, and postsecondary institutions; and the public and advocacy groups. Additional constraints further complicated the process: At least one member must represent business, but the other eighteen could all be educators; “to the extent feasible,” NESIC should “reflect the diversity of the United

States” and “be equally divided between two major political parties”; and one-third must have “experience or background in the educational needs of children who are from low-income families, from minority backgrounds, have limited-English proficiency, or have disabilities.”³¹ The president had much latitude in determining whether the panel would be dominated by interest groups. Because NESIC was designed as a congressionally authorized federal agency, in future years lawmakers could continue to redefine and expand its functions and powers, as happened a few months later in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Under the new law, states could not receive federal funds for K-12 education until either the secretary of education or NESIC approved their state reform plans.

Following its authorization, the nomination process for NESIC proved slow and cumbersome. Less than two months following the enactment of Goals 2000, the department received more than three hundred nominations, with names flowing in daily. This growing list was supplemented by an internal solicitation of nominations from senior department officials who oversaw civil rights enforcement, bilingual education, adult and vocational education, and special education—all long-standing programs with special interests. The goals panel also culled through nearly two hundred names provided by panel members and interest groups, all requiring background checks. The process seemed to encourage interest group lobbying with its appointment categories and diversity considerations. For example, the National Alliance of Business openly expressed the hope that four or five business representatives would serve on NESIC. Concerned with maintaining the legitimacy of the standards review council, the governors wanted to see the “best and brightest” selected, particularly nationally recognized names, but also people still in the classroom and in schools. The nomination process backlogged. With a pending election in November, the president and Secretary Riley decided “to wait and see” and consequently found themselves facing a radically altered political landscape as they contemplated completing the appointment process. In late December 1994 as a last-ditch attempt to preserve their influence before the Republican Congress took charge, congressional leaders sent the president their nominations, with the secretary’s following soon thereafter. But President Clinton was well aware that if he appointed NESIC in light of the forthcoming turnover in Congress, the

council would have no legitimacy and would encounter numerous challenges to its establishment and efforts.³²

As Congress debated Goals 2000, the media prophesied “standards in collision” and speculated that NESIC’s first job would be to “introduce some order into the standards-setting process.”³³ National standards development projects in arts, civics, geography, science, U.S. history, and social studies, which the Bush administration funded, released their documents late in 1994. In a parallel effort, states themselves were engaged in a bevy of standards-setting activities, as were several of the nation’s largest school districts. Apprehension about the large number of organizations developing standards turned to concerns about the quality of work being produced and who could safeguard it. If in place, NESIC would review and certify the standards. But NESIC was still only an idea—stalled by its cumbersome nomination process. As the field awaited NESIC’s appointment, other national groups volunteered to fill the void. These groups sought private funds to find “areas of commonality among various standards” and to rework them “into more manageable documents for teachers.”³⁴

While federal involvement might improve the situation, signs were that it might also aggravate it. Critics connected the poor quality of some of the national standards projects with their federal funding source. Federal financial and political support proved unreliable, as evidenced by the department’s refusal to continue funding the national English language arts project, citing lack of progress. The release of the national history standards in November 1994 created a political furor, culminating in a 99-1 sense of the Senate resolution denouncing their political correctness and opposing their certification.³⁵ Although the history standards were subsequently revised to incorporate most of the concerns raised by critics, the controversy underscored the political difficulty of making standards “national.” It also raised questions about the federal government’s ability to address quality, especially in standards that were developed with federal assistance. (The history standards were revised based on the recommendations of a foundation-funded panel of experts, convened by the Council of Basic Education, a respected nonpartisan, not-for-profit, private organization.)

With the election of 1994, for the first time in forty years the GOP captured control of both houses of Congress. Republicans also gained control

of nineteen state legislatures and a majority of governorships, reflecting a nationwide endorsement of their political platform.³⁶ In terms of education policy, it marked the Republicans' first time in power since the advent of all major federal K-12 education programs. They were determined to roll back the federal role in education, and Goals 2000 was their target: a "symbol in the larger ideological clash over state and federal rights." They believed that it would lead to a national curriculum set in Washington and that NESIC would set school-level policies, bringing the federal government right into their children's classrooms.³⁷

As new Republican lawmakers descended upon Washington in January 1995, they exhibited remarkable cohesion. At the request of the new Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), the conservative Heritage Foundation developed a briefing book for new lawmakers that called for the evaluation of every federal education program, the elimination of the federal education department over five years, and the "scrapping" of NESIC and the goals panel. Conservatives viewed the standards panels as "politically controlled" and feared that NESIC would essentially operate as a nineteen-member national school board.³⁸ The Christian Coalition charged that Goals 2000 would bring the federal government deeply into public schools, burden them with new regulations, and "bully them about how to teach everything from sex education to 'politically correct' history."³⁹

Some conservative critics charged that the national standards movement had been "hijacked" by the education establishment of teachers, administrators, and other "politically correct" education experts. For these critics, the debate about education reform was too removed from parents and citizens. The nomination process for NESIC did not guarantee the participation of lay persons, reinforcing conservative claims that, as currently constructed, NESIC would facilitate the continued domination of education reform by education experts. Moreover, because the consensus-building process at the 1989 National Education Summit around goals occurred behind closed doors and the 1992 presidential campaign prompted little debate about education, as all three candidates endorsed national standards and examinations, public debate about national goals had been severely limited. Bipartisan support of education reform may have helped precipitate the conservative backlash.

Unlike the 103rd Congress, which simply wanted input into the design of the national goals and their related structures, conservative lawmakers

entering the 104th Congress wanted it all eliminated. Within its first month in power the GOP-controlled Congress held hearings on the controversial history standards to air its dismay at the use of federal monies to create a national, as well as an unpatriotic, curriculum. The controversy over the history standards fueled conservative efforts not only to reevaluate NESIC, but also to eliminate it and any possibility that a federal entity outside the control of Congress could influence school curricula. The new chair of the House Education and Labor Committee, Representative William Goodling of Pennsylvania (a former principal and school superintendent), pledged to “rethink the whole thing—whether the federal role has already grown too large, whether we’ll need NESIC.”⁴⁰

With NESIC under attack, only a few voices were raised in its defense. Speaking on behalf of the business community, the National Alliance of Business stressed the importance of bipartisan leadership in the standards-setting process and that such leadership should not be sacrificed to “any incidental political debate on structures or other issues.” Gordon Ambach, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, told Congress it would be a “terrible mistake” to eliminate NESIC, citing the need for an “objective and prestigious” national council to add legitimacy to the standards documents being developed by the states. But these voices were few. As Christopher Cross, president of the Council for Basic Education, observed, NESIC had “no real constituency” that considered its services vital. Existing educational organizations were already beginning to fill the void and provided feedback to states on their standards. Chester Finn observed that the “marketplace should make these judgments” with states and communities buying or rejecting standards as they see fit.⁴¹

In early 1995 Representative Goodling introduced legislation to eliminate NESIC as a way to “put a stop to an unwarranted federal intrusion into education while preserving education standards developed by State and local school districts.” In presenting his proposal on the House floor, Goodling stated that NESIC “has generated great controversy about continued local control of education.” He continued:

The distance between standards and curriculum is not great. Currently there is a prohibition on the federal government dictating curriculum to States and school districts and there is good reason to be wary of Federal involvement in certifying education standards. The seriously flawed and justifiably controversial history standards illustrate how the standards-

setting process can go awry and point out the dangers of having a Presidentially appointed unaccountable body certifying education standards.

In spite of this controversy, Goodling pledged his support of standards-based reform as “the most promising strategy for improving education for all children in our Nation.”⁴² Understanding that the choice was now between saving NESIC and risking all of Goals 2000, Clinton and Riley signaled their acceptance of Goodling’s bill, and NESIC was effectively dead.

The demise of NESIC did not end the discussion among the states about the need for some kind of credible external review body to which they could turn. Governor Romer of Colorado liked to wave his state’s draft standards in the air at Washington meetings and say, “I may not need anyone to certify these standards, but I still need someone who can tell me how they stack up against those of other states and nations with whom we compete.” This being America, three different private organizations jumped into the standards review business, and by the end of his term in office Governor Romer’s new question was, how was he to make sense of the disparate grades Colorado standards received from the American Federation of Teachers, the Council for Basic Education, and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation?⁴³

The Balance Sheet

Has Goals 2000 been successful? The legislation begins by specifying the following purposes: “to improve learning and teaching by providing a national framework for education; to promote the research, consensus building, and systemic changes necessary to ensure equitable educational opportunities and high levels of educational achievement for all students; to provide a framework for reauthorization of all federal education programs.”

If the principal measure of success is the degree to which a law fulfills its stated purpose, Goals 2000 deserves high marks. To begin with the easiest purpose to assess, Goals 2000 has provided a framework to guide the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (retitled Improving America’s Schools Act) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In both cases the legislation has used the

lever of common high academic standards with aligned assessments to challenge “the conspiracy of low expectations” that have led to watered-down academic programs for too many disadvantaged or disabled students. Both laws now push states and districts to include virtually all children within a single, coherent overall reform strategy and encourage schools to adopt schoolwide improvement strategies aimed at helping all students meet the same high standards of performance. Even the Higher Education Act reauthorization shows the influence of Goals 2000, in that teacher education programs will now be expected to prepare their students to teach in a standards-based environment.

The second purpose, promoting systemic changes aimed at both equalizing educational opportunities and improving achievement, is more difficult to measure. The evidence from the several reports cited earlier suggests that states and districts have used Goals 2000 funds to support the broad purposes of systemic reform, but the more important question is whether the kinds of reforms most states are putting in place, and the initiatives to which Goals 2000 funds are being directed, will improve equity and achievement.

The decentralized U.S. system perhaps inevitably results in at least fifty different answers to that question, depending not only on how far along the systemic reform path a state was in 1995 and how strategic it has been in the use of its Goals 2000 funds, but also on such fundamental issues as the quality of its standards and tests, the strength of its teacher preparation programs and professional development strategies, and the capacity of its state education department to mobilize useful technical assistance to low-performing districts and schools.

This leads to the larger question, which is how, if at all, judgments about the effectiveness of Goals 2000 can be disentangled from the assessment of the status and success of standards-based reform. In political terms the standards-based strategy has to be judged successful; it has become America’s de facto national education strategy. Forty-five states as of 1999 have academic standards in place in the four core academic subjects, with four more states well along in the development process. Virtually all states are moving to align their assessments to their standards, with a majority of states reporting such assessments already in place. Seventeen states have professional development policies aligned to standards under development or in place. Thirty-six states issue report cards on district and school performance, and nineteen states have

policies or programs in place to address the problem of persistently low-performing schools.⁴⁴ If “providing a national framework for educational reform” (the act’s first stated purpose) is taken to mean providing a common vision of systemic reform for the states with higher academic standards for all, aligned assessments, and clearer accountability for results at the center of that vision, then the number of states that have adopted policies to move them in this direction in the last five years has to be taken as an extraordinary indicator of success.

But presumably the framers of the law had something more in mind by “providing a national framework” than offering up the national goals and an operational definition of systemic reform, for they sought to create a national reform leadership function through Title II. Part of that leadership function is provided by the National Education Goals Panel, which through its annual reports aims to keep public attention focused on national and state progress toward meeting the goals. But the more important part was to be able to provide guidance and feedback to the states on the quality of their reform and improvement strategies, beginning with their standards, and over time to help shape a more national consensus on how best to “ensure equality of educational opportunities and high levels of educational achievement for all students.” The loss of NESIC crippled the government’s ability to impose some measure of quality control on what has become essentially a block grant program for state and local systemic reform. Without some mechanism for establishing and implementing performance standards for states, some way to help them know whether their standards, tests, and implementation strategies are “good enough,” the national leadership function envisioned in the act cannot be fulfilled.

The loss of NESIC may have signaled the political difficulty of creating a federal mechanism for providing quality control for what is essentially a state-based movement, but NESIC’s demise is hardly the end of the story. In 1996 the nation’s governors, led by two Charlottesville veterans (Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin and Bob Miller of Nevada) came together with fifty corporate chief executives at a second National Education Summit, this time in Palisades, New York, to renew their commitment to raise standards and improve academic performance in their states. At this summit there was no longer any talk of national standards—even President Clinton, the invited luncheon speaker, asserted his conviction that standard setting must be left to the states—but there was significant

discussion about the continuing need of states to have some way to benchmark their standards and tests against the best national and international work. Out of this summit came a decision to create a new organization, Achieve, to respond to this need.

Other organizations were already attempting to fill one piece of the NESIC vacuum, the rating of state standards, and a consortium of state-based organizations led by the Council of Chief State School Officers came together to provide advice and assistance to states on standards issues. Achieve focused its initial efforts on the development of a rigorous benchmarking process to provide states an in-depth analysis of the quality and rigor of their standards and the alignment between their standards and tests. By the end of 1999, six states will have been through Achieve's benchmarking process, with several more states in the pipeline.

Achieve came into being at least in part as a private sector alternative to NESIC, designed to help states move toward a common standard for assessing the quality of their reform strategies. Given the tensions that developed between the governors and both Congress and the administration during the Goals 2000 legislative process, it is conceivable that even if NESIC had survived the governors would have sought to develop a standards review vehicle more responsive to state needs and interests. Resistance runs deep to the federal government's assuming any role that touches on the academic core of what is taught and learned, as was evident again in 1997 when the administration's voluntary national testing proposal ran aground in Congress. As with the review of standards, the states seem to prefer a bottom-up strategy for getting comparative data about student performance, as witness the ten-state consortium that has recently formed under Achieve's sponsorship to develop a joint middle grades mathematics improvement project, with a common syllabus, professional development strategy, and assessment.

Achieve's early experience in promoting rigorous external reviews of state standards and cross-state collaboration on curriculum and assessment issues is only the latest example of a private nongovernmental agency exercising national education leadership in ways that are difficult for the federal government, at least in the current political climate. By and large, the strongest "nationalizing" forces fueling the movement for higher standards have been such nongovernmental entities as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the National Center on Education and the Economy, the American Federation of Teachers, The

Business Roundtable, and the major disciplinary organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Some of these organizations receive federal funds; others, such as Achieve, are privately funded. The common denominator is that they can assert a national interest in education without having to defend themselves against the charge of wanting to become a national school board. As long as the federal education agenda is limited to the protection of particular groups of underserved students or clearly identifiable and circumscribed national problems, the federal government can assert the national interest without raising red flags. When the agenda shifts to programs aimed at raising academic achievement for all students, the underlying ambivalence about the federal role comes to the fore, and the distinction between federal and national takes on greater significance. The governors and their allies in the states have the political legitimacy to call for a national education strategy, as they have done since the mid-1980s, without triggering anxieties about the erosion of state and local control, for it goes without saying that they will protect state sovereignty. The federal government almost by definition does not enjoy that trust and legitimacy in advocating for a national education strategy, and it is difficult to imagine circumstances in which the federal government will be allowed to assume a more activist leadership role in what continues to be a state-based systemic reform movement.

What Next?

On balance, Goals 2000 has succeeded in accomplishing much of its core mission. It was designed to catch the wave of a predominantly state-based movement and to provide flexible funds to help states do better and faster what most were already committed to do anyhow. Despite the political controversy that swirled around it in its first years, Goals 2000 has proven to be an immensely popular program in the states, precisely because it is so flexible and has so few constraints on the expenditure of its funds. It has had, as its architects hoped, a significant impact on the redesign of Title I and the other large-dollar federal programs. For all of these reasons, it would be eminently defensible for the Clinton administration to declare victory and withdraw. Virtually all the states are now well launched on the reform path Goals 2000 was created to support,

and those that are still back at the starting line are unlikely to be much influenced by additional rounds of modest federal funding.

If one asks more difficult questions, however, and reminds oneself that the fundamental purpose of systemic reform, and of Goals 2000, is “to ensure equitable educational opportunities and high levels of educational achievement for all students,” then it ought to be obvious that this movement is still in its infancy and that by and large most states and districts have barely begun to put in place the kinds of changes in curriculum, instruction, teacher preparation, professional development, and school organization that will be necessary if higher standards are going to lead to better performance. Preliminary indications are that standards-based reforms, if implemented thoughtfully and sustained over several years, can produce significant gains in student performance. The recent goals panel-sponsored RAND report on the factors underlying the rapid achievement gains in North Carolina and Texas has captured significant attention among state policymakers, as has Richard Elmore and Deanna Burney’s analysis of the instructional improvement strategies that have led to such impressive results over the last several years in New York City’s Community District 2.⁴⁵

With a relative handful of exceptions, however, most states and school districts have barely begun to address the formidable implementation challenges presented by the adoption of new standards, and in too many jurisdictions the standards themselves are so problematic that they are not worth aligning with.

The range of issues that will be front and center in the next phase of standards-based reform—how to build capacity for continuous organizational learning, how to address the most fundamental opportunity-to-learn issues for the kids who are furthest behind, how to substantially strengthen the knowledge and skills of the education work force—are probably best addressed in federal policies not through an extension of the relatively open-ended, “responsible block grant” provisions of Title III of Goals 2000, but through the more focused, targeted large-dollar programs in ESEA. If a continuing role exists for Goals 2000—and we confess to ambivalence on this score—it is in keeping before the country the unifying vision represented by the goals themselves and in asserting the need for continuing national leadership and direction for the systemic reform movement. Instead of proposing the creation of new federal mechanisms to provide such leadership, perhaps any new legislation should

identify the kinds of issues on which states and districts are most in need of credible advice and assistance, put resources to seek such help in the hands of states, and allow the market to do its work. In such a strategy, special incentives should be offered to encourage collaboration and peer learning across states, and perhaps even across national boundaries. Education has clearly become a major national issue, but in the U.S. system, for better or worse, it remains a state and local responsibility. The lessons of the past decade, in particular the path from Charlottesville through Goals 2000 to the present, are that a national education strategy has to be driven by the states, working in conjunction with a wide variety of nongovernmental national organizations. It may be awkward, inefficient, messy, and, from an international perspective, irrational, but it seems to be the way Americans do education.

Comment by Michael W. Kirst

Robert B. Schwartz and Marian A. Robinson offer a significant contribution to the historical understanding of the federal role in establishing and moving toward national goals. The Goals 2000 legislative debate was the most high-profile initiative of the early Clinton administration but has faded from the limelight as the administration and the Republican Congress have pursued other issues. I agree with the authors that it would be best for the administration to declare victory (whether justified or not) and move on to new grant approaches. Goals 2000 has been lost as a Clinton priority and overtaken by more general aid strategies such as class-size reduction and school construction. The year 2000 is almost here, so another target date is needed to meet the goals if this focus is to continue.

As the paper reveals, it is impossible to isolate the distinctive contribution of Goals 2000 legislation to the rapid spread of standards-based state and local policy. Goals 2000 has helped, but how much is uncertain. The state-level funding was only 10 percent of the total, but it added flexible state money for test and standards development as well as systemic initiatives that state categorical rarely permit. But 90 percent of the money was allocated to local school districts and its effectiveness was problematic. The General Accounting Office did not provide the authors with the grant applications, and the summary statistics do not reveal much. The California local grants were often add-on projects that did

not focus on broad Goals 2000 activities or systemic reform. Small amounts of Goals 2000 money could easily get lost in a blizzard of state initiatives in California and other states. As education has become the nation's top issue, states have passed many bills to fix education, in addition to Goals 2000.

Goals 2000 was headed in the same direction as the recent intensive state reform activity on standards. Goals 2000 reinforced three key reforms that have had mixed results:

1. Challenging academic standards for what all students should know and be able to do. Forty-six states by 1999 had done this in most academic subjects—a remarkable change in the historic state role.
2. Aligning policies—such as testing, teacher certification, and professional development—and accountability programs to state standards. All states but Iowa and Nebraska had statewide student achievement tests in 1999, and most were addressing the other systemic components.
3. Restructuring the governance system to delegate overtly to schools and districts the responsibility for developing specific instructional approaches that meet the broadly worded academic standards for which the state holds them accountable. Only a handful of states have done this.

Known as standards-based systemic reform, the overarching objectives of this policy approach are to foster student mastery of more rigorous, challenging academic content and to increase the emphasis on its application. More data are available on what states did to galvanize standards-based reform than local districts, but local districts got 90 percent of the Goals 2000 money.

Goals 2000 was one aspect of a multipronged federal strategy to stimulate systemic standards-based reform. The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) began in 1991 to monitor progress on meeting the education goals that came out of the 1989 Charlottesville, Virginia, education summit between President George Bush and the governors. But the NEGP role is not clearly linked in the paper to the Goals 2000 legislative evolution. Is there a rationale for continuing NEGP as a separate federal organizational unit, or should it fade away like Goals 2000? It is not clear why the U.S. Education Department—specifically, its National Center for Education Statistics—could not update progress toward the goals after 2000, which is the main task of NEGP.

Goals 2000 legislation was eclipsed in 1995 by Clinton support for a voluntary national test (VNT). This proposed fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math test, however, has never been authorized, because of bipartisan opposition. Clinton tried to use the VNT as another installment in the attempt to enhance the federal role in standard setting. A logical successor to Goals 2000, it ended up stymied by a rare congressional coalition of conservative Republicans, blacks, and Hispanics. The Republicans were wary of excessive federal control from the VNT, and the minority Democrats were concerned about lack of opportunity to learn the content of the federal test in low-income schools.

This inability to build a federal policy upon and around Goals 2000 has left a murky view of the proper federal role. Goals 2000 envisioned the federal role as featuring systemic reform. Consequently, recent reconsideration of the systemic concept has added to the political problems associated with aligning national tests with national standards. The current federal role is a *mélange* of categorical widgets that have accumulated over the past thirty-five years. In 1970 the federal role seemed to focus upon special-needs students (Title I, handicapped, bilingual) rather than general unrestricted aid to schools. But recent Clinton initiatives are general-aid oriented, such as class-size reduction and construction. Even more narrow categories are increasing such as after-school and computer grants. Goals 2000 clearly has not been an overall framework for a new and improved federal role. Standards-based reform began at the state level in the 1980s, briefly was a federal issue through Goals 2000 and the VNT, and now appears to have returned to the states for the foreseeable future. The federal role remains confused and opportunistic, but Goals 2000 does not seem to be the answer to the problems.

Comment by David L. Kirp

For more than thirty years, the idea of a national education strategy has been bruited by academics and public officials. Yet, while Washington has reshaped specific policy domains—the education of the handicapped is one example, racial discrimination another—no overall strategy has been adopted. Goals 2000, the major education initiative of the first Clinton administration, was meant to change that.

Robert B. Schwartz and Marian A. Robinson conclude that this effort has been a real, albeit mixed, success. My reading of the evidence, including the material the paper presents, is more pessimistic. Strategy, even something akin to systemic reform, may exist in certain instances, and standards are a critical component of that strategy. But it is at the state, not the federal, level that the push for standards, as part of a larger vision of change, was initiated in the 1980s; and it is at the state, not the federal, level that the movement has blossomed.

The current federal undertaking has spawned too many diverse programs with too little coherence to be characterized as a strategy. Far from embodying the New Deal or the Great Society redux, Goals 2000 is simply another example of the varieties of state initiative-taking—what Louis Brandeis called the laboratories of democracy in action. The kindest reading of the Goals 2000 story is that Washington has been a cheerleader, occasionally a booster, in this effort. A less charitable view would treat the doings inside the Beltway as essentially irrelevant.

The idea of systemic reform, first put in place by Bill Honig in California and later fleshed out in a series of influential articles by Marshall S. Smith and Jennifer O’Day, represented a radical departure from the conventional education policy wisdom. The received view, developed by Charles E. Lindblom and Herbert Simon, among others, holds that change is almost invariably incremental in character: Policymakers do not optimize, they satisfy.⁴⁶ By contrast, systemic reform is far more ambitious in its intention to align the various elements of education policy, including standards, curriculum, textbooks, assessment, and training. Implicit in this approach is the belief that to do good incrementally, as through the proliferation of categorical programs, might be the enemy of the (systemic) best. As well, the strategy for effecting systemic change has been drawn from the “reinventing government” school of thought.⁴⁷ Good management practice, carried out by smart entrepreneurial professionals, is supposed to carry the day. Politics is conspicuously absent from this analysis.

In the design of real policies, however, politics is present in all its messiness—hence the jibe about the similarities between politics and sausage making. Although a goals and standards agenda was advanced during the Bush administration, it was never taken up in Congress. A window of opportunity opened briefly with the 1992 election of Bill Clinton.⁴⁸ By the time that window had shut, Congress had authorized funds

for Goals 2000, \$2 billion to date, to encourage state and district innovation. But the idea of a national policy was a nonstarter, as were national standards; even a voluntary national test conjured visions of Washington as schoolmaster.

What happened in the states and school districts following passage of the Goals 2000 legislation is far less readily summarized—inevitably so, given the design of the legislation. At the state level, where 25 percent of the money was allocated, federal aid sometimes contributed to reforms that were already being implemented. In those instances, Washington could claim credit (a favorite activity of politicians), but the federal aid amounted to no more than piling on.⁴⁹ Elsewhere, Goals 2000 changed the rhetoric but not the behavior of state agencies. Only in a handful of states, those on the cusp of change, has the Goals 2000 money made a difference, and even those effects are hard to specify. The General Accounting Office report on the program does not make a convincing case.

At the district level, where the bulk of the money has been spent, the impact of the legislation is even harder to estimate. More than sixteen thousand school districts have received slices of the Goals 2000 pie, some getting as little as \$25, and they have used it for an endless array of programs, from installation of new technology to restructuring. The proliferation of activities subsidized by Goals 2000 funds means that the program is really an umbrella under which seemingly any money-spending scheme can be situated. The response of the school districts has not been a random phenomenon. Districts' willingness to change policy direction is a key factor, as is their capacity to change. Hard-pressed urban school districts are, because of their disorganization, least able to take advantage of this potential opportunity to reinvent themselves, while smaller and more stable districts can extract the most from these marginal dollars. This is a familiar phenomenon in the implementation of any policy innovation—Chicago's school reforms, for instance, or Arizona's charter schools—that depends on a bottom-up strategy of change.⁵⁰ Almost invariably, the best do better while the gap widens between best and worst. To them who have, more shall be given, as the Book of Matthew says; the more, the more, in contemporary argot.

Another important if familiar lesson from the Goals 2000 experience is that states and school districts are much better at redesigning organiza-

tions, or at least organizational charts, than they are at setting standards. And they are much, much better at setting standards than at holding anyone—students, teachers, administrators—accountable for failing to meet those standards. Stories of reconstituted schools or school districts placed in state receivership make headlines because they are rarities. Changing practice in the high-visibility, high-stakes world of education is a lot harder than rearranging the proverbial deck chairs.

The ultimate goal of Goals 2000 is to boost academic performance. All the other changes, from better texts to reinvigorated teacher training, represent means to that end. But how could anyone even begin to measure the impact of such an amorphous program on student achievement? Why would anyone contemplate that Goals 2000 might be one of those unusual instances when the null hypothesis was shown to be wrong, when there was a discernible and sustained impact of government policy on student performance? In this context, the strategy of Goals 2000, described by New York senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan years ago and in a not dissimilar context as “feeding the sparrows by feeding the horses,” is hardly promising. Goals 2000 has had no apparent impact on achievement, except perhaps in those states and school districts where the standardized tests drive everything in the academic life of the school.

Predicting the future is hazardous business. The best-case scenario looks like this: Prodded by parental and political pressure, states do a better job of setting meaningful standards of achievement; those standards are vetted by a national agency; and accountability for failure, on the part of both students and professionals, becomes more widely accepted. For all the high hopes surrounding Goals 2000, the federal role will remain marginal. The emerging policy is federal, not national, in character, with fifty flowers blooming in the garden of education. The Clinton administration has already moved on. Its 1999 education initiatives, including reducing class size and building new schools, have nothing to do with Goals 2000, while for his part, Vice President Al Gore seems fixated on Internet access—closing the “digital divide.”

In short, the idea of incremental change, which systemic reform was meant to bury, turns out to be alive and thriving. Such changes, rather than the brave new world of systemic reform, represent the most likely legacy of education’s nearly two-decades-long run on the national policy stage.⁵¹

Notes

1. Education Commission of the States, *Action in the States* (Denver, Colo., 1984).
2. National Governors' Association, *Time for Results: The Governors' 1986 Report on Education* (Washington, 1986).
3. For a comprehensive description of the Bush-Alexander strategy, see *America 2000: An Education Strategy* (Department of Education, 1991).
4. John F. Jennings, *Why National Standards and Tests?* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1998).
5. National Council on Education Standards and Testing, *Raising Standards for American Education: A Report to Congress, the Secretary of Education, the National Education Goals Panel, and the American People* (Government Printing Office, January 24, 1992).
6. See Marshall S. Smith and Jennifer O'Day, "Systemic School Reform," in S. Fuhrman and B. Malen, eds., *The Politics of Curriculum and Testing* (Bristol, Pa.: Falmer Press, 1991); and Jennifer O'Day and Marshall S. Smith, "Systemic Reform and Educational Opportunity," in S. Fuhrman, ed., *Designing Coherent Education Policy* (San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 1993).
7. In a speech delivered at a Brookings Education Policy Conference in 1994, Marshall S. Smith, then undersecretary of education, said: "*State* [italics in original] content and performance standards that establish challenging academic expectations for all students are the heart of the Administration's systemic reform strategy." See Marshall S. Smith, "Education Reform in America's Public Schools: The Clinton Agenda," in Diane Ravitch, ed., *Debating the Future of American Education: Do We Need National Standards and Assessments?* (Brookings, 1995).
8. P.L. 103-227, Title III.
9. As of October 25, 1995, Alabama, Montana, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, and Virginia chose not to participate in Goals 2000. The 1996 amendments to the law attracted the remaining states by (1) eliminating the requirement that states submit their reform plans to the secretary of education for approval; (2) permitting districts to apply directly to the secretary for funding, provided they have approval to participate from their state education agency; and (3) permitting the use of Goals 2000 funds for technology. Alabama, New Hampshire, and Virginia joined Goals 2000 at the state level. Montana and Oklahoma allowed their local educational agencies to apply directly to the Department of Education for their respective Goals 2000 allotment, with the department distributing funds on a competitive basis. Since 1996, all states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories, in some form, have been participating in Goals 2000. See the funding history of the Goals 2000 program in Department of Education, *Goals 2000: Reforming Education to Improve Student Achievement*, report to Congress (Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, April 30, 1998).
10. General Accounting Office, *Goals 2000: Flexible Funding Supports State and Local Education Reform*, HEHS-99-10 (Washington, November 1998).
11. From the Council of Chief State School Officers, *Goals 2000: Educate America Act State Profiles* (Washington: Council of Chief State School Officers, State Leadership Center, November 1995); Council of Chief State School Officers, *Status Report State Systemic Education Improvements*, under the State Education Improvement Partnership (Washington, September 1998); and Texas State Department of Education, *Texas America 2000* (<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/A2000/>, cited April 7, 1999).
12. General Accounting Office, *Goals 2000*, pp. 8-13; and Department of Education, *Goals 2000*, p. 10.
13. General Accounting Office, *Goals 2000*, p. 26.

14. From the General Accounting Office, *Ed-Flex States Vary in Implementation of Waiver Process*, HEHS-99-17 (Washington, November 1998); Texas State Department of Education, *Texas America 2000*; and General Accounting Office, *Goals 2000*, p. 26.

15. General Accounting Office, *Goals 2000*, p. 14.

16. Leslie M. Anderson and Brenda J. Turnbull, *Living in Interesting Times: Early State Implementation of New Federal Education Laws*, prepared by Policy Studies Associates for the Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service, under Contract EA94053001 (Government Printing Office, October 1998).

17. Anderson and Turnbull, *Living in Interesting Times*, p. viii.

18. Policy Studies Associates, *Synthesis of 1997 Goals 2000 State Annual Performance Reports* (Washington, March 1999).

19. Jane Hannaway and Kristi Kimball, *Reports on Reform from the Field: District and State Survey Results*, prepared by the Urban Institute for the Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service, under Contract EA94053001 (Government Printing Office, 1997).

20. Hannaway and Kimball, *Reports on Reform from the Field*.

21. General Accounting Office, *Goals 2000*.

22. P.L. 103-227, Section 2, Purpose.

23. National Council on Education Standards and Testing, *Raising Standards for American Education*.

24. Washington Roundup, "Group Urges 'Hitting the Brakes' on National Test," *Education Week* (January 29, 1992).

25. Julie A. Miller, "Legislation to Create National System of Standards, Assessments under Fire," *Education Week* (March 25, 1992); and Diane Ravitch, *National Standards in American Education: A Citizen's Guide* (Brookings, 1995), p. 146.

26. Congressional Quarterly, *Congressional Quarterly Annual Almanac* (Washington, 1993), p. 3.

27. Ravitch, *National Standards in American Education*, p. 154.

28. Jennings, *Why National Standards and Tests?*, pp. 56-58; Julie A. Miller, "Administration Readies Reform, Assessment Bill," *Education Week* (March 24, 1993); and Ravitch, *National Standards in American Education*, pp. 150-52.

29. Carroll A. Campbell Jr., governor of South Carolina, letter to Richard W. Riley, U.S. secretary of education, June 3, 1993, quoted in Ravitch, *National Standards in American Education*, p. 152.

30. Carroll A. Campbell Jr., governor of South Carolina, letter to Bill Clinton, president of the United States, March 1, 1994, quoted in Ravitch, *National Standards in American Education*, p. 153.

31. P.L. 103-227, Part B, Section 212, National Education Standards and Improvement Council.

32. Lynn Olson, "Board Seen Setting Tone for Standards Efforts," *Education Week* (May 18, 1994); and Lynn Olson, "Two Months and Counting: Naming of Standards Panel Behind Schedule," *Education Week* (November 2, 1994).

33. Debra Viadero, "Standards in Collision," *Education Week* (January 19, 1994).

34. Groups volunteering to fill the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) void included the Council for Basic Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National Center for Improving Science Education. See Viadero, "Standards in Collision."

35. Karen Diegmüller, "Backlash Puts Standards Work in Harm's Way," *Education Week* (January 11, 1995); and S. Res. 66, *Congressional Record*, January 20, 1995, p. S1282.

36. Congressional Quarterly, *Congressional Quarterly Annual Almanac* (Washington, 1994); and Karen Diegmueller, "Standards: Running Out of Steam," *Education Week* (April 12, 1995).

37. For the historic significance of the 104th Congress, see Congressional Quarterly, *Congressional Quarterly Annual Almanac* (Washington, 1995), pp. 1–3. Rene Sanchez, "GOP's Power of the Purse Put to the Test: Education Goals Program Targeted for Early Demise," *Washington Post*, September 26, 1995, p. A1.

38. Lynn Olson, "G.O.P. Victories Energize Conservative Think Tanks," *Education Week* (December 7, 1994); and Lynn Olson, "Undo School Programs, Heritage Urges," *Education Week* (December 7, 1994).

39. Sanchez, "GOP's Power of the Purse Put to the Test," p. A1; and Linda Feldman, "Conservatives Question 'True Goal' of Goals 2000 Education Guidelines," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 8, 1995, p. 1.

40. Lynn Olson, "Bills to Scrap NESIC Likely to Hold Sway," *Education Week* (February 8, 1995); and Diegmueller, "Backlash Puts Standards Work in Harm's Way."

41. Jennings, *Why National Standards and Tests?*, p. 161; and Lynn Olson, "The Future Looks Cloudy for Standards-Certification Panel," *Education Week* (January 11, 1995).

42. *Congressional Record*, February 24, 1995, p. E432.

43. See American Federation of Teachers, *Making Standards Matter* (Washington, 1998); Scott Joftus and Ilene Berman, *Great Expectations?: Defining and Assessing Rigor in State Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts* (Washington: Council for Basic Education, January 1998); and Chester E. Finn, Michael J. Petrille, and Gregg Vanourek, *The State of State Standards* (Washington: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, July 1998).

44. "Quality Counts: Rewarding Results, Punishing Failure," special report, *Education Week* (January 11, 1999); and "The State of the States: A Progress Report," in *1999 National Education Summit: Briefing Book*, prepared for the 1999 National Education Summit, sponsored by Achieve Inc., held in Palisades, N.Y., September 30–October 1, 1999.

45. David Grissmer and Ann Flanagan, *Exploring Rapid Achievement Gains in North Carolina and Texas* (Washington: National Education Goals Panel, November 1998); and Richard Elmore and Deanna Burney, *Investing in Teacher Learning: Staff Development and Instructional Improvement in Community School District # 2, New York City* (New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, August 1997).

46. See, for example, Charles E. Lindblom, *The Intelligence of Democracy: Decision-making through Mutual Adjustment* (New York: Free Press, 1965); and Herbert Simon, *Administrative Behavior* (New York: Free Press, 1976). See also Hugh Hecl, *A Government of Strangers* (Brookings, 1977); and Robert Behn, "Management by Groping Along," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1988), pp. 643–63.

47. David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government* (New York: Perseus, 1992).

48. John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (New York: Addison Wesley, 1995).

49. Eugene Bardach, *The Skill Factor in Politics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972).

50. Richard Elmore, "Backward Mapping: Implementation Research and Policy Decisions," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 94, no. 4 (1979–80), pp. 69–83.

51. The other major legacy is the movement to greater choice in education, whether through intra- and inter-district public school options, the explosion of charter schools, or the revival of vouchers.