

The Campaign for Educational Equity

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL REFORMS AND EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL CHILDREN: THE CHANGING FEDERAL ROLE IN EDUCATION

**MARIS A. VINOVSKIS
GERALD R. FORD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**

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Since the mid-1960s the federal government has played a larger role in state and local education. Though the federal government's share of K-12 education costs has not exceeded ten percent, its influence through regulations and court orders has grown considerably. Much of that expansion in influence has taken place in partnership with the states at the expense of local school districts. Yet student academic achievements have not improved as much as we had hoped, especially in recent years when large federal initiatives such as America 2000, Goals 2000, and No Child Left Behind promised to reach ambitious goals within 10-12 years. Especially disappointing has been the inability to provide more equal education opportunities for disadvantaged students in our society.

This essay examines the federal role in K-12 education mainly from the perspective of the passage and implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and its successors. Particular attention will be paid to America 2000, Goals 2000, No Child Left Behind, and the recent education stimulus package developed by the Barack Obama administration and the 111th Congress. The strengths and weaknesses of the past federal education reforms will be discussed and speculations about the future of the federal role in school reforms will be made.

I. State and Federal Involvement in K-12 Education before 1960

In the past local communities were responsible for K-12

education. In colonial America most education was provided at home, though in some communities local schools supplemented the limited education provided by parents or local neighbors. In antebellum United States public common (elementary) schools and private academies gradually spread, though the South trailed the rest of the nation in providing education for its children. Slaves and free blacks, however, were denied equal opportunities to attend schools (though free blacks in the North often attended segregated schools). State constitutions often designated education as an essential obligation, but delegated responsibility for providing those services to local communities. A few New England and Midwest state school superintendents sought more influence over local education, but they only achieved limited success.¹

The U.S. Constitution does not designate education as a specific federal government responsibility. Occasionally the federal government provided support for K-12 schooling through legislation such as the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. And U.S. Department of Education was created in 1867, but it was quickly reorganized as the Bureau of Education which mainly collected and disseminated statistical information.²

Following the Civil War, schooling opportunities expanded and provisions were made for educating African Americans in the South, though racial discrimination persisted. Larger urban areas centralized and standardized their operations while public

high schools expanded. Most rural student received only a common school education and attended small, dilapidated schoolhouses. Republican efforts to expand federal involvement in reconstructing southern education were thwarted.³

In the early twentieth century, the number of state boards of education expanded from 29 in 1890 to 41 in 1925, and the total size of state education staffs increased by 300 percent. Financial support for K-12 education remained predominately a local responsibility; the contribution of state education funds declined from 22 percent in 1890 to 16 percent in 1925. States passed school regulations such as teacher training and licensing, compulsory school attendance, health and safety regulations, and facilitated rural district consolidation.⁴

The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 provided matching federal funds to encourage vocational training in agriculture, trade, and industry. The new monies stimulated states to hire staff to administer their vocational education programs, but federal revenue for K-12 education was less than half of one percent.⁵

Elementary and secondary education was financed largely through local property taxes. During the Great Depression local property values plummeted and school revenues from those taxes dropped sharply. Since states could levy a greater variety of taxes than local communities, they increased their share of K-12 education funding from 17 percent in 1929 to 30 percent ten years later (the federal government provided almost two percent of the

revenue in 1939). Yet states were reluctant to become too involved in school matters as many citizens believed that local school boards should be responsible for most education decision-making.⁶

The 1940 Lanham Act authorized the federal government to assist communities with large numbers of military or defense populations. Yet during World War II the overall 1.4 percent federal share of K-12 education funding remained stable. Federal education involvement did increase through programs such as the 1944 Serviceman's Readjustment Act (GI Bill of Rights), the 1946 National School Lunch program, and the 1950s "impacted" areas aid program (similar to the earlier Lanham Act). Only one-third of federal education aid in 1961 went to K-12 education; and most of that was spent for either community impact aid or the school lunch program. As a result, the federal share of education funding increased by 1961, but was still only 4 percent of the total K-12 revenues.⁷

Although the White House and Congress were reluctant to expand the federal role in education in the 1950s, the Supreme Court ruled in its 1954 landmark decision, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, that segregated schools were inherently unequal and unconstitutional. The October 1957 launching of the Soviet Sputnik satellite led to increased federal education involvement through the National Defense Education Act a year later. And the state contributions rose from 35 percent in 1945

to 39 percent in 1961.⁸

II. Federal K-12 Involvement in the 1960s and 1970s

President John F. Kennedy tried, but failed, to pass an elementary and secondary school bill calling for expanded education funding, but not directly addressing the issue of poverty or helping disadvantaged children.⁹ Following former Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson's landslide presidential victory, the White House and the 89th Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965.¹⁰ There was disagreement on whether ESEA should be a general aid to K-12 education proposal or a more focused program for teacher salaries, school construction, and helping disadvantaged students. The final legislation was a categorical program intended to help at-risk children mainly through Title I, but it did not specify how the additional monies should be spent. As Title I monies went to almost every county in the United States, most disadvantaged students received only small amounts of extra financial assistance (although ESEA benefited politically from the broad distribution of funds). Most of those monies supported salaries for poorly trained teacher aides who staffed separate programs for disadvantaged children (despite the questionable pedagogical effectiveness of those practices).¹¹

Under Title V of ESEA federal monies were used to enhance

state education agencies (SEAs), doubling their staffs. The SEAs were used to distribute the new federal funds to the local school education agencies (LEAs). An important political and administrative alliance was forged between the federal government and SEAs. Due to their increased staffs as well as their intermediate role in allocating federal education monies and enforcing federal regulations, SEAs further expanded their authority over local school districts.¹²

During the 1970s, programs such as Head Start and ESEA remained fairly stable, though studies raised questions about their ability to improve significantly the academic achievement of disadvantaged students.¹³ The courts became more involved with issues such as school desegregation and providing more education opportunities for special education and bilingual students.¹⁴ The federal contribution to K-12 schooling doubled from 1964 to 1965, but then rose only slightly to 9 percent in 1980. State assistance grew more rapidly from 39 percent in 1965 to 47 percent in 1980; and the local school share of revenue substantially dropped from 53 percent to 43 percent during those years.¹⁵ Yet as Marshall "Mike" Smith and Carl Kaestle aptly concluded in the early 1980s, "after almost two decades of interventions the Title I program stands primarily as a symbol of national concern for the poor rather than as a viable response to their needs."¹⁶

III. Education Reforms in the 1980s and 1990s

The national economy, and especially those of the southern states, suffered during the 1970s and early 1980s. Southern governors such as Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Bill Clinton (D-AK), and Richard Riley (D-SC), initiated a new wave of education reforms to improve the economic competitiveness of their states. Organizations such as the Southern Regional Education Board and the National Governors' Association (NGA) provided ideas and leadership for improving American schooling. Moreover, some of these education governors later went to Washington to develop federal education reforms in partnership with the states.¹⁷

President Jimmy Carter, fulfilling his campaign promise to the National Education Association, created the U.S. Department of Education in 1979.¹⁸ Ronald Reagan, his successor, sought to reduce the federal role in education, including an unsuccessful attempt to dismantle the new agency. Under the leadership of his Secretary of Education Terrel Bell, however, the National Commission on Excellence in Education was created and issued an influential 1983 report, A Nation at Risk. That document graphically described the mediocre condition of American education and helped stimulate widespread public efforts to improve schooling at the federal, state, and local levels through initiatives such as the excellence in education movement in the mid-1980s.¹⁹

In 1988 Congress reauthorized ESEA as the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Act, with only a single dissenting vote in both the House and Senate. Included in the legislation was the mandate for more accountability, including authorization for SEAs to work with schools whose Chapter 1 (the renamed Title I) students showed no academic progress after two years of assistance. The legislation again reaffirmed the federal role in assisting states and governors to target Chapter 1 monies for disadvantaged children. The federal share of K-12 funding, however, had dropped from 9 percent to 6 percent in 1988 while the state contribution remain the same at 47 percent.²⁰

Vice President George H.W. Bush portrayed himself as the "education president" candidate in 1988, even though he had not shown much interest on that issue previously. Following his victory, the NGA pressured the reluctant new administration to fulfill its earlier education campaign promises. In response President Bush and the nation's governors convened the historic September 1989 Charlottesville Education Summit which led to the announcement of six ambitious national education goals, including the pledge that by the year 2000 U.S. students would be number one in math and science in the world.

The Charlottesville Education Summit and the subsequent agreement between the White House and the NGA on the national education goals increased federal-state cooperation in K-12

education. President Bush announced the America 2000 strategy in April 2000 which called for world-class standards in five core subjects (math, science, English, history, and geography), voluntary national tests in the 4th, 8th, and 12 grades for those subjects, parental school choice, and the reinventing of American schools. Though the legislation did not pass, parts of it were implemented administratively. It also stimulated a reconsideration of federal education policies, including an unsuccessful Democratic substitute bill which emphasized content-driven systemic reforms (the alignment of state standards, tests, and evaluations) and added service delivery standards (opportunity-to-learn standards).²¹

Incoming President Bill Clinton incorporated many of the America 2000 components, including the national education goals (which Congress expanded to eight), the American 2000 communities (renamed the Goals 2000 communities), and the New American Schools. Congressional Democrats particularly emphasized systemic education reforms and opportunity-to-learn standards; but they opposed GOP proposals for school choice provisions. After considerable debates, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act passed in March 2004 and provided a new approach for federal K-12 education reforms. Using the Goals 2000 framework, ESEA was reauthorized six months later as the Improving America's School Act (IASA) and provided more federal and state involvement in public schools.²²

In the 1994 midterm elections, the GOP unexpectedly captured both the House and Senate. The White House continued defending Goals 2000 funding, but the administration dropped efforts to enforce rigorously the new standards and assessments. During his 1996 re-election campaign, Clinton proposed a series of smaller education initiatives such as hiring 100,000 new teachers, reducing class sizes, and promoting school uniforms. Over time, Goals 2000 was quietly abandoned and both the Republicans and Democrats agreed not to seek its reauthorization. IASA was continued, but the U.S. Department of Education did not force states to comply with the new guidelines. When none of the national education goals were reached in 2000, as promised by both Democrats and Republicans lawmakers, policymakers and the news media did not publicize that failure.²³

As the nation prepared for the 2000 elections, it was not clear that the recent federal and state initiatives to improve education would be a high priority for either Democratic or Republican presidential contenders. The Republicans, however, nominated Texas Governor George W. Bush, who had been committed to public school reforms in his state, and now ran as a "compassionate conservative." Bush abandoned earlier GOP calls for abolishing the U.S. Department of Education and promised that "no child would be left behind" in his administration. His opponent, Vice President Al Gore, who had not shown much previous interest in education, promised that education would be one of

his top priorities, pledging more federal assistance and calling for more accountability in the schools. After Bush narrowly won the controversial election, he made education reform the centerpiece of his initial domestic policies.²⁴

The Bush administration and the 107th Congress drew upon the upon the ideas of America 2000 and Goals 2000 in passing the bipartisan No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Among the provisions, the legislation included annual statewide math and reading assessments for grades 3-8 (based on individual scores reported by race, income, and other categories). All students in a state had to achieve academic proficiency in those subjects within 12 years; schools failing to make adequate progress regularly faced increasing penalties; and all teachers hired under Title I had to be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-6 school year. Rather than establishing national content, assessment, and proficiency standards, states were allowed to set their own standards. And schools were required to use scientifically-based programs and practices in their operations.²⁵

In the past the federal government rarely insisted on states complying with all of the ESEA regulations. According to the U.S. Department of Education, previously Title I funds had never been withheld from a state because it failed to comply with the mandated requirements. Former Undersecretary Mike Smith noted that “[i]t’s hard to take money away from any state.”²⁶ Yet the Bush administration was determined to enforce the NCLB mandates,

though it was difficult in practice as states were allowed to set their own standards.

There has been little agreement among policymakers and experts on the impact of Title I of ESEA.²⁷ In more recent years there were often partisan differences about the effectiveness of Goals 2000, especially as none of the promised goals were ever reached. Similarly, critics pointed to the minimal, if any, achievement gains under NCLB during the Bush administration. On the other hand, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings repeatedly defended NCLB, arguing that it was improving student learning and closing the achievement gap between different subgroups of the population. Yet most analysts acknowledge that the promise that all children would be proficient in math and science by the school year 2013-14 will be impossible to achieve.²⁸

IV. The Obama Administration and Education

During the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, education had not become a major national election issue. In the 1990s, however, education became one of the major issues for many voters as George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush portrayed themselves as "education presidents." Some analysts thought that public opinion had permanently shifted toward seeing education as a top national priority; others pointed to the particular historical and political circumstances that heightened education

interest temporarily, but did not necessarily imply a major long-term reorientation. The 2008 election was interesting from an education perspective because both parties had to select new presidential candidates and NCLB still had to be reauthorized.

A. K-12 Education Reforms and the 2008 Election

During the 2008 presidential primaries, education was not seen as a major campaign issue by either the public or the candidates. For example, a January Pew Research Center survey of the most important issue facing voters found that 34 percent identified economic issues, 27 percent mentioned Iraq, 10 percent noted health care, 6 percent cited to immigration or dissatisfaction with government, and only 4 percent pointed to education.²⁹ In March, at an American Enterprise Institute meeting, "Education as a Presidential Issue: Historically and in 2008," the panelists agreed that K-12 education had not been a major topic in the presidential primaries and doubted whether the issue would be a key factor in the general election.³⁰

During the fall, the Democratic campaign issued the Obama-Biden Education Plan outlining their proposals for early childhood education, K-12 reforms, and higher education improvements. They called for affordable, high-quality early child care, education for infants, and pledged to help states with voluntary, universal preschools programs. On the

controversial issue of No Child Left Behind, they proposed to reform NCLB rather than repeal it:

Obama and Biden will reform NCLB, which starts by funding the law. Obama and Biden believe teachers should not be forced to spend the academic year preparing students to fill in bubbles on standardized tests. They will improve the assessments used to track student progress to measure readiness for college and the workplace and improve student learning in a timely, individualized manner. Obama and Biden will also improve NCLB's accountability system so that we are supporting schools that need improvement, rather than punishing them.³¹

Obama and Biden also promoted high-quality schools, closing low-performing charter schools, improving math and science education, addressing the dropout problem, expanding after-school opportunities, supporting college stimulus initiatives and college credit programs, and helping English language learners. They focused on improving the quality of teachers by recruiting high-quality applicants, improving their preparation, encouraging teachers to stay in the profession, and promoting new and innovative ways to increase teacher pay.³²

At first, it appeared that the general election would be a very close one between McCain and Obama. But the McCain campaign

faced major problems as the nation experienced a steadily deteriorating economy, continued public anger with President Bush's performance, and a strong Obama candidacy. Education was not a major issue in the November election.³³

Well before the November 2008 election, it was apparent that the economy was weakening. On February 13, 2008 President Bush signed a bipartisan economic stimulus bill (P.L. 110-85) providing nearly \$125 billion, almost entirely for individual tax rebates. During the presidential primaries, candidate Obama endorsed a \$30 billion package for troubled subprime homeowners. As the financial sector collapsed in September, Obama recommended a \$175 billion economic stimulus package while McCain opposed any such a move. With the global financial meltdown and the continued housing market collapse, however, Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson, Jr. and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke in October 2008 persuaded Congress to authorize \$700 billion to stabilize U.S. banks through the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP).³⁴

Following Obama's election as well as the unexpectedly large Democratic House and Senate gains, President-elect Obama moved quickly to fill his cabinet positions and address the worsening economic situation. He nominated Arnie Duncan as the next secretary of education. Duncan was an accomplished Chicago school superintendent, highly regarded by local educators and national education advocacy groups. Duncan praised NCLB's goal

of improving the academic performance of all children, but criticized the program's inadequate funding and its excessive testing emphasis.³⁵ On January 20, 2009 the Senate quickly confirmed Duncan and most educators have viewed him as an effective secretary.³⁶

B. Education and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

The Obama administration and the congressional leadership moved quickly to assemble another large economic stimulus package, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan (ARRP, also the Recovery Plan). Education had not been a major Democratic or Republican presidential campaign issue. Nor did the public rate education as one of the top three priorities in early 2009.³⁷ But as state K-12 education budget deficits deepened, Obama and the Democrats now included education as a major component of the Recovery Plan.³⁸

On January 28, the House Democrats, on a straight-party vote passed a \$819.5 billion economic stimulus bill (H.R. 1), with more than one-sixth of the monies broadly designated for education (\$141.2 billion).³⁹ On February 10, the Senate passed a similar, but less expensive, \$780 billion stimulus package, including substantial education funds as well. Centrist Senate Democrats and three moderate Republicans (who supported the stimulus) reduced the education stimulus package. The House and

Senate conferees agreed upon a \$787 billion stimulus bill, including \$53.6 billion for state fiscal-stabilization school aid and \$13 billion for Title I (for FY2010 and FY2011) as well as \$5 billion for discretionary Incentive Funds (designated as the "Race to the Top Funds" or RTT) and Invest in Innovation Funds (the "i3 funds").⁴⁰ The RTT funds, which Representative George Miller (D-CA) earlier had tried to incorporate into a 2007 NCLB reauthorization, would provide \$4.35 billion to improve teacher effectiveness, ensure equitable distribution of high quality teachers among different schools, raise standards, and create statewide student achievement data systems. The \$650 million i3 funds would be for school districts or nonprofit organizations, in partnership with school districts, to support developing education improvements.⁴¹

In his first joint address to Congress on February 24, 2009, Obama designated education as one of his top three priorities (energy and health care were the other two). Obama noted the importance of education in the new global economy, but pointed out that U.S. high school and college dropout rates were among the highest of any industrialized nation. He also acknowledged that K-12 schools needed additional reforms calling for merit pay, innovative school programs, and expanding charter schools.⁴² Most governors and educators welcomed the new federal monies for the schools. Critics questioned how those funds would be spent and whether it would lead to increased federal intervention in

state and local education.⁴³

C. Implementing the Education Stimulus

The unprecedented \$100 billion education stimulus package encouraged speculations about its possible impact on the federal role in education. Vic Klatt, a top former GOP aide on the House education committee, stated, "I absolutely think this redefines the federal role [in education]. Not in all bad ways, but in ways that haven't been fully thought through."⁴⁴ Similarly, Jack Jennings, also a long-time former Democratic staff director on the House education committee, commented: "It not only makes it more legitimate for the federal government to ask for accountability, it also [opens up] the question of what should the feds be doing to help schools."⁴⁵

There was disagreement over where and how quickly the stimulus education monies should be spent. Congress and many of their constituents wanted the stimulus education funds to be spent quickly to offset the massive state and local education deficits, even if it came at the expense of major education reforms. Representative David R. Obey, chair of the House Appropriations Committee, felt that in view of the worsening economic conditions, "[i]t's legitimate to question whether it's realistic to ask them to also implement dramatic new reforms. I don't want to set them up for failure in the public eye because

they can't do things at once."⁴⁶

Some educators and analysts hoped that much of the stimulus funds would be used more creatively to improve education quality, including instituting broad-based school reforms, replacing ineffective teachers, closing failing schools, and supporting more charter schools.⁴⁷ While Secretary Duncan agreed that immediate stop-gap education assistance was important, he also called for states fundamental state education changes.⁴⁸ Yet only a small proportion of the Recovery funds were set aside for broad-based school reforms.⁴⁹

Given the dire economic circumstances, much of the approximately \$100 billion education stimulus money has already been spent. As of September 30, 2009, 69 percent of the Recovery funding for education was already obligated, including almost three-quarters of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, about half of the Student Financial Assistance, all of the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) funds, almost all of the Title I monies, and 30 percent of the remaining formula grants. Only the \$5.7 billion in discretionary grants (mainly the RTT funds and the i3 monies) had not been awarded yet.⁵⁰

D. Impact of the Education Stimulus

For most policymakers and educators, one of the primary purposes of the economic stimulus package was to provide

immediate assistance to replace the lost state and local K-12 revenues. If the federal government had not been able to provide that assistance, many local school districts would have been forced to reduce sharply their teaching and administrative staffs.⁵¹ Yet the unexpected severity of the economic downturn meant that federal assistance was not enough even to replace all of the immediate budgetary shortfalls. With almost all of the State Fiscal Stabilization, IDEA, and Title I funds already committed, the financial situation of schools in some communities may be even worse in FY2010.⁵²

The economic crisis impacted states and local schools differentially; but the education stimulus programs were not designed to take those differences into account. In order to pass the Recovery Act quickly, most of the education monies were allocated to the states on the basis of the existing funding formulas (such as those for Title I and IDEA). As a result, some states such as Alaska, Texas, and Wyoming, which had not been forced to reduce K-12 spending, received as much federal stimulus money proportionately as California and Florida whose school budgets had been more severely cut.⁵³

Title I monies have always been widely distributed so that almost all congressional districts receive at least some of those funds. While this has ensured political support for the program, it means that the poorest school districts with the most disadvantaged students receive less assistance than needed.⁵⁴ At

the same time, much of the additional \$1.7 billion reserved for funding school improvements in FY2009 and FY2010 will assist the growing number of NCLB academically troubled schools, thereby providing assistance to some of the most disadvantaged students.⁵⁵

Discussions of the impact of the education stimulus frequently focus on the increasing federal involvement. Yet the legislation also enhances the role of state governors.⁵⁶ Previously Congress usually designated state school officials or state boards of education to distribute federal education funds to local school districts using specific formulas. According to the education stimulus plan, however, governors are given more discretion in how the additional monies are spent. While the Title I and IDEA supplements are allocated using the existing funding formulas, the distribution of the state aid for schools and other critical needs is delegated in part to governors (often in conjunction with the state legislatures). Education advocates fear that governors might use some of the stimulus funds to balance existing local education budgets or redirect the broadly discretionary monies to other non-education critical needs. Indeed, some states have cut their education contributions and reallocated those monies elsewhere.⁵⁷

Another smaller, but still sizeable source of education stimulus monies and school reform was the discretionary \$4.35 billion Incentive Funds (Race to the Top or RTT). States were encouraged to apply for the competitive grants intended to

advance reforms in four areas: adopting high standards and assessments, building state data systems, improving teacher quality, and turning around failing schools.⁵⁸ Both President Obama and Secretary Duncan indicated that the RTT guidelines will be a centerpiece of the administration's current education reforms as well as possible guidelines for NCLB reauthorization.⁵⁹

In mid-November the U.S. Department of Education issued the final rules for the RTT competition listing more than 30 criteria on which the applications will be assessed. Among the three top factors will be the state's education reform agenda, strong local school district willingness to participate, and teacher and principal evaluations based in large part on student performance. The first round of RTT applications are due in mid-January; another round will be accepted by June 1 for states that did not apply initially or did not win in the first round.⁶⁰

States eagerly applied for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund and almost all of them now are preparing for the RTT competition.⁶¹ As part of the application process many states altered their current education systems and practices, especially in the areas of data, standards, and assessments. States were on course to be able to track student performances longitudinally by 2011 and to use that information to improve student instruction (though fewer than half can match teachers and students).⁶² A majority of states also were considering the voluntary common standards for core subjects being developed by the National

Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers.⁶³ Yet states had more difficulty in developing plans for recruiting and developing high-quality teachers as well as targeting them to low-achieving schools.⁶⁴ Similarly, many states have not developed adequate procedures for improving their low-performing schools.⁶⁵

Another smaller, but important discretionary program is the \$650 million Invest in Innovation Fund (the "i3 fund"). School districts or nonprofit organizations in partnership with school districts could compete for the i3 funds to demonstrate education successes that could be replicated on a large scale. Three different levels of grants would be available: "Pure Innovation" (try out promising ideas); "Strategic Investment" (develop research base or organizational capacity for large-scale efforts); and "Grow What Works" (assistance for already proven programs to expand).⁶⁶ Secretary Duncan stressed that he was seeking "cutting-edge ideas that will produce the next generation of reform."⁶⁷

In order to raise additional funds for the i3 program, the U.S. Department proposed that applicants obtain 20 percent in matching funds from private sources and philanthropies, or seek a waiver from the department. This provision was strongly opposed by many commentators of the proposed grant guidelines. Allan Golston, president of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's United States Program, stated that the match requirement "is

unworkable in its demand of the philanthropic organizations: It makes philanthropies de facto gatekeepers for applicants by requiring the match at the time of the application; it privileges those organizations that already have relationships with large foundations."⁶⁸

E. Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind

No Child Left Behind was due to expire in 2007. The George W. Bush administration and the Democratically-controlled 110th Congress failed to reauthorize it; instead, they agreed to continue NCLB on a temporary, yearly basis.⁶⁹ Candidate Obama had endorsed NCLB during the 2008 presidential election campaign, but called for additional NCLB funds and supporting, rather than punishing, schools needing improvements.⁷⁰ Similarly, Duncan, as the Chicago school superintendent, supported NCLB, but also recommended more funding and less overall emphasis on testing.⁷¹

Although the Obama administration focused mainly on the education stimulus package, it was aware of the need to address the overdue NCLB reauthorization. In late January 2008 Secretary Duncan reiterated his support for the general NCLB principles, but did not provide specific details for modifying the legislation.⁷² In his February joint-address to Congress, President Obama highlighted education as one of his top three priorities, but did not mention NCLB or its reauthorization.⁷³ On

several other occasions the Obama administration laid out its broader education vision, but also did not explicitly address NCLB reauthorization.⁷⁴

Members of Congress were divided on the effect of the stimulus on NCLB reauthorization. Representative George Miller (D-CA), chairman of the House Education Committee felt that the stimulus package made NCLB reauthorization easier and hoped that the program would be reauthorized in 2009. On the other hand, Senator Michael B. Enzi (R-WY), ranking Republican on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, did not see the stimulus plan as affecting NCLB reauthorization as it was one-time money.⁷⁵

Education advocates were pleasantly surprised by the emphasis President Obama now placed on school reforms, as the issue has not been an important part of the 2008 campaign. They were divided, however, on the specific proposals the administration was pursuing. Some welcomed the possibility of a revised and improved NCLB. Andrew J. Rotherham, a co-director of the Education Sector think tank, praised the education changes Obama proposed. Others feared that Obama was basically advocating a continuation of the previous Bush administration policies. Alfie Kohn, a longtime critic of standardized testing, complained that the administration's positions on accountability and testing were the same as before. And Diane Ravitch, a former assistant secretary in the first Bush administration, criticized

the over-emphasis on standardized testing and argued that "Obama is, in effect, giving George W. Bush a third term in education."⁷⁶

At a meeting of 200 key educators and advocates on September 24, 2009, Secretary Duncan announced that the U.S. Department of Education was beginning a series of public meetings on ESEA reauthorization.⁷⁷ Duncan praised NCLB's contributions:

I will always give NCLB credit for exposing achievement gaps, and for requiring that we measure our efforts to improve education by looking at outcomes, rather than inputs.

NCLB helped expand the standards and accountability movement. Today, we expect districts, principals and teachers to take responsibility for the academic performance of their schools and students. We can never let up on holding everyone accountable for student success. This what we are all striving for.

Until states develop better assessments—which we will support and fund through Race to the Top—we must rely on standardized tests to monitor progress—but this is an important area for reform and an important conversation to have.⁷⁸

Yet Duncan also acknowledged NCLB's shortcomings and called for several improvements:

I also agree with some NCLB critics: it unfairly labeled many schools as failures even when they were making real progress—it places too much emphasis on absolute test scores rather than student growth—and it is overly prescriptive in some ways while it is too blunt an

instrument of reform in others.

But the biggest problem with NCLB is that it doesn't encourage high learning standards. In fact, it inadvertently encourages states to lower them. The net effect is that we are lying to children and parents by telling kids they are succeeding when, in fact, they are not.⁷⁹

The Secretary concluded with a vision of what the ESEA reauthorization should achieve:

Let us build a law that demands real accountability tied to growth and gain in the individual classroom and in the entire school—rather than utopian goals—a law that encourages educators to work with children at every level, the gifted and the struggling—and not just the tiny percent near the middle who can be lifted over [the] mediocre bar of proficiency with minimal effort. That's not education. That's game-playing tied to bad tests with the wrong goals.

Let us build a law that discourages a narrowing of curriculum and promises a well-rounded education that draws children into sciences and history, languages and the arts in order to build a society distinguished by both intellectual and economic prowess. Our children must be allowed to develop their unique skills, interests, and talents. Let's give them that opportunity....

More than any other issue, education is the civil rights issue of our generation and it can't wait—because tomorrow won't wait—the world won't wait—and our children won't wait.⁸⁰

As the Obama administration continued its preparations for the renewal on ESEA, it drew heavily on the types of reforms it had advanced as part of its education stimulus initiatives. In order to be competitive for the Race to the Top (RTT) funds, for example, many states already made substantial changes in their education policies and regulations that probably will be incorporated in the NCLB reauthorization.

V. Future Federal Reforms and Equal Education Opportunities

Speculating on the future of education needs and directions is difficult, especially when the economic, social, and political situation in the United States and the world is undergoing such rapid changes. Nevertheless, a few preliminary thoughts will be explored. First, the changing demographic, economic, and family contexts will be discussed and how they may affect the types of students who enter our schools. Second, the economic challenges facing states and local school communities which provide the resources for future K-12 schooling will be analyzed. Third, the impact of the education stimulus program will be considered. Next, the ambitious education goals that have been promised in earlier federal reform packages and their limited achievements will be reviewed. Then the lack of systematic research and development on school reforms and classroom improvements will be discussed. Finally, a few comments and recommendations will be offered on the role of the federal government in educating

disadvantaged students.

A. Changing Demographic, Economic, and Family Circumstances

United States, like most developed countries, now has a relatively low birthrate. This means that children are a smaller portion of our population than in the past, thereby reducing the relative number of K-12 students needing to be educated (though the real cost of educating each child has increased substantially over time).⁸¹ As the proportion of families with school-age children is reduced, local and state political support for schools tends to diminish.⁸² At the same time, the rapidly increasing proportion of the elderly population means that taxpayers will need to raise even more money for programs such as Medicare and Social Security.⁸³

The U.S. population is also changing as the result of recent immigration increases. In the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries immigration was an important source of population growth. In 1910 the foreign-born population of the United States was 14.7 percent. But the restrictive National Origins Act of 1924 as well as the economic downturn during the Great Depression reduced net immigration substantially. In 1960 the foreign-born population dropped to 5.4 percent. The passage of the 1965 immigration bill stimulated more newcomers and the foreign-born population reached 7.9 percent in 1990, and 12.5

percent in 2008. Indeed, from 2001 to 2008, about two-fifths of the 6.7 percent U.S. population increase was due to net immigration (and if one added the estimated number of illegal immigrants, the contribution to population size due to immigration would be even higher).⁸⁴

As in the early twentieth-century, many of the recent immigrants are poor, unskilled, and do not speak English. Rather than coming from areas such as eastern and southern Europe, more of the immigrants now from Mexico. The children of these immigrants often face special challenges in U.S. schools.⁸⁵ The high school dropout rate among Hispanic children, for example, is higher than those for white or black students.⁸⁶ Schools and other institutions also are being called upon to help integrate these future citizens into our society, resembling in some ways the earlier Americanization programs for immigrants.⁸⁷ Already in the South, a majority of public school students are "children of color" due to the large influx of Latinos, Asian Pacific Islanders, and other groups. In addition, most of the students in this new majority are also from low-income families.⁸⁸ As immigrant and other minority children in the United States constitute a higher proportion of K-12 students, policymakers wonder whether the overall political support for public schools might diminish.⁸⁹

The economic well-being of families affects the lives and educational opportunities of their children. The median family

income (in constant 2007 dollars) doubled from 1947 to 1973, but then grew more moderately, reaching \$61,355 in 2007. There are considerable income differences among population subgroups. The 2007 median income of white families was \$64,427, but that of black or Hispanic families was less than two-thirds of that figure. And single, female-headed households only earned about half of the median income of all families.⁹⁰

Gender wage differences have narrowed, but men still earn more than women. The real wages of low-skilled workers declined while those of college-educated employees improved.⁹¹ Access to high quality schooling and subsequent on-the-job training are becoming even more important for economic well-being and social mobility today.⁹²

The U.S. poverty rate for families dramatically dropped from 22.4 percent in 1959 to 14.2 percent in 1967. Much of the early decline in poverty benefited mainly the elderly due to the generous Social Security increases and other assistance programs for the aged. Since then the poverty rate has fluctuated, dropping to 8.7 percent in 2000 and returning to 9.8 percent in 2007. While 7.9 percent of white families live below the poverty level, the comparable figures for blacks and Hispanics are 22.1 percent and 19.7 percent respectively.⁹³ More than one out of every six children in 2007 was living in poverty, including 14.4 percent of white children, 34.3 percent of black children, and 28.3 percent of Hispanic children.⁹⁴

Unfortunately, the current government data on median family incomes, individual wages, and extent of family poverty does not reflect the recent devastating economic recession. Today we are facing the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s. While the \$700 billion TARP and the \$787 billion economic recovery stimulus helped limit the extent of the economic collapse in areas such as banking, housing, automobile purchases, and K-12 school financing, it has not generated many new jobs (though it preserved some of the existing ones). And the rapid increase in the national debt will constrain future initiatives to ameliorate the continued economic distress.

Although the stock market has recovered some of its dramatic losses, high unemployment continues to plague the economy. In December 2009 the national unemployment rate was 10.0 percent and the so-called underemployment rate was another 7.3 percent.⁹⁵ While 9.0 percent of whites are out of work, 16.2 percent of blacks and 12.9 percent of Hispanics are unemployed. Particularly hard hit are teenagers (ages 16-19) who have an unemployment rate of 27.1 percent. Workers with the least education are struggling the most. The unemployment rate for individuals with less than a high school education is 15.3 percent, and 10.5 percent for high school graduates. Of those with some college experience, 9.0 percent are unemployed; but only 5.0 percent of college graduates are unemployed. The average unemployment duration of 29.0 weeks is the highest since those data were first collected in 1948.⁹⁶

In addition to the difficulties of maintaining or finding a job, the current crisis has affected the economic well-being of families in other ways as well. Some families have already lost their homes, and about a quarter of those with mortgages now owe more money than their houses are worth on the market. The economic turmoil also has depleted significantly many families' retirement and savings accounts as well as left them saddled with significant debts to be repaid without easy access to low-cost credit.

Particularly hard hit are poor families who have fewer resources to face the current and future economic uncertainties. Under these economic and psychological strains, how will the parents and children cope and plan for their futures? Will there be an even larger cohort of disadvantaged and discouraged students with fewer educational opportunities today and less social mobility tomorrow? Will these troubled times make it even more difficult for poor and minority students to succeed in elementary and secondary schools? Will school dropout rates increase as struggling students fail to meet the proposed higher academic standards as well as becoming more discouraged by their bleak career prospects? Will low-income families be willing or financially able to help their children attend a community college, a four-year college, or a university? What are the chances for these disadvantaged students to attend and graduate from a more selective post-secondary institutions?⁹⁷ Perhaps

policymakers and educators should consider how major economic and social disruptions such the Great Depression affected poor children in the past and what might be done today to minimize the negative long-term impact of similar disadvantages.⁹⁸

B. State and Local K-12 Education Revenues

There is no consensus on the importance of K-12 funding for increasing student academic achievement, though most educators appreciate the additional monies.⁹⁹ Over the twentieth century there has been a substantial increase in per pupil spending (in constant 2006-07 dollars) from \$513 in 1919-1920 to \$3442 in 1963-64. By 1980-1981 per pupil spending rose to \$5,961 and two decades later it reached \$9,997; in 2004-2005 it was \$10,725.¹⁰⁰

States and local areas provide the bulk of the K-12 school funds, with the federal government providing a much smaller proportion. Since 1965 the federal government has contributed less than 10 percent of the revenues; in recent years, state and local taxes provide almost equally the rest of the assistance. In 2007 states put up 47.2 percent of K-12 school monies, local communities contributed 44.0 percent, and the federal government added 8.8 percent.¹⁰¹

States and local areas have been hard hit by the economic crises, facing sharp reductions in tax collections as property values have declined, unemployment and Medicaid costs have risen,

and sales tax revenues have dropped. Since the decrease in revenues has not been accompanied by sufficient expenditures cuts, most states and local communities anticipate sizable education deficits in 2010 and 2011. Much of the federal education stimulus was intended to offset state and local K-12 spending deficits, but most of those monies have already been committed, leaving less special federal assistance for FY2010. Nor is it likely that the White House and the Congress will be funding another similar multi-billion dollar education stimulus plan in the near future.

With states and local communities facing continued hard times, K-12 education funding is likely to be reduced. How those education cuts will be administered and what additional sacrifices local taxpayers be willing to make remains to be seen. Will states and local school districts pay special attention to preserving the educational opportunities for the most disadvantaged students? Will middle class and more wealthy parents not only provide the best education possible for their own children, but also support increased state and local taxes to educate other children? Will state courts use their powers to insist on an "adequate" or "sound" education for all children, or will they accept across the board education cuts that may disproportionately hurt poorer communities?¹⁰²

C. Impact of the Education Stimulus Programs

As the education stimulus monies have not been fully been distributed or evaluated, it may be premature to hazard even any preliminary assessments. The bulk of the education funds has been spent closing serious state and local education budget deficits. With additional time and planning, some of those monies might have been used better to help the most economically distressed students as well as improving K-12 schools. But the Obama administration faced a politically divided Congress and were under great economic pressure to act quickly.

One consequence of this legislative and administrative process is that relatively little money was left to finance the innovative reforms that President Obama and Secretary Duncan supported. The decision to allocate the \$4.35 billion RTT monies competitively to states by encouraging them to put into place several major reforms was a good one. Even before state applications arrived or any awards were made, states undertook major changes in areas such as creating student data systems, improving teacher quality, expanding charter schools, and turning around the worst schools. As Grover J. "Russ" Whitehurst, former IES director in the Bush administration, put it, "[t]he administration hasn't spent a dollar yet, and they've already gotten a lot of states to make important legislative changes that are a positive for school reform."¹⁰³ While none of these reform initiatives are flawless, many observers are surprised that the administration has achieved so much under the present

circumstances.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the early RTT experiences may provide lawmakers and states with valuable information for the upcoming ESEA reauthorization.

The reforms instituted so far are fairly moderate and probably appeal to many centrist Democrats and some Republican education reformers. Those who fear any further federal expansion into state and local education, like many GOP conservatives, are understandably disappointed. Similarly, those who oppose the idea of merit pay for teachers or expanding charter schools, such as many teacher union activists, are unlikely to applaud the administration's actions.¹⁰⁵ What additional school reforms and useful information will result from the RTT projects remains to be seen.

The \$4.35 billion RTT reforms and the \$650 million i3 innovations are intended to help all states and school districts, including those with the most disadvantaged students. The fact that the RTT and i3 monies are distributed competitively, however, may favor states and school districts which have the best state school departments or local communities most experienced in grant-writing (especially for the i3 funds which emphasize strong research and development).

States and local school districts anticipate substantial shortfalls in school revenues, especially in FY2010 and FY2011.¹⁰⁶ Some policymakers advocate yet another federal education stimulus package. On December 16, 2009 the U.S. House of Representatives

passed, by a vote of 217-212 (with 38 Democrats joining all of the Republican in opposition to the bill), a \$156 billion bill which redirects TARP monies to job creation. Included in that package would be \$23 billion for an "education jobs fund." Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) stated that avoiding teacher layoffs was one of her top priorities for the legislation. The NEA championed the legislation, urging the U.S. Senate to support the bill.¹⁰⁷ Given the close vote, the upcoming mid-term elections, and the growing public concerns about the mounting deficit, it will not be easy to pass such legislation at this time.¹⁰⁸ Nor will President Obama's January 19, 2009 proposal to add another \$1.35 billion to the Race to the Top in the FY2011 budget necessarily be enthusiastically embraced by Congress.¹⁰⁹

D. Ambitious Education Goals, Limited Achievements

One of the characteristics of American education reforms is the tendency to exaggerate their effectiveness and underestimate the difficulties of implementing and monitoring them. When President Johnson announced his War on Poverty, education was a centerpiece of that endeavor and included ambitious programs such as Head Start and ESEA to help disadvantaged children. At the time, a promise was made that poverty would be eliminated within ten years, though we had neither the knowledge nor the resources to realistically reach that objective.¹¹⁰

After President George H.W. Bush and the nation's governors met, they announced the six national education goals, including that by the year 2000 the United States would be the first in math and science internationally, that all children would enter school ready to learn, and that every school would be free of drugs and violence. In March 1994 President Bill Clinton and the 103rd Congress reaffirmed those promises, even adding two additional goals, by passing Goals 2000. Seven years later President George W. Bush and the 107th Congress enacted No Child Left Behind, promising that by the school year 2013-14 all children would be proficient in math and reading. And though President Obama has yet to reveal the administration's specific plans for ESEA reauthorization, he has pledged that "by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world."¹¹¹

Accompanying these ambitious objectives, political leaders promised to be held accountable for reaching them and suggested various measures by which we could demonstrate success (using such measures as NAEP scores, state student achievement scores, or high school graduation rates). Naturally, given the broad scope and ambitious promises of the goals, it would unrealistic to expect that all of their objectives would be reached within a decade or so. Yet none of the eight national education goals, endorsed by the White House, Congress, and the national governors, came even close to being met. Similarly, almost no one today believe that

all children will be proficient in math and reading within the next two or three years.

So what happens when the repeated education promises of our political and education leaders are not met? Not much. The political leaders who pledged to be held accountable rarely acknowledged their complicity in the failure to reach those goals. Even the National Education Goals Panel, which was specifically charged with monitoring and promoting the goals, choose not to discuss the failure to reach any of the them. The news media, which frequently discusses education, also entirely ignored the failure to attain the national education goals. Nor did reporters challenge current or former policymakers to explain our inability to reach those objectives. Instead, most policymakers and educators advocated yet another set of overly ambitious, bipartisan NCLB goals that seem to be as elusive as the previous ones.¹¹²

Schools are important institutions for educating children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. And some individual schools and communities are providing high quality education. What we do not have, however, are the large-scale education improvements necessary to provide all students with a first-rate education. Secretary Duncan, who praised several NCLB provisions, candidly acknowledged that much remains to be done despite national school reforms such as America 2000, Goals 2000, and No Child Left Behind:

27% of America's young children drop out of high school. That means 1.2 million teenagers are leaving our schools for the streets.

Recent international tests in math and science show our students trail their peers in other countries. For 15-year-olds in math, the United States ranks 31st.

17-year-olds today are performing at the exact same levels in math and reading as they were in the early 1970's on the NAEP test.

And just 40% of young people earn a two-year or four-year college degree.

The US now ranks 10th in the world in the rate of college completion for 25- to 34-year-olds. A generation ago, we were first in the world but we're falling behind. The global achievement gap is growing.¹¹³

What about the American public? Are they becoming discouraged and cynical by the repeated broken promises that all American children will become well-educated within a dozen years or less? In light of the modest improvements in student achievements, are Americans be ready to support yet another ambitious ESEA initiative or authorize additional federal education stimulus monies? Probably. One reason that Americans may not be as upset with these previous setbacks is that many voters are not fully aware of the earlier promises or their

disappointing outcomes.¹¹⁴

E. Broad National Education Packages,
Limited School and Classroom Improvements

As major federal education initiatives such as America 2000, Goals 2000, and No Child Left Behind were crafted, they brought together a variety of different categorical reform initiatives. These components were only loosely related to each other, and sometimes did not mesh well with each other. Not enough attention was paid to how these programs were to be implemented and coordinated at the state and local levels. Particularly missing was adequate knowledge of how these reforms would actually work at the school or classroom level, reflecting the lack of rigorously developed and tested school improvement models.

Americans have strong ideas about education should be improved, often based upon their own experiences as students and parents. Many policymakers believe that we already know enough about how to develop good schools; we simply need to provide adequate resources and have the political will to implement them. Unfortunately, often there is little appreciation of the complexity of educating all children, not just the ones who have had similar schooling experiences or live in neighborhoods like ours. Moreover, the common assumption that education reforms which work in one particular school or community can readily be

transported and implemented elsewhere is unwarranted.¹¹⁵

Providing early childhood education to disadvantaged students illustrates the some of the difficulties involved. In the mid-1960s both Democrats and Republicans favored early childhood education programs, such as Head Start, as a way to ensure that all students entering the first grade would have an equal opportunity to succeed in school.

The concept of early childhood education, especially for disadvantaged students has much to offer. Yet policymakers paid relatively little attention to how it would work in practice. President Lyndon Johnson and Sargent Shriver, director of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), for example, disregarded the advice of child development experts, such as Martin Deutsch, when Project Head Start was launched. Without adequate planning or trained teachers, in the summer of 1965 OEO enrolled about a half million children in eight-week programs.¹¹⁶

Head Start was an extremely popular program among policymakers, parents, and the public, but lacked agreement on the program's goals, was underfunded, poorly implemented, and improperly evaluated. Even as Head Start shifted from a summer program to a full-year enterprise, the early education gains quickly faded once students entered regular classrooms.¹¹⁷

A few expensive, experimental early childhood programs such as the Perry Preschool were more successful with disadvantaged students. Therefore, the Johnson administration created the

Follow Through program at the U.S. Office of Education to help early childhood education students transition into the regular schools. Unable to secure adequate funding for the intended massive service program, the Johnson administration transformed Follow Through into a large-scale experimental effort to ascertain which particular early childhood program models were most effective in helping disadvantaged students.¹¹⁸

The results from 17 of the initial Follow Through model programs were disappointing. None of the approaches consistently overcame the negative impact of poverty on student academic learning. In most cases the Follow Through students did not do any better in school than those who had not participated in that intervention. Moreover, the variation in student achievements within the same model program was greater than those attending different models.¹¹⁹

Follow Through was one of the most long-lasting and expensive federal education demonstration programs. The program was hampered by initial design, program implementation, and evaluation practices. Follow Through was maintained well beyond its assessment of different models of early childhood education. From FY1967 to FY1992, when the program was finally terminated, the federal government spent about \$1.5 billion dollars on it (in constant 1982-84=100 dollars). Follow Through cost more than we spent on the regional education laboratories (\$810 million) and the research and development (R&D) centers (\$600 million) during

that same period. Today, few policymakers or educators are even aware of its existence, let alone any of the results from those Follow Through evaluations.¹²⁰

Yet the early experiences with Head Start and Follow Through, suggested new ways of thinking about education development and evaluation. In 1973 the Brookings Panel on Social Experimentation organized a conference on planned variation experiments, calling for a systematic five-stage strategy for education research and development. Their largely forgotten or ignored recommendations still provide one of the best frameworks for systematic program development. As the panel explained:

The experiment would begin as a highly controlled investigation at a single site involving random assignment to control and treatment groups and careful observations of inputs and outcomes. If the intervention appeared to have appreciable positive effects under these conditions, a couple of years would then be devoted to developing it further, creating a training program for teachers and instruments for measuring the program's implementation and outcomes. The intervention would next be tried out under natural conditions in small number of sites, close enough to the sponsor's home base to be supervised without great travel and communication costs, and curriculum, training procedures, and measuring instruments would be revised in light of this experience. Not until after all of this development, small-scale testing, and revision had been successfully completed would a large-scale field test be undertaken to find out how the intervention works under a variety of conditions and with a variety of populations. In the final stage, full results of the field testing and training would be disseminated to those who wanted to adopt the intervention in their own school.¹²¹

Overall, the federal government has spent considerable money on education research and development. Some of those investments

have been helpful, but in general practitioners and scholars have been disappointed by their lack of scientific rigor as well as their limited practical usefulness. The quality and applicability of education research and development produced by the Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI) has been uneven and criticized by researchers, educators, and policymakers. With the creation of the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) in 2002, the scientific rigor of some of that work improved through the increased use of randomized field experiments. But IES has done little to produce the type of systematic, rigorous development envisioned by the Brookings panel 35 years earlier.¹²²

Congress and others continue to demand high quality research and development that provides educators with reliable and practical information to improve schools and classroom practices. Indeed, research and development is one area where Democrats and Republicans agree that the federal government has an important role to play. Under NCLB, for example, schools were required to use scientifically-based programs and practices. In certain areas, such as reading, considerable attention was paid to the quality of these studies, though IES was accused of stacking the review panels in favor of particular reading programs.¹²³

What will happen to the quality, scientific rigor, and utility of research and development in the Obama administration? John Q. Easton, the new IES assistant secretary, is committed to high quality research that will benefit practitioners as well as

scholars. Yet some critics have accused IES of over-emphasizing expensive, narrow randomized field trials in the past. Other question whether IES now will be sufficiently concerned about the scientific validity of future studies. And will IES finally pursue the task of systematic, rigorous education development that most federal agencies have ignored over the years?¹²⁴ With education funds becoming scarcer, we need to become more efficient and effective in our schools. And after 45 years of trying to develop better ways to provide disadvantaged students with equal educational opportunities, we will still have a long way to go.

F. The Federal Government and Educating Disadvantaged Children

In order to survive, human societies need to care for their children, including providing them with information and training to function as adult members. Usually child rearing has been left up to parents, but the larger group has often intervened when they considered it necessary for its own best interests. Yet there is great variation in how societies perceive and treat children, often taking into account the situation of their parents as well as that society's aspirations for the future.

In colonial America education received considerable attention, especially for religious reasons among the Puritans. Parents provided the primary education of their children, but often it included relying on outside help from local ministers and

neighbors. If children did not receive what was regarded at least as adequate, minimal education, the local community and the broader society often were willing to intervene, at least in principle. Over time, formal and informal schools became an essential complement to the role of parents; and the extent and nature of education perceived as necessary for everyone in society grew over time. Although religious needs continued to play an important role, concerns for developing future citizens and preparing economically productive adults grew increasingly important. And while children from disadvantaged backgrounds often received minimal public assistance and private charity, the idea that all children, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, and economic status deserved equal educational opportunities has spread and become widely accepted by most Americans today.¹²⁵

Defining what we mean by equal educational opportunities, who should provide it, and how we should finance schools has changed considerably in the past and will continue to evolve in the future. Parents continue to be seen as the primary caretakers of their children, but reliance on K-12 schools and postsecondary education is widely accepted and practiced (though some parents now prefer to teach their own children at home longer). Local communities and states have financed most of K-12 education, including providing the substantially increasing amount of real dollars spent on children over time.

The federal government has played a smaller role in financing and defining K-12 education, but since the mid-1960s that involvement has grown. With the economic crisis before us as well as the growing global education and economic competition facing the nation, today there are calls for more federal involvement to address these concerns. Particularly concerns about the fate of disadvantaged children and the increasing efforts made by the federal government through ESEA in recent decades leads many policymakers and educators to advocate even more federal involvement. Others, who are also committed to helping those who are disadvantaged in our society, want to maintain as much as possible the more traditional roles of parents, local communities, and states in financing and controlling the education of children. The tensions among the different government levels and public points of view will inevitably continue and may alter configurations of K-12 schools, their financing, and their governance.

Local communities and states provide most of the K-12 revenues and that is likely to continue, especially as the federal government struggles to pay for the expanding health care and Social Security programs. Growing concerns about global climate control, national and international security, our economic competitiveness, and the need to pay off our rapidly increasing national debt will also require further attention and financing.

At the same time, the ability and willingness of local

communities and states to continue funding K-12 education at the same levels, or even to increase it, will be much more difficult as many of the same demands locally as at the national level will require more local and state taxes as well. Since there are no easy, simple, or inexpensive ways of providing high quality education, we need to pay more attention at all levels to ascertaining the most effective and efficient ways of delivering those education services. The federal government can play a particularly important role in stimulating and financing scientifically reliable and practically useful developmental studies of schooling, perhaps along the lines suggested by the Brookings panel in the early 1970s. Unfortunately, our achievements to date in creating and testing appropriate, reliable models of school reforms and classroom practices, including how to help disadvantaged students to thrive in school, have been disappointing.¹²⁶

Almost everyone agrees that education should be a top priority in our society. Yet confronted with the multitude of extraordinarily challenging problems facing all of us individually and collectively, it is easy to forget how central education is to our personal and societal well-being. Yet education was not one of the top concerns in the 2008 elections. As the proportion of parents with school-age children diminishes and the nature of our public K-12 school population becomes more diverse, there is a danger that some Americans will focus more on financing an

increasingly expensive education for their own children (especially at the postsecondary levels), but neglect providing equal education opportunities for all children. We need to remind policymakers and the public of the importance of a highly educated workforce as well as the moral reasons for especially helping disadvantaged children. And we need to persuade everyone, including ourselves, that our education monies, at all levels of schooling and government, are being well-spent.

If we are to succeed in maintaining and improving our K-12 schools, it is essential that education receives bipartisan support at all levels of governance. This is difficult to accomplish as American politics, especially among political activists, is becoming more divided and partisan. Part of that divisiveness is structural, resulting from how Democrats and Republicans help maintain barriers for outside candidates and minor political parties as well as allowing the two major parties to play such key roles in creating safe congressional and state legislative districts. Successful primary candidates often are those who are willing to take more extreme positions among the party faithful than their more moderate, centrist colleagues who might be more inclined to foster bipartisan cooperation. And voters need to focus more on supporting effective ways of improving schooling and less on some of the symbolic education differences that divide us (though there will always be some significant and legitimate divisions over what should be taught and

who should be responsible for teaching it).¹²⁷

The federal government, including the White House, Congress, and the judicial system, has an important role to play, not in just providing direct education monies and expertise, but ensuring that the nation will be able to provide decent jobs and remain competitive in the global economy. The federal government also needs to provide financial assistance and other social and health services. Particular attention needs to be paid to helping those who are the most economically disadvantaged, as the educational opportunities for children are determined in large part by the well-being of their families and neighborhoods. And the recent sharp increases in income and wealth inequality in the post-World War II era needs to be reversed.¹²⁸

The federal government also can play a more direct role in education by reminding us of the national importance of K-12 schooling and providing additional funding, especially for disadvantaged children who might not otherwise receive adequate attention at state and local levels. While politically it makes sense to distribute federal education aid as broadly as possible, it is important to ensure that those monies that are especially targeted for providing equal educational opportunities for disadvantaged students reach them. We also need tangible evidence that the additional monies in practice really improves disadvantaged students academically.

When ESEA is finally reauthorized, rather than mandating

unrealistic goals that cannot be met in ten or twelve years, we should set reasonably high national, rather than state standards, including content, student achievement, and teacher quality standards. Holding policymakers, educators, students, parents, and the public responsible for reaching more modest objectives then will be more realistic. And progress toward these objectives needs to be measured through appropriate means, including using mechanisms such as growth-model approaches.

Promising even more federal objectives, such as improving early childhood education, expanding the number of subjects in which K-12 students will excel, reducing high school dropout rates, making everyone ready for postsecondary education or entering the labor force, increasing college attendance and graduation rates, enhancing teacher quality and their equitable distribution, and improving education research and program development, may be helpful in reminding us what needs to be accomplished. But given the limited federal financial resources and available expert staff, it is important that a smaller number of priorities be identified and pursued vigorously (often in conjunction with each other). What are the most crucial and realistic issues where more federal assistance will be the particularly helpful? What are the problems where the federal government can work most effectively with other partners? What are the areas where states, local school districts, businesses, teacher unions, colleges and universities, and private foundations

can provide the best leadership and resources?

Above all, we need to recommit ourselves to improving education for everyone, especially those who are most disadvantaged. Too many of us have forgotten the ideals of working for a better and more equitable society that motivated many citizens in the 1960s. While there were serious shortcomings with some of the Great Society programs, the earlier passion and commitment to help those most in need is worth rediscovering and emulating today.

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38. Michelle McNeil, "Budget Pain Dampening K-12 Efforts," Education Week, 28, no. 16 (January 7, 2009), 1, 21.
39. Alyson Klein, "Education Aid in Stimulus Raises Eyebrows," Education Week, 28, no. 20 (February 4, 2009), 17-9; Joseph J. Schatz and Richard Rubin, "House Democrats Pass Stimulus," Congressional Quarterly Week (February 2, 2009), 254-6. The education spending was \$79 billion for the Stabilization Fund for state programs; \$13 billion for low-income elementary and secondary schools; \$20 billion for school and university construction projects; \$15.6 billion for increasing Pell grants; and \$13.6 billion to assist children with disabilities.
40. Alyson Klein, "Stimulus Sets Stiff Management Challenge," Education Week, 28, no. 22 (February 25, 2009), 19, 23; Joseph J. Schatz and David Clarke, "Congress Clears Stimulus Package," Congressional Quarterly Week (February 16, 2009), 352-6. In addition, the \$115 billion for education included \$15.6 billion for Pell Grants; \$13.9 billion for higher education tax credits over 10 years; \$12.2 billion for special education; \$2.1 billion for Head Start; \$2 billion for child-care development; \$900 million for technology; \$680 million for vocational rehabilitation; \$400 million for teacher quality; \$370 million for homeless students, impact aid, and work-study; and \$250 million for other projects. Due to the insistence of Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), one of the three Republican senators willing to support the stimulus package, a line-item for assistance for school construction was eliminated (an area for which states and local districts have traditionally been responsible).
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42. Barack Obama, "Remarks of President Barack Obama-As Prepared for Delivery to Joint Session of Congress, Tuesday, February 24th, 2009," retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office (accessed December 21, 2009). Michele McNeil and Alyson Klein, "President's Education Aims Aired," Education Week, 28, no. 23 (March 4, 2009), 1, 22-23.
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47. Alyson Klein, "Stimulus Tensions Simmer," Education Week, 28, no. 36 (July 15, 2009), 1, 20-1; Andy Smarick, Education Stimulus Watch: Special Report 1 (Washington, DC: AEI, June 23, 2009), retrieved from <http://www.aei.org/paper/100024> (accessed September 5, 2009).
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51. Michele McNeil, "Stimulus Aid's Pace Still Slow," Education Week, 28, no. 35 (June 17, 2009), 1, 26; U.S. Department of Education, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Report: Summary of Programs and State-by-State Data, 3-7
52. Christina A. Samuels, "As Stimulus Tap Turns On, Districts Can't Escape Cuts," Education Week, 28, no. 28 (April 8, 2009), 1, 14; Erik W. Robelen, "'Funding Cliff' Fueling Worry Among States," Education Week, 29, no. 10 (November 4, 2009), 1, 19. A confidential survey of officials from 44 states and the District of Columbia from August through October, 2009, revealed concerns about the worsening economic prospects for K-12 education in 2010. Center for Education Policy, An Early Look at the Economic Stimulus Package and the Public Schools (Washington, DC: Center for Education Policy, 2009). Similarly, a field survey completed by governors' state budget officers in all 50 states found that "fiscal conditions significantly deteriorated for states during fiscal 2009, with the trend expected to continue through fiscal 2010 and even into 2011 and 2012." National Association of State Budget Officers, The Fiscal Survey of States, December 2009, vii, retrieved from <http://www.nasbo.org><http://www.nasbo.org> (accessed December 30, 2009).
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Montana with more promising education budgets are using more of their stimulus monies to help higher education. Alyson Klein, "K-12 Taking Primacy in States' Targeting of Stimulus Dollars," Education Week, 28, no. 27 (April 1, 2009), 19.

54. McNeil, "Rush to Pump Out Stimulus Cash Highlights Disparities in Funding."

55. David J. Hoff, "Title I Turnaround Programs Due for Big Cash Boost," Education Week, 28, no. 25 (March 18, 2009), 13, 15.

56. As was mentioned earlier, states have played an increasingly important role in K-12 education since the 1930s, reinforced by the delegation of powers and staff assistance under Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

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58. U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Funds: Purpose," last modified, December 24, 2009, retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop> (accessed December 29, 2009).

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61. Thirty-nine states indicated that they were applying for RTT funds in the first phase, two in the second phase, and four were undecided about applying. None of the 45 states surveyed said that they would not apply. Center for Education Policy, An Early Look at the Economic Stimulus Package and the Public Schools.

62. Dakarai I. Aarons, "Report Finds States on Course to Build Pupil-Data Systems," Education Week, 29, no. 13 (December 2, 2009), 6.

63. Mary Ann Zehr, "States Slow, Put Off Work on Standards,"

Education Week, 29, no. 11 (November 11, 2009), 1, 14.

64. Center for Education Policy, An Early Look at the Economic Stimulus Package and the Public Schools; Stephen Sawchuk, "Performance-Based Evaluation Systems Face Obstacles," Education Week, 29, no. 15 (December 16, 2009), 1, 12.

65. Center for Education Policy, An Early Look at the Economic Stimulus Package and the Public Schools; Lesli A. Maxwell, "Rules Ease Overhaul Strategies," Education Week, 29, no. 13 (December 2, 2009), 1, 19. Education Secretary Duncan explained how in Chicago "complete turnarounds" were the most effective remedies for coping with seriously low-performing schools. Arne Duncan, "Start Over: Turnarounds Should Be the First Option for Low-Performing Schools," Education Week, 28, no. 35 (June 17, 2009), 36.

66. Andrew Brownstein, "Innovation Grants to Reward Past Success, Ability to Scale," Title I Monitor, 14, no. 10 (October 2009), 3, 12; Erik W. Robelen, "Potholes Ahead on Innovation Fund," Education Week, 29, no. 3 (September 16, 2009), 1, 26.

67. Michele McNeil, "Proposal Sets Out 'i3' Rules," Education Week, 29, no. 7 (October 14, 2009), 1.

68. Michelle McNeil, "Officials Urged to Retool Draft 'i3' Rule," Education Week, 29, no. 13 (December 2, 2009), 20.

69. Vinovskis, From A Nation at Risk to No Child Left Behind.

70. Education Week, The Obama Education Plan, 216-9.

71. Aarons, "Chicago Record Shows Duncan as Collaborator."

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73. Obama, "Remarks of President Barack Obama-As Prepared for Delivery to Joint Session of Congress, Tuesday, February 24th, 2009."

74. At the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, for example, President Obama outlined his education plans. Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on a Complete and Competitive American Education," March 10, 2009, retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office (accessed January 1, 2010).

75. Alyson Klein, "Affect of Stimulus on NCLB Renewal Mullied," Education Week, 28, no. 24 (March 11, 2009), 19, 24.

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76. Erik W. Robelen, "Obama Echoes Bush on Education Ideas," Education Week, 28, no. 28 (April 8, 2009), 18.
77. Duncan explained that this was a continuation of his ongoing Listening and Learning education tour which already had visited 30 states. Arne Duncan, "Reauthorization of ESEA: Why We Can't Wait," press release, U.S. Department of Education, September 24, 2009, retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/print/news/speeches/2009> (accessed January 6, 2010). Alyson Klein, "ESEA Action High Priority, Duncan Says," Education Week, 29, no. 5 (September 30, 2009), 1, 17.
78. Duncan, "Reauthorization of ESEA: Why We Can't Wait."
79. Duncan, "Reauthorization of ESEA: Why We Can't Wait."
80. Duncan, "Reauthorization of ESEA: Why We Can't Wait."
81. The proportion of the resident U.S. population ages 5 to 19 has dropped from 24.8 percent in 1980 to 20.2 percent in 2008. The estimate is that by 2015 that percentage may drop to 19.9 percent and then remain about the same until 2025. U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009), tables 7-8.
82. Maris A. Vinovskis, Education, Society, and Economic Opportunity: A Historical Perspective on Persistent Issues (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995).
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85. Robert Crosnoe, Mexican Roots, American Schools: Helping Mexican Immigrant Children Succeed (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone, Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration (New York: Russell Sage Foundation,

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86. U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010, tables 36, 262.

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89. Shaila Dewan, "Minorities and the Poor Predominate in the South's Public Schools," New York Times (January 7, 2010).

90. U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010, tables 680, 683.

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92. Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz, The Race Between Education and Technology (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); James J. Heckman, "U.S. Education and Training Policy: A Reevaluation of the Underlying Assumptions Behind the 'New Consensus.'" in Race, Poverty, and Domestic Policy, ed. C. Michael Henry (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 367-404.

93. U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010, table 699.

94. U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010, table 697.

95. The underemployment rate includes people who want to work but have given up seeking a job as well as those who are part-time workers but want a full-time job.

96. Peter S. Goodman, "85,000 More Jobs Cut in December, Fogging Outlook," New York Times (January 9, 2010).

97. Often we compare college or university attendance rates of children from poor and more wealthy families; while this is a good first step, it does not take into consideration the likelihood of children from different backgrounds attending one of the more selective institutions of higher education. In 1999, about one-fourth of full-time college students from families with annual incomes over \$200,000 attended a highly selective four-year college; fewer than 6 percent of children from families with incomes below \$20,000 do so. Michael S. McPherson and Morton Owen Shapiro, eds., College Access: Opportunity or Privilege? (New York: College Board, 2006), 5. Indeed, many top public research universities, such as Indiana University and the University of Michigan, are decreasing their representation of low-income students while providing more institutional assistance for students from wealthier families. Kati Haycock, Mary Lynch, and Jennifer Engle, Opportunity Adrift: Our Flagship Universities are Straying Away from their Public Missions (New York: Education Trust, 2010), retrieved from <http://www.edtrust.org> (accessed January 14, 2010). <http://www.edtrust.org>

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Schoolhouses, Courthouses, and Statehouses; Michael Paris, Framing Equal Opportunity: Law and the Politics of School Finance Reform (Stanford: Stanford Law Books, 2010); Rebell, Courts and Kids; Benjamin Michael Superfine, The Courts and Standards-Based Education Reform (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Martin R. West and Paul E. Peterson, eds., School Money Trials: The Legal Pursuit of Educational Advocacy (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2007).

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105. Stephen Sawchuk, "2 State Unions Balking at Plans for Race to the Top," Education Week, 29, no. 16 (January 6, 2010), 1, 16.

106. Robelen, "Stimulus is Spurring Legislation."

107. Alyson Klein, "'Education Jobs Funs' is Aimed at Averting Layoffs," Education Week, 29, no. 16 (January 6, 2010), 17-20.

108. The unexpected upset Senate victory for Republican Scott Brown in Massachusetts will make it much more difficult for the Obama administration and the Democratic Congress to pass some of its current proposals. Charles Babington, "Analysis: GOP Sees Mass. Win as a Stop Sign for Dems," Washington Post (January 20, 2010), retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com> (accessed January 20, 2010).

109. Office of the Press Secretary, "Background on the President's Events Today in Falls Church, Virginia," White House (January 19, 2010), retrieved from <http://whitehouse.gov/the-press-office> (accessed January 20, 2010).

110. Gareth Davies, From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1996); James L. Sundquist, Politics and Policy: The Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson Years (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1968); Sar A. Levitan, The Great Society's Poor Law: A New Approach to Poverty (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969); Vinovskis, Preschool Education Policies in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations.

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Inequality of Opportunity. Public education in the United States has long promised quality education for all children, regardless of ethnicity, race, or income. However, critics of public education argue that many children do not have equal opportunities to learn and are not likely to attend a quality school. As educators and legislators continue to believe in the power of change through education reform, dollars will be spent on one innovative idea after another to improve academic performance, efficiency, or other structural characteristics of the schools. American public education has, since 1980, endured reform after reform, with few reforms sustained over the long-term, and little to show for the effort except frustration and lack of clarity in the mission of the reforms. Presentation on theme: "Education policy and Equal Education opportunities" Reforms in Secondary Education and their effect on "children in risk" in North Caucasus. Dr. Irina. Presentation transcript 11 Impact of conflicts on education Schools destroyed; Children dropped out from education because of wars (about 100 000 children): In some villages Children to reach school from one part of village to another (to Ingush school) use special transport because of security reasons; 19 455 kids need rehabilitation " post war syndrome; Problems of I and II wars between Georgia -S. USE-idea of equal opportunities for all children; Positive discrimination