

## U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings Announces Final Regulations to Strengthen No Child Left Behind

Encourages Use of New Tools to Build Upon the Successes of NCLB

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U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings today announced final regulations to strengthen and clarify *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), focusing on improved accountability and transparency, uniform and disaggregated graduation rates and improved parental notification for Supplemental Education Services and public school choice. The Secretary made the announcement while speaking to educators, state and local policymakers and business leaders at South Carolina Educational Television in Columbia, S.C.

"NCLB has shined a spotlight on schools," said Secretary Spellings. "It is compelling grown ups to do the right thing by kids. And it's working. According to the Nation's Report Card, since 2000, more kids are learning reading and math. Since this law was passed, nearly one million more students have learned basic math skills. Children once left behind are making some of the greatest gains, but more work needs to be done. That's why I've taken a responsive, common sense approach to implementing the law with today's announcement."

The Secretary noted that these new regulations reflect lessons learned over the past six years since NCLB was enacted and builds on work that states have made with their assessment and accountability systems. One area that there is broad public consensus around is the need for a uniform graduation rate.

Recognizing that the nation can no longer tolerate - much less prosper - with its abysmal graduation rate, particularly among minority students, the final regulations establish a uniform graduation rate that shows how many incoming freshman in a given high school graduate within four years.

"As far back as 2005, governors from all 50 states agreed to adopt a uniform, more accurate graduation rate. But so far, only 16 states have done so," said Secretary Spellings. "Parents know that a high school diploma is the least their children need to succeed in today's economy."

Under the new regulations, all states will use the same formula to calculate how many

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students graduate from high school on time and how many drop out. The final regulations define the "four year adjusted cohort graduation rate" as the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who entered high school four years earlier, adjusted for transfers, students who emigrate and deceased students. The data will be made public so that educators and parents can compare how students of every race, background and income level are performing.

The final rules announced by the Secretary today also require that parents must be notified in a clear and timely way about their public school choice and supplemental education service options. The regulations seek to ensure that states make more information available to the public about what tutoring providers are available, how these providers are approved and monitored, and most importantly, how effective they are in helping students improve.

"These services can't make a difference if parents don't know they're available," said Secretary Spellings.

Several of the regulations seek to clarify elements of the law that require school systems to be accountable for results and transparent in their reporting to parents and the public. States and districts must now publish reading and mathematics results from the Nation's Report Card alongside data from their own tests for students and include participation rates for students with disabilities and those who are limited English proficient. The regulations also state that measures of student academic achievement may include multiple question formats and multiple assessments within a subject area. In addition, in order to ensure the inclusion of all sub-groups of students, states will be required to explain how its minimum group size, or "N-size" and other components of its AYP definition, interact to provide statistically reliable information and at the same time ensure the maximum inclusion of all students and subgroups.

Building on the Department's growth model pilot program, the regulations outline the criteria that States must meet in order to incorporate individual student progress into the State's definition of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Recognizing schools in restructuring need the most significant intervention, the regulations seek to ensure that the interventions are more rigorous and that they specifically address the reasons for the school being in restructuring.

Under the new regulations, the Secretary of Education will be required to continue the dialogue and address some of the more technical needs of the states through the National Technical Advisory Council. The council is comprised of experts in the fields of education standards, accountability systems, statistics and psychometrics and it is advising the Department on complex and technical issues and ensure state standards and assessments are of the highest technical quality.

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