Lessons Learned, Challenges Ahead

National Education Goals Panel

December 1999
NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

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Lessons Learned, Challenges Ahead

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December 1999
Emily Wurtz wrote *National Education Goals: Lessons Learned, Challenges Ahead*, based on the nine commissioned papers written by Richard Elmore, Sharon Lynn Kagan (Goal 1), Rafael Valdivieso (Goal 2), Lauren Resnick (Goal 3), David Imig (Goal 4), Senta Raizen (Goal 5), Paul Barton (Goal 6), John Porter (Goal 7), and Douglas Powell (Goal 8) and the data reported in the 1998 Goals Report. The full text of these commissioned papers is available from the Goals Panel and will appear in a special issue of the *Columbia Teachers College Record*. The authors prepared their papers for the National Education Goals Panel in December 1998.
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PREFACE

December 1, 1999

The 10th anniversary of the launching of America’s National Education Goals coincides with the millennial year 2000. This presents a unique opportunity for Americans to take stock. As both the millennial year and the year upon which the goals are focused, it also is an occasion for the nation to think about what lies ahead for education and for the goals.

As chair of the National Education Goals Panel, I have asked the panel to think about the future of the National Education Goals, the contributions they have made, and the role they can play in the future. The panel began 1999 by recommending that the National Education Goals be continued as America’s Education Goals. This decision was grounded in information the panel received from many sources, including a set of scholarly papers from its expert advisors.

This policy brief presents the highlights of these experts’ thoughtful comments. As one advisor, Richard Elmore, points out, the panel has served as a forum that can

- focus diverse political leaders across levels of government on education reform;
- work on a common set of concerns—the goals—with a combination of technical expertise and political judgment;
- develop and communicate a bipartisan consensus that can shape the policy debate at the state and local levels; and
- sustain public discussion of the purposes and performance of American schools.

How appropriate for such a forum to reflect on what has been accomplished in the past 10 years and chart its course for the century, and millennium, ahead!

These highlights summarize data trends and expert opinion about what was accomplished in the eight goal areas over the past decade of reform. On behalf of the panel, I thank each of the authors and the colleagues with whom they worked for their generous help and service to the panel. Their insights will remind us of what has been accomplished and where the goals and the panel can best add value in the future.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Patton
Governor of Kentucky
Chair (1999), National Education Goals Panel
INTRODUCTION

In 1989, President George Bush and the nation’s governors developed National Education Goals to achieve by the year 2000. As the new millennium approaches, it is appropriate to reflect on what has been accomplished in the past decade and what lies ahead. On December 1, 1999, the panel plans a conference to discuss these issues and their implications for the future.

To inform its thinking, in 1998, the National Education Goals Panel asked its advisors to think about the current status and future of educational reform. It invited the leaders of its eight Resource Groups to write a paper about what had been accomplished in their goal area since the goals were set and what future priorities should be. It also asked one advisor to read these eight papers and comment as an outsider on what had been accomplished across the goals. This booklet summarizes the highlights of those papers and indicates the “lessons learned” and “challenges ahead.”

The nine papers reported several common factors. In 1990 these Resource Groups of prominent experts recommended what current data the panel should report to measure progress toward each goal. When existing data were inadequate, they indicated what new measures were needed. Each group discovered that measuring a goal required both clarifying what it means and reaching a consensus among concerned professional and political groups. Each group felt that this process had been an important element of its work and entailed both defining and promoting central concepts, such as “readiness” for Goal 1 and “academic standards” for Goal 3. Each group remains frustrated that the data needed to measure progress toward the goals are not available.

This report is organized around the three topics the panel asked the authors to address: 1) trends in the data the panel reports; 2) accomplishments of the past decade and the contributions the Goals and the Goals Panel may have made to them; and 3) recommended priorities for the future. While the indicators the panel reported have changed from year to year, all trend data here are from the 1998 Goals Report. The complete text of each paper is available upon request from the Goals Panel and will be reprinted in a future special issue of the Columbia Teachers College Record.

The members of the National Education Goals Panel are deeply grateful to the authors, Richard Elmore, Sharon Lynn Kagan, Rafael Valdivieso, Lauren Resnick, David Imig, Senta Raizen, Paul Barton, John Porter, and Douglas Powell. Their thoughtful advice to the panel goes far beyond these summaries. Each consulted with other Resource Group and Technical Planning Group advisors. All have given generously of their time and wisdom.
CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

On December 1, 1999, the Goals Panel plans a conference to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the National Education Goals and to ask what challenges the nation will face in future efforts to reach those goals. The conference is designed to help the panel address these questions:

✦ Have the goals worked; what have they helped America accomplish?
✦ What are the “big issues” for the next period of education reform, and how should they be addressed?
✦ What is the future role of the goals and the Panel; how can they best add value?

The panel seeks information from many sources to help it address these questions. The papers of its Resource Group advisors already have helped the panel and will be a valuable part of the December conference. Below is a brief synopsis of the questions suggested by those papers about the challenges the goals and panel will face in the future.

Questions Common to All the Papers

✦ Should the panel modify its reporting process to show the increasing diversity of the student population and to give more credit for progress short of goal targets?
✦ Should the panel undertake an initiative to expand data collection, its frequency, and its comparability?
✦ Should the panel address the continuing disparity between white and minority students in academic achievement and in rates of college attendance and completion?
✦ Should the panel seek to identify the next set of “big issues” in education reform and work to build a bipartisan consensus on how to address them?
✦ Should the goals and objectives themselves be revisited and possibly modified?

Across the Goals—Richard Elmore

✦ Current indicators don’t account for large demographic shifts and state and local variation in reform implementation that obscure real improvements. Should the panel consider modifying indicators or reporting more context information to better portray progress toward the goals?
✦ Very specific goal language may focus attention on the failure to meet the goal, rather than on monitoring and promoting actual progress that is being made. Should the panel consider revisions in the goals themselves?
✦ Elmore recommends that the panel shift its emphasis to more special studies to help shape the national agenda on big issues that fall out from routine monitoring of progress. How should the panel identify the “big issues” for study?

Goal-Specific Questions and Comments

Goal 1—Sharon Lynn Kagan

Kagan suggests that the panel consider extending its Goal 1 activities to:

✦ Revisiting the goal and objectives;
✦ Promoting more effective early childhood assessments;
✦ Helping with issues of school readiness for children;
✦ Increasing public awareness and willingness to help young children.

Goal 2—Rafael Valdivieso

The number of states maintaining longitudinal, individual student’s records increased from seven in 1992 to 14 in 1998. Should the panel focus attention on increasing the number of states that maintain individualized student records?

✦ The national rate for high school completion has remained constant, despite changes in school populations to include more students with historically higher rates for noncompletion. Should panel reporting on Goal 2 be modified to reflect the increasing diversity of school age populations?
Goal 3—Lauren Resnick
- States are moving from the development of standards to the more difficult and complex process of putting them into operation. How can the panel assist states and school districts to implement standards-based reform?
- Resnick credits the panel with playing a critical role in launching and sustaining the standards-based reform movement and urges the panel to resume a strong policy leadership role. Now that there is strong public support for standards-based reform, what should the panel do to return to the strong visionary, consensus-building role it played effectively in the past?

Goal 4—David Imig
Imig recommends that the panel turn its attention to several critical issues. What steps can the panel take to assist in:
- Creating alignment among state standards, curriculum, teacher pre-service training, and licensure programs?
- Ensuring that all teachers have access to quality professional development that is organized around problem solving, informed by research, and sustained through appropriate follow-up?

Goal 5—Senta Raizen
Raizen recommends that the panel undertake a broader policy role that provides more interpretation of data and advocacy for change, based on data. What steps can the panel take to:
- Identify and publicize successful programs and practices that particularly lead to improvements in "whole curricular sequences through the grades?"
- Improve teacher learning in math and science?
- Identify new school organization patterns to support math and science learning?
- Narrow achievement gaps among population subgroups?

Goal 6—Paul Barton
Barton suggests that the panel:
- Retain its focus on improving adult literacy as measured by NALS;
- Apply the concept of standards to higher education by resuming the work of an earlier technical planning group considering a NAEP-like assessment for higher education.
- Turn attention to the growing disparity between white and minority access to and completion of higher education.

Goal 7—John Porter
Porter recommends that the panel:
- Work to link national, state, and local measures of school violence;
- Sponsor additional study to identify the most effective mix of incentives and sanctions in policy to reduce school violence.

Goal 8—Douglas Powell
Powell recommends four actions for the panel:
- Getting more valid and reliable measures of local, state and national parent involvement efforts and outcomes;
- Providing policy direction and technical assistance to implement partnerships with parents;
- Supporting research on what works;
- Strengthening the explicit links between parental participation and the other goals.
Richard Elmore sees a “seismic shift” in recent political attitudes about education. The states’ role has shifted from providing and monitoring inputs to schooling (such as financing and facilities) to one of setting student learning standards and monitoring school performance. State and local political leaders now “routinely discuss student performance on statewide tests,” and international comparisons “are now a routine feature of political discourse.” The overriding signal is that “schools should become more focused on results for students, and that state policies should focus on accountability for student learning.”

Significance of National Education Goals

The National Education Goals give purpose and direction to this shift. At the 1989 Charlottesville Summit, …for the first time in the history of American education, political leaders from both political parties, representing widely divergent constituencies, agreed upon a broad strategic framework, and a set of commitments, to guide the overall course of education…. The salience and importance of consensus on national goals for education reform, and on broad strategic guidance for state and local efforts, persists…. What is truly remarkable about this period of reform is the persistence of the idea that education reform merits some kind of focused national debate and discussion among key political, professional, and community leaders at the state and local level to guide its overall course. Also truly remarkable about this period of reform is that, despite the partisan wrangling that has occurred around the exact form that national debate and discussion should take, many political and professional leaders have taken the idea of national consensus on education reform seriously and have explicitly let that consensus guide their actions.

In this context, Elmore contends, the fate of the National Education Goals Panel becomes important. He cites five functions he thinks the panel has performed: 1) convening expert panels to recommend the measures to track progress to the goals; 2) issuing regular progress reports that use those measures; 3) providing guidance and support to organizations representing key reform constituencies; 4) commissioning periodic special studies of key reform issues that inform debate on the progress of education reform; and 5) convening public discussions on the progress of reform and progress toward the achievement of goals. To date, Elmore writes, the NEGP has been a model of how to construct and maintain a bipartisan institution, representing diverse constituencies, serving as a forum for public debate on progress toward the goals and the course of reform in the states and localities. He sees the NEGP as the only remaining national institution focused on education reform with bipartisan representation of political leaders across levels of government. This fact sends an important symbolic message about the importance of education reform as a bipartisan political issue.

Lessons Learned About the Goals Process

- Different goals have served different purposes for different constituencies. Resource Group work
with the panel has contributed to consensus in professional communities about what is worth measuring and why, but each goal has its own relationship to the constituencies concerned with it.

- Indicators, even good ones, are not always valid measures of the progress of reform. Indicators don't account for large demographic shifts and state and local variation in reform implementation that obscure the real improvements. "Aggregate data on student performance overall may conceal a variety of successes and failures."

- Clear goals may not be good goals. Becoming “first in the world” in math and science is a clear goal but one that is "not even remotely within range" for the foreseeable future. This wording may focus attention on the failure to meet the goal, rather than monitoring and promoting actual progress that is being made.

- Good goals are a combination of expertise and political judgment.

NEGP, as a forum where technical expertise and political judgment get worked out around a common set of concerns, is important... [There are] few places that bring technical and political judgment together around educational issues in the way the NEGP does.

- We probably do get what we measure, whether we want it or not. In the long run, "when political leaders articulate relatively clear expectations for schools and create incentives that reinforce those expectations, broad-scale changes occur. These changes occurred when high school completion rose from 50 percent in the 1950s to more than 85 percent today and again in the 1960s and 1970s, when most students were taught to master minimum competency in basic skills. It is this history of success with meeting goals that set the stage for the current desire to reach more challenging goals.

The NEGP... has managed to sustain some level of discussion on the purposes and performance of American schools. And it has managed to do so in the context of a bipartisan institution that represents considerable diversity in composition. These things are probably well worth preserving.

**Options for the Future of the Panel**

The panel’s future niche depends upon the roles other organizations assume for various aspects of reform. Elmore recommends that the panel shift its emphasis to more special studies to help shape the national agenda on big issues that arise from routine monitoring of progress.

From my perspective, the NEGP’s comparative advantage... is in its bipartisan, multilevel representation and its ability to combine technical expertise with political judgment. Capitalizing on this comparative advantage means focusing the panel’s work on issues where communicating bipartisan consensus will shape the policy debate at the state and local level.

Important aspects of this debate will include considering whether to reformulate any of the goals and how to address the inequalities of performance among different types of students.
GOAL 1: READY TO LEARN

By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.

Objectives:

★ All children will have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare them for school.
★ Every parent in the United States will be a child’s first teacher and devote time each day helping their child learn, and parents will have access to the training and support they need.
★ Children will receive the nutrition, physical activity experiences, and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies and to maintain the mental alertness necessary to be prepared to learn, and the number of low birthweight babies will be significantly reduced through enhanced prenatal health systems.

NEGP Indicators:

★ There is not yet a direct measure of progress toward Goal 1.
★ Indicators of young children’s health include a Children’s Health Index, 2-year-olds immunized against preventable diseases, low birthweight, and mothers’ early prenatal care
★ Family reading and storytelling
★ Preschool participation by children with disabilities

Trends: What do the data show?

A consistent pattern of improvement appears in the data reported by the Goals Panel on indicators of progress toward the Goal 1 objectives. Thirty-five states report fewer infants born with one of four health risks; 50 states increased the percentages of mothers receiving early prenatal care; 47 states increased the number of young children with disabilities enrolled in preschools. Likewise, the percentage nationally of 2-year-olds fully immunized against preventable diseases rose to 78 percent in 1997 from 75 percent in 1994, and those 3- to 5-year-olds whose parents read to them or told stories to them regularly increased to 72 percent in 1996 from 66 percent in 1993.

The Goals Panel does not yet have direct data regarding children’s readiness for school. A major new study from the National Center for Educational Statistics, the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, however, promises to provide the kind of new data the panel has sought.
The past decade of NEGP work on Goal 1 has greatly contributed to raising the status of children’s early years to that of an issue worthy of the nation’s attention and commitment. The work to date has been impressive, yet it remains incomplete. Kagan recommends that the panel consider extending its Goal 1 activities to: 1) revisit the goal and its attendant objectives; 2) promote more effective early childhood assessment processes; 3) help schools become more ready for the young children they serve; 4) improve the quality of all early childhood settings; and 5) increase public awareness and willingness to help young children.

Prospects: What next?

We will remember the past decade as a “landmark epoch” for American early care and education, Sharon Lynn Kagan writes. Over this decade, we have seen dramatic improvements and a dramatically new respect for young children and for the importance of the early years. The value of early childhood education has been “incorporated into the educational and policy mainstream. Readiness is on the lips of parents and policymakers.” The zeitgeist has changed.

Goal 1 played a significant role in these developments. It “provided opportunities for visionary thinking; it evoked more thorough analyses and conceptual frameworks [within education]; and it elevated professional and public awareness of the issue.” The panel represented a broad and powerful constituency... that had never before stood behind the need for a focus on all young children.... Because readiness was acknowledged as important by a prestigious and powerful group like the NEGP, and because readiness was conceived as a collective responsibility from the outset, Goal One set the stage for new thinking about the needs of young children and society’s responsibility to them.... Goal One was significant in forcing the field to come together, to transcend its differences, and to reach a common definition of readiness.

Other organizations also were important in promoting the importance of early childhood, including the Committee for Economic Development, the Business Roundtable, the Children’s Defense Fund, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Rob Reiner’s “I Am Your Child” campaign, welfare reform legislation, and many others. But the bipartisan nature of the Goals Panel is critical to underscore.... The panel reaffirmed the ideas of the business community, who knew that readiness was both an educational and a workforce issue. Finally, the NEGP allowed the profession to see beyond itself. For the first time, readiness for all children had a place on the national agenda.

Examining Children’s Readiness for School: Progress over the Decade

Sharon Lynn Kagan, Yale University, with Ronnie Rubin

Goal 1: Accomplishments and the contributions of the Goals and Panel

Specific work of the Goals Panel helped focus educators on direct measures of children’s outcomes (Reconsidering Children’s Early Development and Learning, NEGP, 1995; Getting a Good Start in School, 1997), extended the debate on how we should conduct assessments (Principles and Recommendations for Early Childhood Assessments, 1998), raised the issue of how schools prepare themselves to serve all children (Ready Schools, 1998), and brought visibility to early childhood issues (Special Early Childhood Report, 1997).

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GOAL 2: HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

Objectives:

★ The nation must reduce its dropout rate dramatically, and 75 percent of those students who do drop out will successfully complete a high school degree or its equivalent.
★ The gap in high school graduation rates between American students from minority backgrounds and their non-minority counterparts will be eliminated.

NEGP Indicators:

★ High school completion rates, as the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds who have a high school credential (diploma or other credential)
★ High school dropout rates, as the percentage of students in grades 9 through 12 who leave school without completing a recognized secondary program

Trends: What do the data show?

The percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds nationally who completed high school or received an alternate credential has remained flat at 86 percent during the 1990s. Indeed, Rafael Valdivieso says the rate over the past quarter-century has been static, increasing only 2 percent since 1973. Although 15 states have now achieved a 90 percent high school completion rate, nationally during the 1990s, the percentage of students who stayed in school and received a diploma decreased by 5 percent while the percentage of those earning an alternative credential, usually a General Education Development (GED), increased by the same amount. This decline has occurred while students are taking more academic courses, educators have raised academic standards, and the requirements of the GED increased. Therefore, “the rate of 86 percent during the 1990s can be considered an accomplishment, given the social environment in which it occurred—a period of active efforts to raise standards in schools while social systems for young people outside school were deteriorating,” Valdivieso writes.

The gap in high school graduation rates between whites and minorities has remained. “Although there was significant reduction in the black-white disparity—about 10 percentage points in the 1980s—no further progress has been made in the 1990s.” In 1996, the rate of completion was 92 percent for whites, 83 percent for blacks, and 62 percent for Hispanics. “The Hispanic-white disparity is a long-standing one—for at least the last 25 years,” Valdivieso writes, and it pertains to immigrant and nonimmigrant Hispanic youth alike.
The growing proportion of Hispanic students in schools and the mainstreaming of students with disabilities, both groups with historically low school completion rates, will make it more difficult to report the proportion of all young adults in the population who complete high school because it could profile young adults in terms of their educational attainment and needs as well as their readiness to join the workforce.

Panel advisors also recommended that the states develop a comprehensive student record system as the basis for calculating high school completion. Related work by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has helped states move in this direction. The number of states maintaining a record system for every student doubled to 14 in 1998 from seven in 1992. The states have included many of the data elements the panel recommended, and these elements also may help provide data to measure progress toward several of the National Education Goals.
GOAL 3: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

By the year 2000, all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so that they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation’s modern economy.

Objectives:

★ The academic performance of all students at the elementary and secondary levels will increase significantly in every quartile, and the distribution of minority students in each quartile will more closely reflect the student population as a whole.

★ The percentage of all students who demonstrate the ability to reason, solve problems, apply knowledge, and write and communicate effectively will increase substantially.

★ All students will be involved in activities that promote and demonstrate good citizenship, good health, community service, and personal responsibility.

★ All students will have access to physical education and health education to ensure that they are healthy and fit.

★ The percentage of all students competent in more than one language will substantially increase.

★ All students will be knowledgeable about the diverse cultural heritage of this nation and about the world community.

NEGP Indicators:

★ Student achievement by subjects, as the proportion of students scoring at the “proficient” level on NAEP—in reading, math, science, writing

★ Advanced Placement performance, as the proportion of AP scores high enough for college credit

Trends: What do the data show?

The Goals Panel reports significant improvement in student achievement in mathematics in the United States between 1990 and 1996 in the percentage of students scoring at the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) at the 4th, 8th, and 12th grade levels, and in reading between 1992 and 1998 at 8th grade. Likewise, 27 states increased the percentage of 8th graders proficient in math, and all 50 states increased the proportion of Advanced Placement (AP) scores qualifying for college credit. Scoring at the “proficient” level on NAEP is generally recognized as reaching a high standard of achievement, which is appropriate for measuring goal attainment but difficult for showing short-term change. Lauren Resnick writes, “Measured in this way... the overall percentages of proficient students are much too low to suggest that all or even most American students are competent in challenging subject matter.”

Other data show other evidence of improvement. Over the decade, the percentage of students whose scores rose from below basic to basic or above has increased. For instance, the percentage of 4th graders scoring at or above basic in math rose to 62 percent in 1996 from 57 percent in 1992, and the percentage of 8th graders doing so rose to 61 percent in 1996 from 56
Resnick credits the early activities of the panel with launching the standards-based reform movement and advocating on its behalf at critical points in its development, until 1994. As the public sustains its sense of the importance of education and standards, she appeals to the panel, as a highly visible, credible, and bipartisan agency, to return to the strong visionary consensus role it played in the development of policy in the past.

**Prospects: What next?**

Beyond these data, Resnick sees states’ commitment to the process of setting and pursuing academic standards as a transforming shift, triggered by the goals and the panel. The Goal 3 Resource Group, which she chaired, recommended that the panel use NAEP and AP data as the best measures available to report annual progress toward Goal 3. The group also recommended developing academic standards as a new way both to measure and to promote improved student achievement.

The panel embraced the recommendation to develop and promote academic standards for student learning. Its commitment led directly to the establishment with Congress of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing, its 1992 report, *Raising Standards for American Education*, and the subsequent development of national standards in the various subject domains. The panel also supported proposals for a continuing national “entity” to oversee state and national standards and their implementation. The establishment of Achieve and its recent education summits shows “it is clear... that the issues that gave rise to the Goals Panel are still very much alive.”

The “success” of the standards movements, judged by states’ voluntary development of such standards, seems almost absolute. Virtually all states have articulated academic standards and are working to develop and align state student testing programs to them. On the other hand, states only now are moving beyond the rhetorical stage of specifying standards and into the complex processes of putting them into operation.

**Goal 3: Accomplishments and the contributions of the Goals and Panel**

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GOAL 4: TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By the year 2000, the nation’s teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.

Objectives:

🌟 All teachers will have access to preservice teacher education and continuing professional development that will provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to teach to an increasingly diverse student population with a variety of educational, social, and health needs.

🌟 All teachers will have continuing opportunities to acquire additional knowledge and skills needed to teach challenging subject matter and to use emerging new methods, forms of assessment, and technologies.

🌟 States and school districts will create integrated strategies to attract, recruit, prepare, retain, and support the continued professional development of teachers, administrators, and other educators, so that there is a highly talented workforce of professional educators to teach challenging subject matter.

🌟 Partnerships will be established, whenever possible, among local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, parents, and local labor, business, and professional associations to provide and support programs for the professional development of educators.

NEGP Indicators:

🌟 Teacher preparation, as the percentage of public school teachers with academic degrees, and the percentage with teaching certificates, in their main teaching assignment

🌟 Teacher professional development, as the percentage of public school teachers participating in in-service or professional development programs in one or more topics since the end of the previous year

Trends: What do the data show?

Goal 4 was added to the National Education Goals, and the Goals Panel first reported on it in 1994. Like other goals, it is difficult to measure, and insufficient data are available. Nonetheless, too many teachers are clearly teaching “out-of-field,” and the situation is getting worse.

Across the country, the percentage of secondary school teachers without an undergraduate or graduate degree in their main teaching assignment got worse, declining to 63 percent in 1994, the latest year for which data are available, from 66 percent in 1991. These data will not be updated until 2000. No state has improved, and nine states have declined on this indicator.

In 1994, 85 percent of teachers in the United States reported having participated in professional development programs in education technology, methods or in-depth study of their subject field, or student assessment. Imig indicates that high rates of participation sometimes reflect that participation is mandatory, and he urges attention to the nature and focus of the activities offered.
Goal 4: Accomplishments and the contributions of the Goals and Panel

Teacher quality has been recognized as pivotal to improving education. Early efforts have begun to recast professional development as a school-embedded activity linked directly to students’ ability to meet challenging new academic standards. As Imig says, “Nothing has a greater impact on the success of students... the capabilities teachers bring to the classroom are the single most important factor in the education of young people.”

During the 1990s, a number of efforts to reform professional development have flourished. Notable among them are the work of the National Board on Professional Teaching Standards, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) and its report Teaching for America’s Future, the associated network of state NCTAF initiatives, other state professional development boards, and independent efforts to recruit capable people into education.

At the same time, the institutions offering teacher education and professional development have made efforts to reorient traditional staff development toward “school-embedded professional development,” focused on long-term support for teachers learning what they need to know to improve student learning. Imig sees the increase in the number of “professional development schools” (in which designated public schools serve as field sites for teachers-in-training) as a promising development in this process.

In 1997, the panel clearly identified improved professional development focused on enhancing teachers’ ability to raise student achievement as a precondition for reaching higher standards and communicated its recommendations to state policymakers. The major Goal 4 reform efforts of the decade, however, have unfolded independent of the panel. Nonetheless, the passage of Goal 4 itself reflects the new importance that teacher quality has assumed in all efforts to improve education.

Prospects: What next?

Imig sees Goal 4 as an unfinished agenda. He urges the panel to address such issues as the lack of alignment among many preservice teacher education programs, state and local K-12 standards and curricula, program approval guidelines for teacher education programs, and state teacher licensing requirements.

He recognizes the need to engage the higher education community in the school-based reform efforts. He especially appeals to the panel to reaffirm its commitment to ensuring that all teachers have access to these new forms of professional development—professional development that is connected to teachers’ work with their students; linked to the concrete tasks of teaching; organized around problem-solving; informed by research; and sustained over time by ongoing conversations and coaching.
GOAL 5: MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

By the year 2000, United States students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.

Objectives:

- Mathematics and science education, including the metric system of measurement, will be strengthened throughout the system, especially in the early grades.
- The number of teachers with a substantive background in mathematics and science, including the metric system of measurement, will increase by 50 percent.
- The number of United States undergraduate and graduate students, especially women and minorities, who complete degrees in mathematics, science, and engineering will increase significantly.

NEGP Indicators:

- International mathematics and science achievement, as U.S. and state standing on international assessments of math and science achievement
- Mathematics and science degrees, as increases in the percentage of math and science degrees awarded to all students, minorities, and females
- Mathematics instructional practices, as increases in the percentage of public school 8th graders whose teachers report selected instructional practices (small-group instruction, teach algebra, functions, reasoning, and analytical ability)

Trends: What do the data show?

While NAEP data show that math achievement in the United States is improving, comparative international data on student achievement in both mathematics and science show the United States is far from "first in the world." International data were collected in 1980–82, 1986, and, most recently and most comprehensively, in 1995 on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

The 1995 TIMSS data show that 20 of 40 participating countries scored above the United States in 8th-grade math, and nine of 40 participating countries scored above the United States in 8th-grade science. American students seemed to perform comparatively better in science than in math. The panel recognized 14 states for their science performance, because a research study linking TIMSS and NAEP results indicated that only Singapore would be expected to outperform them in 8th-grade science.

Unlike other countries, however, the United States scored comparatively better in the early grades (4th) than in later grades (8th and 12th). Even the very best American high school students, those taking the specialized physics test, were outperformed by students in 14 of 15 other nations.

On another indicator, the percentage of degrees awarded in mathematics and science to all students, to minorities, and to females have all increased significantly across the United States and in 33 states.
Raizen writes, “Goal 5 is an unfinished agenda.” She urges the panel to report the results of new international studies that will become available between 2000 and 2006. She also urges the Goals Panel to undertake a broader policy role. “The future demands far more interpretation of the data and advocacy for changes based on the data.” She specifically recommends the panel: and science achievement and created a broad sense of fervor and urgency for improvement, particularly in the face of disappointing results from international comparisons.... Although the rhetorical formulation of the goal—‘first in the world by the year 2000’—has led to a certain amount of derision and sarcasm, it nevertheless has kept the reform of mathematics and science education in the forefront of educational policy and the public consciousness. As noted, these reform efforts have had enormous staying power compared to many other past and present education initiatives.... Because of the composition of the Goals Panel, the reports carry the imprimatur of the governors, [the Administration], members of Congress, and state legislators. This ensures a broad bipartisan policy audience critical to successful implementation of reforms aimed at the education goals.... The formulation of Goal 5 and the steady annual reporting on it also have helped lend importance and credibility to international studies and comparisons, with people more willing to learn from the educational practices of others.
GOAL 6: ADULT LITERACY AND LIFELONG LEARNING

By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Objectives:

- Every major American business will be involved in strengthening the connection between education and work.
- All workers will have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills, from basic to highly technical, needed to adapt to emerging new technologies, work methods, and markets through public and private educational, vocational, technical, workplace, and other programs.
- The number of quality programs, including those at libraries, that are designed to serve the needs of the growing number of part-time and midcareer students more effectively will increase substantially.
- The proportion of college graduates who demonstrate an advanced ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems will increase substantially.
- Schools, by implementing comprehensive parent involvement programs, will offer more adult literacy, parent-training, and lifelong learning opportunities to improve the ties between home and school and to enhance parents’ work and home lives.

NEGP Indicators:

- Adult Literacy, change in the percentage of adults scoring 3 or higher on a National Adult Literacy Study
- Participation in Adult Education, change in the gap in participation rates of those with a high school diploma or less and those with additional post-secondary education
- Participation in Higher Education, change in gap between white and minority high school graduates who enroll and who complete a college degree
- Voter Registration and Voting, changes in the percentages of U.S. citizens who register to vote and who vote

Trends: What do the data show?

Paul Barton notes that Goal 6 and its objectives encompass a broad range of topics, from adult literacy, college quality and enrollment, workforce development, business involvement in education and parent training, to citizenship and more. In 1992, Washington and Indiana scored significantly above the U.S. average for adult literacy, but new data on the National Adult Literacy Study (NALS) will not be available until 2000 to show trends.

While it is difficult to characterize the status of citizenship among American adults, voter registration has increased significantly in 10 states and declined in none. Thirty-nine states increased the percentage of high school graduates who immediately enrolled in college, and although the proportion getting a degree remained stable, the gap has increased between the percentages of white and black students completing a college degree.

Likewise, the proportion of adults who need it most—those with a high school diploma or less—and who actually participate in adult education has declined.
Goal 6: Accomplishments and the contributions of the Goals and Panel

Barton sees public perceptions of the National Education Goals as most closely associated with the K-12 school years, where he sees the goals as tending to be “much more specific and disciplined.” Nonetheless, he recalls a series of specific studies by Goal 6 Technical Planning Groups convened by the Goals Panel that constitute significant contributions in post-secondary education. Among these contributions were recommendations for an assessment of a national sample of college students and their “ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems.”

The National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) held workshops, commissioned papers, and issued a request for proposals (RFP) for initial development work, but it did not appropriate funds for the work and canceled the RFP.

Prospects: What next?

Barton recommends that the panel clarify its priorities among the diverse aspects of post-secondary education associated with Goal 6. He suggests that the panel maintain its central focus upon improving adult literacy, measured by NALS. He also suggests that the panel apply the concept of standards to higher education by resuming the work of its early Technical Planning Group on a NAEP-like assessment of the quality of college education. He strongly recommends monitoring and addressing the growing disparity between white and minority access to, and completion of, higher education, as well as disparities in participation in adult education.

A group headed by Marc Tucker and John Bishop studied how the United States and other countries support workforce development that showed “that most developed countries do a much better job of equipping late teenage youth with the skills they need to be productive in employment.”

Barton notes the significant increase in college enrollment since the goals were set, but he expresses concern about the growing gap between white and minority students in both enrollment and completion of college. As in other goal areas, he expresses frustration with the inadequacy of data and cites a number of relevant international studies in which the United States failed to participate.
GOAL 7: SAFE SCHOOLS

By the year 2000, every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Objectives:
- Every school will implement a firm and fair policy on the use, possession, and distribution of drugs and alcohol.
- Parents, businesses, and governmental and community organizations will work together to ensure the rights of students to study in a safe and secure environment free of drugs and crime and that schools provide a healthy environment and are a safe haven for all children.
- Every local education agency will develop and implement a policy to ensure that all schools are free of violence and the unauthorized presence of weapons.
- Every local education agency will develop a sequential, comprehensive, kindergarten-through-12th-grade drug- and alcohol-prevention education program.
- A drug and alcohol curriculum should be taught as an integral part of sequential, comprehensive health education.
- Community-based teams should be organized to provide students and teachers the support they need.
- Every school should work to eliminate sexual harassment.

NEGP Indicators:
- Overall student drug and alcohol use, including use of marijuana and drinking five or more drinks in a row
- The sale or availability of drugs at school
- Incidents when students and teachers become victims of threats or injury with a weapon while on school property, physical fights at school and students carrying a weapon
- Disruptions in class by students that interfere with teaching

Trends: What do the data show?

While data are inadequate and incomplete, NEGP indicators show conditions growing worse wherever Goal 7 indicators change, with one exception. Ironically, during a decade of nationwide horror and concern about the killings in a series of highly publicized school shootings, the percentage of 10th-grade students who report that they have been threatened or injured at school decreased nationally to 33 percent in 1997 from 40 percent in 1991. All other changes are negative. Nationally, more 10th graders report using illicit drugs during the previous year, increasing to 40 percent in 1997 from 24 percent in 1991. Likewise, students in 16 states (among 27 with data) reported increased use of marijuana between 1991 and 1997. Nationally, more students report being given or offered illegal drugs for sale at school, increasing to 33 percent in 1997 from 18 percent in 1992. Likewise, students in 15 states (among 23 with data) report such increases. More high school teachers report that student disruptions interfered with their teaching, increasing nationally to 46 percent in 1994 from 37 percent in 1991, in 37 (of 50) states. John Porter writes, “These results are not encouraging and suggest much more needs to be done.”
Porter suggests maintaining the common set of evidence (or indicators) of school safety that educators have developed and linking national, state, and local measures. He also recommends more work to determine the most effective mix of incentives and sanctions among the policies developed to combat school violence. He concludes that Goal 7 “must be sustained as a national school priority for the first decade of the twenty-first century... Goal 7 is, by any measure, more important and vital to the nation’s well-being today than it was 10 years ago.” He also suggests the possibility of a national summit meeting on the subject in 2000.

Prospects: What next?

Porter credits the Goals Panel for establishing consensus on the indicators it would use to measure progress toward Goal 7, Safe Schools, and for monitoring and reporting progress on those indicators. He also praises the work of a Technical Planning Group that the panel convened in 1993. The planning group defined eight elements of a “disciplined environment conducive to learning.”

He does not claim, however, that the Goals Panel or educators have made substantive progress toward reaching Goal 7. He writes, “There is no evidence in the literature that a national strategy has generalized any successful direction in terms of” reducing illicit drug use and sale on school property, student and teacher victimization, or disruptions in class. He expressed a wish to identify one state or school system “that had pursued Goal 7 vigorously and had valid data on strategies that had reduced” the use and sale of drugs at school, teacher and student victimization, or disruptions to teaching.

Porter cites efforts to address these problems, however, and he commends the development of a federal annual report card on school violence compiled by the U.S. Education and Justice departments. He finds encouraging the concern and attention shown by the President and the Secretary of Education about school violence, and he notes the many valuable publications and panels of experts convened to address school safety.

Encouraged by a Virginia decision to supply data on school safety annually to parents, he praises the National Education Goals Panel’s publication, Promising Practices, for documenting the success in four states in reducing the number of students reporting they carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property. The real question, he says, “is whether these efforts make a measurable difference.”
GOAL 8: PARENTAL PARTICIPATION

By the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

Objectives:
- Every state will develop policies to assist local schools and local education agencies to establish programs for increasing partnerships that respond to the varying needs of parents and the home, including parents of children who are disadvantaged or bilingual or parents of children with disabilities.
- Every school will actively engage parents and families in a partnership that supports the academic work of children at home and shared educational decision making at school.
- Parents and families will help to ensure that schools are adequately supported and will hold schools and teachers to high standards of accountability.

NEGP Indicators:
- Parental involvement in schools, as a change in the percentage of public school teachers and principals who report that a lack of parental involvement in their schools is a serious problem.
- Influence of parent associations, as a change in the percentage of principals reporting that the parent association in their schools has influence in at least one of three areas of school policy.

Trends: What do the data show?

Goal 8 was added to the National Education Goals in 1994. The Goals Panel first reported upon Parental Participation later that year. Like other goals, it is difficult to measure, and insufficient data are available. Although the educators widely acknowledge the importance of the goal, Douglas Powell writes, “Little is known about the nation’s progress in meeting Goal 8.”

The only trend data available among the NEGP indicators showed almost no change in the percentage of parents who report that they participated in two or more activities in their child’s school (attending a general school meeting or school or class event, serving as a volunteer, or serving on a school committee). The percentage was 62 percent in 1996 and 63 percent in 1993.

Principals in 17 states report that the influence of parent associations increased from 1991 to 1994 in their states, though teachers and principals nationally reported no significant change in their perceptions of parental participation in their schools. Powell summarizes data on current patterns of parental participation from one-time studies, which, if the studies are repeated in the future, may indicate trends.
**Promoting Parent-School Partnerships: Progress in Meeting National Education Goal 8**

**Douglas R. Powell, Purdue University**

**Goal 8: Accomplishments and the contributions of the Goals and Panel**

Educators long have acknowledged the lasting impact of families on students’ school performance and the benefits of parental participation in children’s learning, but in the past decade, attention to parental participation has grown, Doug Powell writes. Most educators recognize the pivotal contribution they expect parents to make toward also reaching the other National Education Goals, from preparing young children to start school (Goal 1), to helping them complete high school (Goal 2), and supporting their academic achievement (Goals 3 and 5).

Parents also have a role in creating the environment and demand for better professional development (Goal 4) and safer schools (Goal 7). Powell cites various state and local programs that build upon these effects parents have, from Head Start and Even Start to “zero-tolerance” school safety programs. General interest in parental involvement is growing, judging by the increase in popular news coverage and national surveys on the subject.

"The inclusion of school-parent partnerships as a national education goal has elevated the national significance of a topic often accorded peripheral status in educational reform efforts," Powell writes. "Goal 8 will not be met by the year 2000... [but] the momentum of the past four years indicates solid progress is being made." Specific accomplishments of the decade include the 1997 development by the National Parent-Teacher Association, instrumental in setting Goal 8, of research-based guidelines and workshops for states, districts, and schools to encourage school partnerships with families. States such as California have set policies on parent involvement to promote comprehensive programs that involve parents at all grade levels in a variety of roles. Powell credits Goal 8 with contributing to a “maturing” of research on this issue. With more work done on this issue, more articles address specific content or types of parents, and more studies ask how to involve parents well, rather than whether doing so is important.

Educators have developed new publications, resource centers, and networks designed to help schools involve parents more in their programs, and they have given new life to some existing programs, such as Title 1. They also have paid more attention to the training that teachers receive in learning how to work well with parents.

**Prospects: What next?**

To reach Goal 8, Powell sees four actions that must be taken: 1) getting valid and reliable measures of local, state, and national parental involvement efforts and outcomes; 2) providing policy direction and technical assistance to implement partnerships with parents; 3) supporting research on what works with whom and why; and 4) strengthening the explicit links between parental participation and the other national education goals.
ORIGINAL RESOURCE GROUP MEMBERS

Goal 1: Ready to Learn
Resource Group Chair: Ernest L. Boyer (1928-1995), The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
Technical Planning Group Leader and Author: Sharon Lynn Kagan, Yale University

Members (with 1990 place of work):
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William Spring, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
Thomas Sticht, Applied Behavioral, and Cognitive Sciences, Incorporated
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Jacquelynne Eccles, University of Michigan
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Anne Henderson, National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
Thomas Hoffer, National Opinion Research Corporation
Adrian Lewis, National Urban League
Jeana Preston, San Diego City Schools
Diane Scott-Jones, Temple University
Ralph Smith, The Annie E. Casey Foundation
Layla Suleiman, Family Resource Coalition
Sherry West, Prevention Partnership (National Head Start Association)
The National Education Goals

The Value of the Goals (Comments of Advisors)

[Goals have been] “a broad strategic framework, and a set of commitments, to guide the overall course of education…. Many political and professional leaders have taken the idea of national consensus on education reform seriously and have explicitly let that consensus guide their action.” —Richard Elmore

“The National Goals should provide a lens through which to view the progress of our efforts toward education reform.” —Rafael Valdivieso

[Goal 1] “provided opportunities for visionary thinking; it evoked more thorough analyses and conceptual frameworks [within education]; and it elevated professional and public awareness of the issue…. [It] set the stage for new thinking about the needs of young children and society’s responsibility to them…. [It] was significant in forcing the field to come together, to transcend its differences, and to reach a common definition of readiness.” —Sharon Lynn Kagan

[Goal 5] “has kept the reform of mathematics and science education in the forefront of educational policy and the public consciousness. As noted, these reform efforts have had enormous staying power compared to many other past initiatives.” —Senta Raizen

[Goal 7] “must be sustained as a national school priority for the first decade of the twenty-first century…. Goal 7 is by any measure more important and vital to the nation’s well-being today than it was 10 years ago.” —John Porter

The Panel’s Niche (Comments of Richard Elmore)

NEGP is “the only remaining national institution focused on education reform with bipartisan representation of political leaders across levels of government. This fact sends an important symbolic message.”

“NEGP is a forum where technical expertise and political judgment get worked out around a common set of concerns.”

“NEGP… has sustained some level of discussion on the purposes and performance of American schools.”

“NEGP’s comparative advantage… is in its bipartisan, multilevel representation and its ability to combine technical expertise with political judgment. Capitalizing on this comparative advantage means focusing the panel’s work on issues where communicating bipartisan consensus will shape the policy debate at the state and local level.”

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