



NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

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2001 WILL SEE INCREASED FOCUS ON EDUCATION ISSUES

Goals Panel Members Predict Bipartisan Cooperation on Education Issues

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – The members of the National Education Goals Panel foresee a year of progress among policy makers on mainstream education issues. That was the consensus among the state legislators, governors, Secretary of Education and members of Congress who serve on the Panel. The Panel is composed of an equal number of Republicans and Democrats. After their meeting, Panel members were asked what would be the focus of education reform in 2001.

Governor Tommy Thompson (R-WI), chair of the National Education Goals Panel and one of its eight governors, said, “With President-elect Bush focused on education issues and a mandate to govern from the center, we will see growing attention being paid by policy makers to issues everyone can, and should, support, such as strengthening and sustaining high standards, improving assessment mechanisms like NAEP and ensuring accountability in our schools by offering consequences for under-performing schools.”

“I am hopeful that given the priority that the American public has placed on education, we can build on the progress we have made over the past eight years,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, one of two members of the administration to serve on the Panel. “We should take advantage of the opportunity to move forward on issues on which we find agreement: standards-based reform, improving our ability to measure progress and to effectively target resources. It is especially important that Congress renew the Elementary and Secondary Education Act with a focus on the national priorities that are making a difference in schools across the nation as one of its first orders of business.”

“You are going to see a lot of movement at the state level this year. While Congress and the new administration work to find common ground, state legislatures will forge ahead on the types of education issues we deal with regularly,” said state senator Stephen Stoll (D-MO), one of four state legislators on the Panel. “Countless states have found that the best formula for progress on education issues is through state legislators working together to drive education improvement.”

Emily Wurtz, the acting executive director of the Panel, predicted “with the current political environment, we will see an increasing reliance on bipartisan structures already in place that can advocate mainstream views on education improvement. What you will see is the Goals Panel bringing together members from both sides of the aisle, and allowing leaders to forge consensus and move forward.”

About the National Education Goals Panel

Created in July 1990, the National Education Goals Panel is a bipartisan body consisting of an equal number of Republicans and Democrats from the federal and state levels of government. The Panel is made up of eight governors, four members of Congress, four state legislators and two members appointed by the President. The eight National Education Goals call for greater levels of: student achievement; high school completion; teacher education and professional development; parental participation in the schools; adult literacy and lifelong learning; and safe, disciplined, and alcohol-and-drug-free schools. The Goals also call for all children to be ready to learn by the time they start school and for US students to be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement by the year 2000.

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