Coordination With Other Agencies

The Department of Education (ED) recognizes the importance of unlocking the potential for more effectively achieving and sustaining our goals by coordinating with other agencies and organizations. The Government Accounting Office (GAO) has noted that we are making strides to improve interagency coordination (July 1999). However, GAO also notes that the Department needs "to continue to improve its coordination with the other agencies that provide educational services and engage in cross-cutting efforts" (January 1999). We have initiated a dual-level strategy for increasing our coordination. At the office level within ED, we encourage staff to develop collaborations by asking them to report annually on their collaboration efforts in this report and in their performance reviews. At the agency level, we are beginning to identify long-term strategic opportunities for coordination with agencies, such as Health and Human Services (HHS), that provide services to the same citizens we do and often measure similar outcomes. We are working to strengthen our coordination in three areas:

- State governments
- Nongovernmental organizations and businesses
- Other Federal agencies

Each of these areas has the potential to improve and increase the number of available services to citizens, reduce redundancies and inefficiencies in the provision of Federal services, improve DQ, and increase the long-term achievement of goals.

Coordination with state governments. State departments of education often share the same objectives and outcome data requirements as the Federal Department of Education. ED is looking for new ways to coordinate with states in these domains. Two strategies ED has adopted are (1) to decrease regulations while increasing accountability for results and (2) to target areas for data coordination and data harvesting.

The Education Flexibility (Ed-Flex) Partnership Demonstration Program is an example of ED's efforts to reduce regulations and increase accountability. Ed-Flex was established by the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and provides greater state and local flexibility in using Federal education funds to support locally designed, comprehensive school improvement efforts. Ed-Flex gives partnership states the power to waive requirements of certain Federal education programs, including the Title I program and the Eisenhower Professional Development program. Specifically, Ed-Flex allows the Secretary of Education to delegate, to a maximum of 12 states, the authority to waive certain Federal statutory or regulatory requirements affecting the state and local school districts and schools. A state that has developed a comprehensive school improvement plan that has been approved by the Secretary may apply for Ed-Flex. In addition, a state applying for Ed-Flex must have the authority to waive its own statutory or regulatory requirements, while holding districts and schools affected by the waivers accountable for the academic performance of their students.

Ed-Flex can help participating states and local school districts use Federal funds in ways that provide maximum support for effective school reform based on challenging academic standards for all students. Ed-Flex partnership states named to date include Colorado, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, and Vermont. For example, the Fort Worth, Texas, School District received a waiver allowing it to target an extra portion of its Title I dollars to four high-poverty inner-city elementary schools. The schools were chosen for a complete overhaul on the basis of low achievement on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and other factors. Each school uses Title I funds to improve instruction for all

its students; they are reorganizing staff, lengthening the school year, enhancing instruction in reading and math, providing extensive teacher training, and strengthening links to the community.

ED also recognizes the great potential to increase DQ while reducing redundancy and state data burden by coordinating state and Federal data collection efforts. Several efforts are under way to coordinate data collection efforts, the largest of which is the IPBS. The goal of the system is to reduce paperwork and streamline the Federal education program reporting system in a way that provides the Federal government, states, districts, school boards, and parents with accurate, comparable information about how Federal programs work. This system is described as a long-term strategy in the section "Improving Our Data and Information Systems" in this volume.

Coordination with non-governmental organizations. Research has shown that community involvement contributes to improving student outcomes. The Department realizes that this is true on a national level as well, and it has made recent moves to increase its partnerships. We are now working with numerous non-governmental organizations to achieve mutual goals. Two prominent program examples are our Partnership for Family Involvement in Education (PFIE) and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CLC) program.

Since parents' participation in children's learning is influenced increasingly by work schedules and other time constraints, it is crucial that businesses, community and religious organizations, families, and schools support parental and employee involvement in education. To encourage such support, we established the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education in 1994. The Partnership now has over 4,400 members and offers resources, ideas, funding, and conferences relevant to family involvement. Partners commit to increasing family participation in children's learning through various activities, including student- and family-friendly policies at the workplace, before- and after-school programs, tutoring and mentoring initiatives, and donations of facilities and technologies. For example, this past year the Partnership published *The Compact for Reading* to help families and schools develop written agreements on how they can work to improve student reading. Published with the support of the *Los Angeles Times* "Reading by 9" campaign, the Compact provides hundreds of activities to link the family at home with the classroom curriculum. Other PFIE partners include the Children's Defense Fund, the Girl Scouts, Chase Manhattan Bank, GTE Corporation, the Southern Baptist Convention, and B'nai B'rith International.

Another example of coordination with non-governmental organizations is what is happening in the 21st Century CLC program. The CLC program is an out-of-school time program and a key component of the Administration's efforts to keep children safe, encourage academic enrichment, and provide recreational and enrichment opportunities. About 1,600 rural and inner-city public schools in 471 communities--in collaboration with other public and nonprofit agencies, organizations, local businesses, postsecondary institutions, and scientific/cultural and other community entities--are now participating as 21st Century CLCs. On top of this coordination at the local level, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation is contributing up to $55 million in technical assistance for the grantees, and the foundation coordinates at least three conferences each year with the CLC program office. In addition, the Afterschool Alliance is an emerging alliance of public, private, and nonprofit groups committed to raising awareness and expanding resources for after-school programs that grew out of the Mott-ED partnership. Initial partners of this emerging alliance are the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, ED, JCPenney, The Entertainment Industry Foundation, *People Magazine*, Creative Artists Agency Foundation, and the Advertising Council.

Coordination within the Federal government. Our strategies for building interagency collaboration include the following:

- Identifying **common goals.**
- Developing **common definitions and measures.**
- Combining or streamlining **similar services.**
- Introducing **performance partnerships.**

For example, we know that HHS and ED share family health and development goals, while the Department of Justice (DOJ) and ED share goals of reducing youth crime and violence. Having identified these common goals, we are looking for opportunities for common indicators. (An example of how this process works with HHS is outlined in the next paragraph.) At the same time, we are looking for opportunities to combine or streamline similar services, such as the coordination occurring in the Safe Schools, Healthy Students Grant Initiative, through which ED, HHS, and DOJ have begun to provide grants for local coordination of schools, police departments, mental health agencies, and others to promote school safety. Finally, we are increasingly using performance partnerships to raise expectations and performance of ED and our partners.

A specific example of indicator alignment is currently occurring with HHS. ED and HHS are working to coordinate their program indicators across two programs: Even Start (ED) and Head Start (HHS). Our Even Start program is a relatively small program that offers low-income children early learning opportunities. HHS's Head Start program is a much larger program that offers healthy preschool services to low-income families. Both of these programs have indicators that assess family and child development, including literacy, health, and preparedness for school. Examples of each program's indicators appear in Exhibit 9. By aligning the indicators for the programs, we hope to be able to make comparisons and aggregate data, where in the past we could not. Over time, we anticipate that this alignment will decrease the burden and redundancies for the service providers and data collectors, who currently are required to fill out two different reports with different data requirements and definitions.

Exhibit 9

Even Start (ED) and Head Start (HHS): Examples of Existing Indicators that Could Benefit from Further Alignment

Even Start (ED)	Head Start (HHS)
Increasing percentages of parents will show significant improvement on measures of parenting skills, home environment, and expectations for their children.	Head Start parents demonstrate improved parenting skills: (a) Increase the number of children who are read to at least three times per week (1999).
Local Even Start projects will provide high-quality, comprehensive instructional and support services to all families in a cost-effective manner.	Head Start programs provide developmentally appropriate educational environments; Head Start parents link with educational agencies to obtain needed services.

Our next steps for the coordination of these two programs are (1) to continue to build leadership support, (2) to set up a coordination committee, (3) to begin to align the wording of objectives, and (4) to look for opportunities to merge data collection to increase the power of the data and reduce the burden on individual sites.

In this year's plan, ED cites coordination activities with other Federal agencies. A summary of these coordination efforts appears in Exhibit 10. For example, we have coordinated with the DOJin recently producing *Early Warning, Timely Response*, a guide for schools on how to recognize possible precursors to violence and how to address them immediately. Based on the success of that document, the team is working on a follow-up guide. ED and DOJ also partnered on producing the *Annual Report on School Safety*.

Next Steps. We plan to continue to focus our attention on identifying, seeking out, and building coordination within the Federal government and beyond. Specifically, over the next year, we are focusing on four coordination strategies:

- Providing leadership in ED to push program offices to seek active partnerships with other programs, agencies, organizations, and business that may have similar goals.
- Using the Data Quality (DQ) attestation process to highlight opportunities for greater collaboration within ED and with other agencies.
- Continuing to develop the data collection and alignment with states and existing state and Federal data sources.
- Building partnerships with nongovernmental organizations and business by actively recruiting them around our common goals.

In addition to these strategies, we will nurture the relationships we already have. As we have seen with PFIE and the CLC program, people will notice that we are doing something right, and they will want to get involved.

Figure 10: Summary of Across-Agency Coordination

Agency	Objective																					
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7
White House			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
National Partnership for Reinventing Government					✓		✓	✓		✓			✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency																	✓					
Office of National Drug Control Policy																				✓		
Office of Science and Technology Policy							✓															
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development			✓	✓			✓	✓		✓									✓			
Agriculture (USDA)					✓	✓						✓	✓	✓		✓						✓
Commerce	✓						✓															
Defense (DOD)				✓					✓	✓				✓								
Army				✓					✓	✓												
Selective Service														✓								
Veteran's Affairs														✓								
Energy										✓												
General Services Administration (GSA)																✓						
Health and Human Services (HHS)			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Center for Disease Control (CDC)			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓			
National Institutes of Health			✓	✓															✓			✓
Public Health Service										✓								✓	✓	✓	✓	
Social Security Administration		✓												✓	✓							
Housing and Urban Development (HUD)					✓		✓															
Interagency Council on the Homeless											✓											

Figure 10: Summary of Across-Agency Coordination, Continued

Agency	*Objective*																					
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7
Interior	✓	✓		✓					✓		✓	✓										
Bureau of Indian Affairs	✓	✓		✓					✓		✓	✓										
Justice (DOJ)			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Immigration and Naturalization Service			✓	✓	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓	✓						
Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓	✓			
Office for Civil Rights											✓											
Labor (DOL)		✓		✓			✓							✓	✓	✓						
Department of State				✓									✓			✓						
Transportation		✓								✓						✓						
Treasury											✓		✓	✓	✓						✓	✓
Internal Revenue Service											✓											
Additional Agencies and Organizations																						
Environmental Protection Agency																						
Federal Communications Commission							✓															
Federal Interagency Coordinating Council				✓	✓			✓			✓					✓	✓	✓				
National Academy of Sciences								✓	✓	✓												
National Aeronautical and Space Administration				✓						✓												
National Endowment for the Arts	✓										✓		✓									
National Science Foundation	✓			✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓				✓				
National Staff Development Council																						
Office of Personnel Management																				✓		✓