

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**Statement by**

**Raymond J. Simon**  
**Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**on**

**Teaching and K-12 Education Programs**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

It's a privilege to be here today with Deputy Secretary Hickok and have this opportunity to talk about key issues related to the No Child Left Behind Act. As many of you know, I joined the Department early this year, and it has been both interesting and educational to move from the State superintendent's office in Arkansas—where I was on the receiving end of Federal requirements and funding—to helping to make policy and funding decisions here in Washington.

**A KEY YEAR FOR NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND**

Fiscal year 2005 is a critical year for No Child Left Behind. The 2005 appropriation will fund the 2005-2006 school year, a year that will witness two significant milestones under the new law. First, States and school districts will begin testing all students in grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics. This is a necessary step toward giving teachers the data they need to teach effectively and parents the information they need to assess the progress of their children's education.

Second, as you have heard from the Deputy Secretary, all teachers must be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. Research tells us there is no better single way

of improving education than by putting a highly qualified teacher in every classroom, and in this as in so many things, No Child Left Behind is all about putting research into practice.

It's exciting to be so close to full implementation of the law, but it's also a reminder that there is a lot of work to be done over the next two years. I suspect many of us at the Department will soon begin to feel a little bit like the Olympics organizers in Athens, who are rewarded for years of planning and hard work by having to work even harder in the final months before the Summer Games begin.

That's okay, though, because it is hard for me to imagine anything more worthwhile than the goals of No Child Left Behind. I'm proud to be part of an Administration that has demonstrated such a strong commitment to expanding educational opportunity and improving achievement for all students.

### **MAJOR PROGRAM INCREASES**

The President's budget would provide a total of almost \$25 billion for No Child Left Behind programs in fiscal year 2005, an increase of \$7.4 billion, or 43 percent, since the President took office.

The President has consistently dedicated most new **elementary and secondary** education resources to the Title I Grant to Local Educational Agencies program—the key driver of No Child Left Behind reforms in the areas of accountability and parental options—and this is the case for 2005 as well. Our budget includes \$13.3 billion for Title I, an increase of \$1 billion over the 2004 level.

This request is critical because Title I helps the children who are most in need of extra educational assistance, who are most in danger of falling further behind, who are on the wrong side of the staggering achievement gap between poor and minority students and their more advantaged peers.

These students also would benefit from the President's *Jobs for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* initiative, which would provide a total of \$333 million in new resources to help ensure that middle- and high-school students are better prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce. This initiative includes, for example, \$100 million for a Striving Readers program that would help struggling readers at risk of dropping out of secondary school, as well as \$120 million for a Secondary Education Mathematics proposal to improve the math skills of secondary school students who are performing below grade level.

In addition, the 2005 request would expand support for Reading First, the President's signature initiative to provide at-risk children in grades K-3 the benefits of research-based, comprehensive reading instruction designed to ensure that all children read on grade level by the end of third grade. The request includes \$1.1 billion for Reading First State Grants, an increase of \$101 million, or 10 percent, over last year, as well as \$132 million for Early Reading First, an increase of \$38 million, or 40 percent.

### **EXPANDING CHOICE OPTIONS**

Our budget also reflects President Bush's determination to extend educational options to all parents and students—not just those who can afford this freedom. No Child Left Behind has greatly expanded the choices available to students in low-performing schools, including both the

option to transfer to a better school and to obtain supplemental educational services from a private-sector provider. And this fall we will for the first time provide Federally funded opportunity scholarships to low-income students in the District of Columbia.

The President's 2005 budget would build on these achievements by investing an additional \$113 million in expanding choices for students and parents. This total includes \$50 million for a Choice Incentive Fund that would support new transfer options, including private school options, and a \$63 million increase for the Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities program, which encourages greater private sector lending to finance facilities for charter schools.

## **CONCLUSION**

The President's 2005 budget request for the Department of Education demonstrates his ongoing commitment to investing in educational excellence and achievement. But it also reaffirms that the Federal role in education should be based on leadership, particularly in the areas of high standards, accountability, and the use of proven educational methods. Only in combination with this leadership—exemplified by the No Child Left Behind Act—will the resources provided by the Congress have the impact we have all hoped for over the past four decades.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to take any questions you may have.

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Biographical Sketch

**NAME:** Raymond Joseph Simon

**POSITION:** Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education

**BIRTHPLACE:** Conway, Arkansas

**EDUCATION:** B.S. in Mathematics/Accounting – University of Central Arkansas (1966)  
M.S. in Education – University of Central Arkansas (1969)  
Educational Specialist in School Administration – University of Arkansas (1981)

#### EXPERIENCE:

Jan. 2004-Present Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education

1997-2004 Director of Education (Chief State School Officer) Arkansas

1991-1997 Superintendent of Schools, Conway, Arkansas

1984-1991 Assistant Superintendent for Finance, Conway Public Schools, Arkansas

1975-1984 Director of Computer Services, Conway Public Schools, Arkansas

1973-1975 Director of School Food Services, Conway Public Schools, Arkansas

1966-1973 Mathematics Teacher, Conway Public Schools, Arkansas

#### ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE:

1977-1984 Adjunct Professor, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Division of Continuing Education – Computer Science (undergraduate) and Computer Science for Teachers (graduate)

1980 Arkansas State University, Division of Continuing Education – Computer Science (undergraduate)

1986-1997 Adjunct Professor, University of Central Arkansas Graduate School – Public School Finance

**PUBLICATIONS:**

- Arkansas Council of teachers of Mathematics Newsletter – “Creative Thinking in High School Mathematics” (1967); “High School Experiment in Computer Algebra” (1968).
- Arkansas Department of Education – Member, Writing and Editing Committees – “A Contemporary Mathematics Program for College Capable Twelfth Grade Students in Arkansas” (1970).
- Arkansas Council of teachers of Mathematics Annual Conference – “Student Apathy in mathematics Survey” (1972).
- University of Central Arkansas Master’s Thesis – “Partition Theory and Probability” (1969).
- The Achiever - Anchors Aweigh! For a Smart Start” (2002).

**HONORS AND AWARDS:**

- 1968 – North Little Rock Jaycee Outstanding Young Educator
- 1991 – Arkansas Association of Educational Office personnel Administrator of the Year
- 1992 – Arkansas Association of School Business Officials Administrator of the Year
- 1999 – Arkansas For Gifted and Talented Education Award of Excellence
- 2002 – Conway Public School Distinguished Service Award
- 2003 – Arkansas Literacy network Exemplary Educator of the Year