

Education

1) How does the Bush administration's budgeting request for K-12 education funding for fiscal year 2004 compare to the actual amount approved by Congress for the preceding year?

It is \$1.2 billion less.

Source: <http://www.house.gov/owens/rap020503.htm>

2) How does the Bush administration's funding proposal for implementing "No Child Left Behind" compare with the amount of funding estimated to be required by education experts?

It is \$9.4 billion less than would be necessary.

Source: www.nea.org/presscenter/testingcosts.html

3) What is the Bush administration's "No Child Left Behind" program based on?

"No Child Left Behind" is based on the so-called "Houston Miracle," which was recently discredited when it was discovered that schools were falsely reporting high educational achievement and low drop-out rates in order to meet program goals. Rod Paige was the head of the Houston School District at the time, and is now the US Secretary of Education.

Source: Now with Bill Moyers, Oct. 17, 2003, http://www.pbs.org/now/transcript/transcript238_full.html

4) "Headstart" is widely considered to be a very successful early childhood educational program. How much has the Bush Administration cut its funding?

President Bush has proposed to turn Head Start's services entirely over to the states. This could kill Head Start within 5 years, according to the National Head Start Association. The costs involved in shifting Head Start over to the states include the following:

- 1) The scarcity of states equipped to provide Head Start services. Of 30 states studied by independent researchers, only 3 — Delaware, Washington, and Oregon — were found to provide the equivalent of comprehensive Head Start services.
- 2) States' financial inability to provide Head Start services. Across the nation, 49 of the 50 states are facing a combined budget deficit of approximately \$100 billion. Ten states have reported large cuts in pre-kindergarten programs.
- 3) The rise in administrative costs. The GAO has estimated that the rising cost of administering Head Start by the states will result in a \$418 million shortfall, the equivalent of 59,000 Head Start slots.

Source: www.nhsa.org/press/index_news_041603.htm

5) An "unfunded mandate" is a federal law that requires a state to implement a program even though the Federal Government is not funding or is only partially funding that program. What aspects of "No Child Left Behind" are educators unable to implement due to the lack of federal funding for these mandates?

According to a study by the General Accounting Office, it is estimated that states may have to spend up to \$5.3 billion to implement the testing provisions of "No Child Left Behind" between 2002 and 2008. Also, the provision of "No Child Left Behind" for ensuring the quality of teachers is an unfunded man-

date. The President of the National Education Association has written that only \$1 billion, a meager amount, has been budgeted for this purpose.

Special education for the 6 million children with special needs is another unfunded mandate. Only 15% of the money needed to provide for these programs is coming from the federal government. This shift in funding to the states, many of which are suffering from severe budget deficits of their own, has resulted in massive further shortfalls. Also, the provisions of Title I allow students to go to any school that they choose, even if there is no room for them at that school.

Source: www.nea.org/newsreleases/2003/nr030702.html

6) How much funding for after-school and recreational programs has been cut by the Bush administration?

The current Bush budget cuts already inadequate levels yet another 40%, from \$1 billion down to \$600 million, leaving another 1/2 million children without after-school programs. “No Child Left Behind” called for \$1.75 billion for this purpose in fiscal year 2004. Thus, President Bush’s current funding proposal is a reduction of over \$1 billion, according to the Afterschool Alliance.

Source: www.commondreams.org/news2003/0313-08.htm

7) How much money is the public education system losing due to voucher programs?

According to the NEA, voucher programs in place in Milwaukee and Cleveland have cost public schools about \$32 million. Proposed voucher plans in California and Michigan are estimated to produce a loss to public schools of, respectively, \$3 billion a year and \$35 million a year.

Source: www.nea.org/issues/vouchers/02voutrack.html

8) How does standardized testing of No Child Left Behind constitute “the largest Federal intrusion into state administration of education”?

According to Paul Revelle, Harvard Professor of Education and an expert on education policy, the unprecedented intrusion of the federal bureaucracy has caused “resentment at both the state and local levels. It’s a very awkward marriage. . . . it threatens to overwhelm the system to the point where the system crashes.”

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2003/EDUCATION/08/13/sprj.sch.overview/>

9) What are some of the tactics schools have been using to score high on standardized tests without actually improving the quality of their student’s education?

Richard Allington of the University of Florida has collected real incidents in which schools have used various tactics to inflate their test scores, and has compiled them in the following list:

- 1) Cheat: alter the answer sheets, or tell kids to answer only the questions they’re sure of, and fill in the remaining (correct) answers later.
- 2) Encourage kids to stay home, or send them on field trips.
- 3) Expel, or encourage the dropping-out of, low-achieving students.
- 4) Identify low-achieving students as students with disabilities. In many states, their scores won’t count.
- 5) Use irregular test accommodations for students with disabilities. For example, take dictation for the writing tests.
- 6) Triage: target resources away from certain groups of students. Identify likely high-scoring students and spend all your time with them.
- 7) Invest in test preparation materials.

8) Flunk lots of kids. It will be more expensive in the long run, but in the short term, it will raise test scores because it will remove low-scorers from any given grade.

9) Make the test easier.

10) Lower the failing grade.

Source: <http://www.fairtest.org/k12/allington.html>

10) Over the next 10 years, how does the expected revenue lost due to the Bush tax cuts compare to the amount that will be needed for education?

According to a study by the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, “just the portion of the tax cut that would go to the wealthiest 1% of Americans is larger than the total amount requested for all education, health, and other services. \$1.6 trillion (over 10 years) is 40 times larger than the 41 billion the budget table shows as the amount slated for improving the nation’s education system.”