



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20202

September 17, 2003

Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary
Superintendent of Public Instruction
State Department of Education
101 North 14th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

Dear Superintendent DeMary:

Last week, President Bush and I had the pleasure of announcing the School Information Partnership. This unique public-private partnership is designed to assist you in meeting the letter and the spirit of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 as it relates to educational data reporting.

Through the financial support of the Broad Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education, state educational agencies will be given the opportunity, at no cost for the next two years, to report and analyze certain data through an easy-to-use web-based service provided by Just for the Kids and Standard and Poor's School Evaluation Services. Further, the Partnership will enable your agency and local educational agencies within your state to communicate educational data to parents, educators, and taxpayers, consistent with the requirements of No Child Left Behind, while providing policymakers with better information to improve decision-making.

Participating in this initiative will allow you and your districts to be compliant with the report card requirements of No Child Left Behind, so long as all the necessary data are provided. The Partnership is also committed to using data from existing sources to minimize your need to provide additional reports. I believe you will find this initiative provides tremendous value by allowing webpage visitors to search, analyze, and compare schools and districts using unique charts, graphs, and analytical frameworks. These tools will transform your data into user-friendly, customer accessible, and customized information and reports.

It is also important to understand that this opportunity does not diminish the need for states and school districts to improve their data and student information systems. The School Information Partnership is simply one of many services that rely on these systems to provide quality data. Having robust data management systems will not only facilitate your involvement in this partnership, it will also help you with using data on a daily basis to inform instruction and guide decision-making.

No Child Left Behind is significantly transforming the national education debate from one of "resources" to one of "student achievement." This new initiative takes the country a huge step in the right direction by offering all states the opportunity for, and assistance with, using data for performance-based decision-making.

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In the coming weeks, the Broad Foundation will be contacting you to invite you to participate in this initiative. I strongly encourage you to weigh the benefits that participation may have for your implementation of No Child Left Behind and for education in your state. Through your continued efforts and those of public-private partnerships like the School Improvement Partnership, we can turn raw data into useful, understandable, and valuable information to guide our decisions so that every child has the opportunity for a high-quality education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rod Paige". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rod" and last name "Paige" clearly distinguishable.

Rod Paige

cc: Governors
Directors of Education Service Centers