

Federal law, or substantially interfere with any agency's ability to perform its statutory obligations. The Acting Leader, Information Management Group, Office of the Chief Information Officer, publishes that notice containing proposed information collection, grouped by office, contains the following: (1) Type of review requested, e.g. new, revision, extension, existing or reinstatement; (2) Title; (3) Summary of the collection; (4) Description of the need for, and proposed use of, the information; (5) Respondents and frequency of collection; and (6) Reporting and/or Recordkeeping burden. OMB invites public comment.

Dated: July 22, 1999.

William E. Burrow,

Acting Leader, Information Management Group, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

Office of Educational Research and Improvement

Type of Review: New.

Title: Teacher Quality in U.S. Public Schools in 2000.

Frequency: One time.

Affected Public: Individuals or households; State, local or Tribal Gov't, SEAs or LEAs.

Reporting and Recordkeeping Hour Burden:

Responses: 7,300.

Burden Hours: 4,950.

Abstract: The survey, Teacher Quality in U.S. Public Schools in 2000, is designed to provide NCES and the Office of the Secretary with timely data to monitor changes in key indicators of teacher quality. It is the second in a proposed series of biennial reports on the preparation and qualifications of public school teachers. In addition, the survey will provide some early estimates for data that will be provided in the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) to be conducted 1999-2000. The issues addressed in the proposed survey have been the focus of a growing concern of the condition of education, challenging U.S. teachers to adequately prepare students for competing in an increasingly complex international marketplace. Thus, the data will provide a national profile of teacher quality, representing an important device for tracking the nation's progress toward the goal of raising educational standards and ensuring high levels of student competence.

Written comments and requests for copies of the proposed information collection request should be addressed to Vivian Reese, Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 5624, Regional Office Building 3, Washington, DC 20202-4651, or should

be electronically mailed to the internet address Vivian.Reese@ed.gov, or should be faxed to 202-708-9346.

For questions regarding burden and/or the collection activity requirements, contact Kathy Axt at 202-708-9902. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-8339.

[FR Doc. 99-19228 Filed 7-27-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

National Awards Program for Model Professional Development

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of proposed eligibility and selection criteria.

SUMMARY: The Secretary proposes eligibility and selection criteria to govern competitions under the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development for fiscal year (FY) 2000 and future years. Under these criteria, the National Awards Program would recognize a variety of schools and school districts with model professional development activities in the pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade levels that have led to increases in student achievement.

DATES: We must receive your comments on or before August 27, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments about these proposed eligibility and selection criteria to Sharon Horn, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, US Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, room 506E, Washington, DC 20208-5644. If you prefer to send your comments through the Internet, use the following address: sharon_horn@ed.gov.

You may also fax your comments to Sharon Horn at (202) 219-2198.

If you want to comment on the information collection requirements you must send your comments to the Office of Management and Budget at the address listed in the Paperwork Reduction Act section of this notice. You may also send a copy of these comments to the Department representative named in this section.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sharon Horn. Telephone: (202) 219-2203. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternate format (e.g., Braille, large print,

audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the contact person listed in the preceding paragraph.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Invitation To Comment

We invite you to submit comments regarding these proposed eligibility and selection criteria.

We invite you to assist us in complying with the specific requirements of Executive Order 12866 and its overall requirement of reducing regulatory burden that might result from these proposed eligibility and selection criteria. Please let us know of any further opportunities we should take to reduce potential costs or increase potential benefits while preserving the effective and efficient administration of the program.

During and after the comment period, you may inspect all public comments about these proposed eligibility and selection criteria in room 506E, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday of each week except Federal holidays.

Assistance to Individuals With Disabilities in Reviewing the Rulemaking Record

On request, we will supply an appropriate aid, such as a reader or print magnifier, to an individual with a disability who needs assistance to review the comments or other documents in the public rulemaking record for these proposed eligibility and selection criteria. If you want to schedule an appointment for this type of aid, you may call (202) 205-8113 or (202) 260-9895. If you use a TDD, you may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

General Information

Through this notice the Secretary proposes definitions and criteria to govern applications for recognition submitted under the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development. This Program began in 1996, in coordination with a wide range of national education organizations, to highlight and recognize schools and school districts whose professional development activities are well aligned with the statement of the Mission and Principles of Professional Development that the Department developed in 1994. The National Awards Program to be conducted during FY 2000 and future years would be implemented in ways similar to prior years' programs (see, for example, the Notice of Final Eligibility and Selection Criteria published in the

Federal Register on October 30, 1997 (62 FR 58870). However, as explained more fully in the Proposed Eligibility and Selection Criteria section of this notice, the program's selection criteria would be slightly revised to identify information applicants will need to provide to demonstrate a strong link between their professional development efforts and increased student achievement, to address circumstances in which applications are received from both a school and its local educational agency (LEA), and to require certification of compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Secretary plans to publicly honor and recognize successful applicants, and to pay the costs incurred in enabling them to make presentations about their professional development activities at national and regional meetings.

The reasons for wanting to continue the National Awards Program are clear. Schools and school districts throughout the Nation are undertaking efforts to raise academic standards and to improve the academic achievement of all students. Research indicates that for these efforts to be successful they must include strategies for permitting teachers and other school and LEA staff to obtain the skills and knowledge they need to enable all students to achieve to high standards. Indeed, teachers are at the core of any school reform initiative. However, teachers need access to new knowledge and skills to enable them to continue to teach to higher standards and to respond to the challenges facing education today.

The public has expressed great interest in this program. In the first two years of the program, the Department received over 200 applications and recognized 13 schools and school districts in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, New York, and Texas for the high quality of their professional development activities and the link between those activities and improved student learning. Moreover, the National Awards Program has helped educators at all levels to learn both how teachers and others in these sites have succeeded in implementing high-quality professional development activities, and what educators in other locations can do to better evaluate the effectiveness of their own professional development efforts.

Currently, the Department and its outside panels of reviewers are evaluating the quality of the nearly 65 applications submitted for FY 1999 national recognition. The importance of encouraging even more schools and

LEAs to implement high-quality professional development that is tied to increased student achievement, and having even greater numbers of exemplary sites as models for others, demands that this awards program be continued. Therefore, the Secretary is pleased to propose definitions and criteria to govern the FY 2000 and future year National Awards Program.

The Secretary will announce the final eligibility and selection criteria in a notice in the **Federal Register**. The final eligibility and selection criteria will be determined by responses to this notice and other considerations of the Department.

Note: This notice does not solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under this competition will be published in the **Federal Register** concurrent with or following publication of the notice of final eligibility and selection criteria.

Proposed Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Eligible Applicants

As with previous years' programs, eligible applicants would be schools and school districts in the States (including schools located on Indian reservations, and in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the outlying areas) that provide educational programs in the pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade levels.

Selection Criteria

Subject to the three changes described in the next three items, the Secretary also proposes to use in the FY 2000 and future year competitions both the eligibility and application selection criteria and the selection procedures as published in the **Federal Register** on October 30, 1997 (59 FR 63773). Similarly, the Secretary would retain the relatively simple application format that has been used to date. Those wishing to review a copy of the FY 1999 application package, which incorporates the criteria and procedures the Department will continue to use, may do so by calling or writing the Department contact identified in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION** section of this notice. Those with access to the Internet also may view the document at the following URL web site: <http://www.ed.gov/inits/TeachersWeb/>

1. The application criteria would be revised to better identify information that applicants would need to present to demonstrate the link between their professional development activities and increased student achievement. Specifically, Criterion D ("Objective Evidence of Success") in the application package for the FY 1999 competition

required that applicants present evidence that teacher effectiveness and student learning improved as a direct result of the implementation of the school's or LEA's professional development activities. While the application package observed that the highest-quality applications were likely to be those which include evidence drawn from multiple assessment measures and cover a period of three years or more, the selection criteria did not require applicants to present evidence of this kind. In the fourth and succeeding years of the National Awards Program, the Secretary believes that it is time that these recommended measures of exemplary quality be required components of all professional development activities that would receive national recognition. Accordingly, the Secretary proposes that for the FY 2000 and future year competitions Criterion D include the following additional language: "Applicants here must provide and discuss data that indicate the connection between needs assessments, improvement plans, professional development activities, and teacher and student outcomes. In order to confirm that student achievement has increased, data on student achievement must reflect multiple measures and cover a period of three years or more."

2. Existing selection criteria for the National Awards Program do not address how the Department responds if a school that applies for national recognition is located in the area served by an LEA that applies on its own. This situation occurred in a prior competition, and the Department had established no criteria for addressing it. Accordingly, there is a need now to clarify this matter.

The Department's peer reviewers cannot assess the degree to which professional development activities at a school are independent of the support provided by the school district in which it is located. Therefore, in order to promote fairness in the application process, the Secretary proposes that a school that applies for national recognition must apply on its own or as part of its LEA's application. A school would not be able to apply through both applications. Moreover, should the Department receive an application from a school and the LEA in which the school is located, it will review only the LEA's application. Since a school's professional development activities are linked, to some degree, to the support of the LEA in which it is located, the proposal to consider the LEA's application but not the school's seems

the most appropriate response to this problem.

3. It is important that schools and LEAs that would receive national recognition support the rights of all students, including those with disabilities, to an appropriate education. Therefore, the Secretary proposes that those applying for National Awards Program recognition be required to certify that there are no outstanding findings of violations of IDEA in a Department monitoring report or, if findings do exist, the findings either have been corrected or are part of an agreement for corrective action.

In all other respects, subject to minor editing that does not affect the program's eligibility or selection criteria, the Secretary proposes to retain for the FY 2000 and future year competitions the application package used for the FY 1999 National Awards Program competition, and the eligibility and selection criteria and selection procedures published in the **Federal Register** on October 30, 1997.

Goals 2000: Educate America Act

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Goals 2000) focuses the Nation's education reform efforts on the eight National Education Goals and provides a framework for meeting them. Goals 2000 promotes new partnerships to strengthen schools and expands the Department's capacities for helping communities to exchange ideas and obtain information needed to achieve the goals.

These proposed eligibility and selection criteria would address the National Education Goal that the Nation's teaching force will have the content knowledge and teaching skills needed to instruct all American students for the next century.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995

This notice and the proposed application packet contain information collection requirements. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3507(d)), the Department of Education has submitted a copy of this notice and the application packet to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for its review.

Collection of Information: National Awards Program.

Schools and school districts that operate programs for children in the pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade levels are eligible to apply for national recognition of the quality of their professional development activities. Information in the application would include: (1) A description of the applicant's professional development

activities in terms of specific criteria designed to clarify the kinds of activities that would align with the Department's statement of the Mission and Principles of Professional Development, (2) basic identifying and demographic information about the applicant school or school district, and (3) a certification of compliance with requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Applications also would be limited in page number and have to meet basic formatting requirements. The Department would use this information to select the highest-quality applicants through a review of responses to the criteria and site visits that can confirm the accuracy of information contained in the application.

All information is to be collected once only from each applicant. Annual reporting and record keeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 30 hours for each response for 200 respondents, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. For the 20 applicants selected for site reviews, there will be an additional annual reporting and record keeping burden that is estimated to average 20 hours for each response. Thus, the total annual reporting and record keeping burden for this collection is estimated to be 6,400 hours.

If you want to comment on the information collection requirements, please send your comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OMB, room 10235, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503; Attention: Desk Officer for US Department of Education. You may also send a copy of these comments to the Department representative named in the ADDRESSES section of this notice.

We consider your comments on this proposed collection of information in—

- Deciding whether the proposed collection is necessary for the proper performance of our functions, including whether the information will have practical use;
- Evaluating the accuracy of our estimate of the burden of the proposed collection, including the validity of our methodology and assumptions;
- Enhancing the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the information we collect; and
- Minimizing the burden on those who must respond. This includes exploring the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information

technology; e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

OMB is required to make a decision concerning the collection of information contained in this notice of proposed eligibility and selection criteria between 30 and 60 days after publication of this document in the **Federal Register**. Therefore, to ensure that OMB gives your comments full consideration, it is important that OMB receives the comments within 30 days of publication. This does not affect the deadline for your comments to us on the notice of proposed eligibility and selection criteria.

Intergovernmental Review

This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism. The Executive order relies on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

This document is intended to provide early notification of our specific plans and actions for this program.

Electronic Access to This Document

You may review this document, as well as all other Department of Education documents published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at either of the following sites:

<http://ocfo.ed.gov/fedreg.htm>

<http://www.ed.gov/news.html>

To use the PDF you must have the Adobe Acrobat Reader Program with Search, which is available free at either of the previous sites. If you have questions about using the PDF, call the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), toll free, at 1-888-293-6498; or in the Washington, DC area, at (202) 512-1530.

Note: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. Free Internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available on GPO Access at: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/index.html>

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 8001.

Dated: July 23, 1999.

C. Kent McGuire,

Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement.

[FR Doc. 99-19309 Filed 7-27-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P