

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**Notice Inviting Comments on Priorities To Be Proposed to the National Board for Education Sciences of the Institute of Education Sciences**

AGENCY: Institute of Education Sciences, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice inviting comments on priorities to be proposed to the National Board for Education Sciences of the Institute of Education Sciences.

SUMMARY: The Director of the Institute of Education Sciences (Institute) has developed priorities to guide the work of the Institute. The National Board for Education Sciences (Board) must approve the priorities, but before proposing the priorities to the Board, the Director must seek public comment on the priorities. The public comments will be provided to the Board prior to its action on the priorities.

DATES: We must receive your comments on or before August 16, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments about these proposed priorities to Elizabeth Payer, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW., room 602c, Washington, DC 20208. If you prefer to send your comments through the Internet, use the following address: elizabeth.payer@ed.gov. We encourage you to submit comments electronically to ensure timely receipt. We also ask that you include:

(1) "Comment on Proposed Priorities of the Institute" in the subject line of your e-mail message;

(2) Your name, title, organization, postal address, telephone number, and the full text of your comments in your e-mail message; and

(3) As an attachment to your e-mail message, the full text of your comments without your name, title, organization and contact information, so that we may more easily compile all of the comments we receive for review by members of the National Board for Education Sciences.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Elizabeth Payer. Telephone: (202) 219-1310.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (*e.g.*, Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Invitation To Comment

We invite you to submit comments regarding these proposed priorities. To ensure that your comments have maximum effect in developing the final priorities, we urge you to identify clearly the specific proposed priority that each comment addresses.

During and after the comment period, you may inspect all public comments about these proposed priorities in room 602c, 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 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 record for these proposed priorities. If you want to schedule an appointment for this type of aid, please contact the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. 9516) requires that the Director of the Institute propose to the Board priorities for the Institute. The Director is to identify topics that require long term research and topics that are focused on understanding and solving education problems and issues, including those associated with the goals and requirements established in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as amended by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004; the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; and the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, such as closing the achievement gap; ensuring that all children have the ability to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on State standards and assessments; and ensuring access to, and opportunities for, postsecondary education.

Before submitting proposed priorities to the Board, the Director must make the priorities available to the public for comment for not less than 60 days. Each comment submitted must be provided to the Board.

The Director anticipates submitting to the Board proposed priorities for the

Institute at its next meeting to be held on September 6-7, 2005.

The Board must approve or disapprove the priorities for the Institute proposed by the Director, including any necessary revision of the priorities. Approved priorities are to be transmitted to appropriate congressional committees by the Board.

The Director will publish in the **Federal Register** the Institute's plan for addressing the priorities and make it available for comment for not less than 60 days.

Proposed Priorities

The long-term goals associated with the Institute's priorities are threefold: First, to develop or identify a substantial number of programs, practices, policies, and approaches that are effective in enhancing academic achievement, and that are widely deployed and well-implemented; second, to identify what does not work and what is problematic, and thereby encourage innovation and further research; and third, to develop dissemination strategies and sources of information on the results of education research that are routinely used by policymakers, educators, and the general public when making education decisions. By providing an independent, scientific base of evidence, the Institute aims to further the transformation of education into an evidence-based field, and thereby enable the nation to educate all of its students in an effective manner.

In pursuit of its goals, the Institute will support research, conduct evaluations, and compile statistics in education that conform to rigorous scientific standards, and will disseminate and promote the use of research in forms and through activities that are objective, free of bias in their interpretation, and readily accessible. Given these goals, we invite you to submit comments regarding the priorities proposed here.

The Institute's over-arching priority is research that contributes to improved academic achievement for all students, and particularly for those students whose education prospects are hindered by inadequate education services and conditions associated with poverty, race/ethnicity, limited English proficiency, disability, and family circumstance.

With academic achievement as the major priority, the Institute will focus on outcomes that differ by periods of education. In the infancy and preschool period, the outcomes of interest will be those that enhance readiness for schooling, for example, language skills. In kindergarten through 12th grade, the

core academic outcomes of reading and writing, mathematics, and science will be emphasized, as will discipline and social interactions within schools that support learning. At the post-secondary level, the focus will be on enrollment in and completion of programs that prepare students for rewarding and constructive careers. The same outcomes are emphasized for students with disabilities across each of these periods. The acquisition of basic skills by adults with low levels of education is also of interest, as is the learning of skills that support independent living for individuals with significant cognitive disabilities.

In conducting research on factors that affect the academic outcomes on which it focuses, the Institute will concentrate on conditions that are within the control of the education system, with the aim of identifying, developing, and validating effective education programs, practices, policies, and approaches. Conditions that are of greatest interest to the Institute are in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, the quality of the teaching and administrative workforce, and the systems and policies that affect these factors and their interrelationships, such as accountability systems and education options for parents.

The successful pursuit of the Institute's goals and priorities requires increased capacity to produce and use rigorous education research. To that end, the Institute's priorities include support of doctoral and post-doctoral training in the education sciences, development and refinement of education research methods, and expansion for research purposes of longitudinal databases that link individual student data to information on conditions that can affect student outcomes, such as curriculum. To assure increased capacity to use and apply the results of research, the Institute will support systematic reviews of evidence, enhanced access to findings through advanced electronic systems, and outreach to parents, educators, students, policymakers, and the general public.

These are not exclusive or absolute priorities: To the extent that resources permit and the Institute's priorities are being adequately addressed, the Institute may address other important education issues.

Intergovernmental Review

This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79.

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(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number does not apply.)

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 9501 *et seq.*

Dated: June 13, 2005.

Grover J. Whitehurst,

Director, Institute of Education Sciences.

[FR Doc. 05-11921 Filed 6-15-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4001-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

West Valley Demonstration Project Waste Management Activities

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy.

ACTION: Record of decision.

SUMMARY: In the *Final West Valley Demonstration Project Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement* (WVDP WM EIS, Department of Energy (DOE)/EIS-0337, December 2003), DOE considered alternatives for the management of WVDP low-level radioactive waste (LLW), mixed (radioactive and hazardous) LLW (MLLW), transuranic (TRU) waste, and high-level radioactive waste (HLW). DOE prepared the WVDP WM EIS pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) 4321 *et seq.*, the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) parts 1500-1508), and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (10 CFR part 1021). To make progress toward fulfilling its responsibilities under the

WVDP Act, DOE needs to disposition the wastes that are either currently in storage at the site or that will be generated at the site over the next ten years. DOE evaluated three alternatives for the management of the wastes: *A No Action Alternative* (Continuation of Ongoing Waste Management Activities), *Alternative A* (Off-site Shipment of HLW, LLW, MLLW, and TRU Wastes to Disposal), and *Alternative B* (Off-site Shipment of LLW and MLLW to Disposal, and Shipment of HLW and TRU Waste to Interim Storage [prior to disposal]). Based on the analysis of the potential impacts documented in the EIS, implementation of any of the alternatives would result in very low impacts to human health and the environment.

DOE has decided to partially implement *Alternative A*, the preferred alternative, for the management of WVDP LLW, MLLW, and HLW that are either currently in site over the next ten years:

DOE will ship LLW and MLLW off site for disposal in accordance with all applicable regulatory requirements, including permit requirements, waste acceptance criteria (WAC), and applicable DOE Orders. DOE will dispose of LLW and MLLW at commercial sites (such as Envirocare, a commercial radioactive waste disposal site in Clive, Utah), one or both of two DOE sites (the Nevada Test Site [NTS] in Mercury, Nevada; or the Hanford Site in Richland, Washington), or a combination of commercial and DOE sites, consistent with DOE's February 2000 decision regarding LLW and MLLW disposal.¹ Disposal of WVDP LLW and MLLW at Hanford would be subject to the limits DOE has imposed upon non-Hanford waste receipts in its June 2004 decision regarding waste management at the Hanford Site,² and contingent upon the resolution of ongoing Hanford litigation in which a preliminary injunction has been entered against shipping off site LLW and MLLW to Hanford.

Consistent with the Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement High-Level Waste Record of Decision (64 FR

¹ Record of Decision for the Department's Waste Management Program: Treatment and Disposal of Low-Level Waste and Mixed Low-Level Waste; Amendment of the Record of Decision for the Nevada Test Site (65 FR 10061, February 25, 2000).

² Record of Decision for the Solid Waste Program, Hanford Site, Richland, Washington: Storage and Treatment of Low-Level Waste and Mixed Low-Level Waste; Disposal of Low-Level Waste and Mixed Low-Level Waste, and Storage, Processing and Certification of Transuranic Waste for Shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (69 FR 39449, June 30, 2004).