

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 1, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
UPON HIS SIGNING
OF THE
EDUCATION MESSAGE

THE CABINET ROOM

11:15 A.M. EST

In the past decade, while education has remained a local responsibility, we have responded at the Federal level to a number of problems perceived to be of a national scope. We have tried to improve educational opportunities but in the process we have created a heavy burden of regulations and red tape.

Too often we have found ourselves asking whether Federal forms have been properly filled out, not whether children have been properly educated. There has also been a tendency toward a greater central control over the decisions which should be made by local education officials.

The time has come to provide Federal support without Federal impediments. For that reason, I am proposing today the financial assistance for the Elementary and Secondary School Act. It would consolidate 24 existing categorical grant programs into a single or one block grant program.

The focus of my proposal will be on improved educational opportunities for those with very special needs: the handicapped and the educationally deprived. Federal funds will be provided with a minimum of Federal regulation and a maximum of local control.

Education needs can be met most effectively by giving people at the local level the tools to do the job well. Under the legislation I propose every State will receive at least as much money for the consolidated program as it did in fiscal year 1976 for the existing programs.

I am requesting a total of \$3 billion 300 million for fiscal year 1977. I am also proposing that the program grow by \$200 million in each of the next three fiscal years. For too long the real issue in our education programs, Federal versus local control, has been obscured by debate over funding levels. Hopefully with the funding levels that I am proposing we can direct the debate where it really belongs, to reform of our education support programs.

I strongly urge the Congress to act quickly and favorably on my proposal to help insure quality education for all of our children.

Thank you very much.

END

(AT 11:18 A.M. EST)