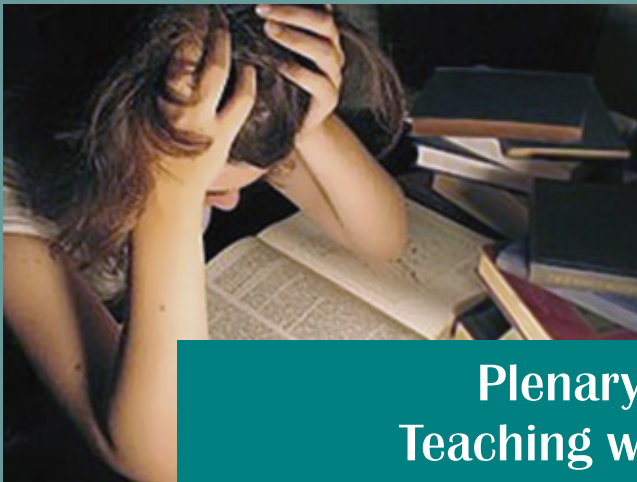


# Partnering with Faith

## Assessing Government Alliances with Religious Groups in Key Service Areas

2006 Annual Conference



**Plenary Session:  
Teaching with a Mission  
Faith-Based Organizations and  
Supplemental Educational Services**

**Closing Reflections**



**The Roundtable**

on Religion and Social Welfare Policy

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**Partnering with Faith:  
Assessing Government Alliances  
with Religious Groups in Key Service Areas**

**Plenary Session**

**Teaching with a Mission:  
Faith-Based Organizations and Supplemental Educational Services**

**Moderator:**

**Leslie Anderson,**  
Managing Director, Policy Studies Associates

**Panelists:**

**Alma Hueston,**  
Associate, Office of School Improvement and Community Services,  
New York State Department of Education

**Eileen Dowd,**  
Executive Director, Mrs. Dowd's Teaching Service

**Joel Packer,**  
Senior Litigator, ACLU

**Closing Reflections**

**Adelle Banks,**  
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*Tuesday, December 5, 2006*

LESLIE ANDERSON: My name is Leslie Anderson. I'm a managing director at Policy Studies Associates, based here in Washington D.C. PSA is an organization that does education and youth development research and program evaluation. I'd like to thank the Roundtable for inviting me here today, to moderate this session. I'm always excited when people are interested in learning more about the supplemental services program because I think it's really an interesting program for all of the interesting issues that it introduces.

And for those of you who don't know what the Supplemental Educational Services provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act are, essentially it's a set of services that kick in to place when a district has schools that have been identified for improvement under the No Child Left Behind Act for two years or more. Basically, these are low performing schools that must offer tutoring services; services from providers that are either districts acting as tutoring providers, or external organizations. And these organizations are private, for-profit, non-profit; there are some online providers; districts – as I mentioned – can act as providers; as well as faith-based providers.

And just to be perfectly upfront with you, my research focused on early implementation of the Supplemental Educational Services provisions of NCLB. And I worked – my firm, PSA, worked with SRI International under a contract to the U.S. Department of Education. And the Department was interested in understanding how the supplemental services provisions, which were brand new, were rolling out. And so they asked us to visit nine districts one year and see how implementation was going, what were the issues the districts were struggling with, because the Department was hoping that it could offer some additional guidance and help and try to head off any major problems. And then they asked us to go back a second year.

Now, there are two reports that were issued from this study. There was a report based on results in 2002, 2003, and then a second report based on what we found in 2003, 2004. But I do want to say that I'm not going to stand here and tell you I know a lot about faith-based providers. What our study was intended to do was to give the U.S. Department of Education a sense of how this program, writ large, was being implemented. And they did ask us to try to get a better sense of what was going on with faith-based providers.



And the fact of the matter is, we went to nine districts that were sort of at the front end of implementing this program, and in the first year, none of them had faith-based providers. The second year we were out, we found in three of our nine districts, there were exactly three faith-based providers. Nevertheless, it's probably important for me to say a little bit about what this program looks like nationally because I think there are a number of findings that are generalizable to all providers. And so if you are a faith-

based organization that is interested in providing tutoring services, there are probably some interesting lessons from this study.

First, this is a difficult program to implement for a number of reasons. There are an enormous number of tasks that states and districts are required to carry out, and typically, there's no administrative budget for this program. So states are basically adding on the tasks associated with this program to all the other things they have to do.

So what we found was that states got a little bit better between year one and year two in terms of defining criteria for evaluating providers. And I will also mention that providers are approved at the state level; they do not get approval to offer tutoring services to students at the district level; they have to apply directly to the state. And the states got pretty good at coming up with some standard criteria for evaluating provider applications. That said, none of the states were able to say – were able to define a process that we would have concluded was competitive. In other words, they basically – as long as a provider could check all of the boxes, you got approval to offer services, so I wouldn't have described the state approval process as particularly rigorous.

Also, the U.S. Department of Education's review of state websites in 2004 revealed that the 13 most commonly approved providers across the nation were all for-profit companies and they represented 20 percent of all state-approved providers.

And then the last thing that I wanted to say about the states was that very few did very much to encourage providers to submit applications. With respect to the districts, participation in the supplemental services program was not as robust as states and districts had hoped. Depending on whose data you're looking at, the participation rates – meaning the number, the percent of kids who are eligible to receive services that actually participate or actually sign up for tutoring services – ranges somewhere between 17 and 20 percent.

And we also learned that districts were struggling to communicate effectively with parents about the availability of supplemental services and the types of services that providers were offering. They were struggling to contract with providers in a timely fashion, to coordinate and manage providers, to serve all the eligible students. For example, six of the nine districts in our case study, had more students eligible to receive services than the districts had the funding to serve.

Then, with respect to providers, we know that the number of state-approved providers is on the increase. We would argue that the supplemental services program is starting to grow, or has been growing every year in terms of the number of students who are eligible to receive services, in terms of the numbers of providers who are offering services.

The states, however, reported that, by and large, providers were struggling to serve rural areas and small districts. And several of the providers, although they were statewide, they were approved to serve an entire state, many of them said that they really couldn't serve certain districts, and those usually were districts that were small or rural.

Sometimes the providers also backed out of offering services because they weren't able to serve schools that were in remote locations because those remote locations didn't have the technology to make use of the services that the providers were offering because typically those services were online services.

I will say that with respect to faith-based providers, the U.S. Department of Education reports that they accounted for about 9 percent of all state-approved providers in May 2005. And the Center on Education Policy's 2006 report on the implementation of NCLB puts that number at a little lower than 9 percent. But there were – and as I said earlier, there were only three faith-based providers among the 75 providers operating in the six districts included in our sample.

What I did want to make a point of, though, is that although there were 9 percent of providers that were faith-based, they were only serving less than one-half of 1 percent of all the students who were eligible to receive services. And also, among the three faith-based providers in our sample, two of those providers were serving – were offering fewer hours of service for an hourly rate that was above the average. But I would argue that overall, the majority of providers are largely going unused. The Center on Education Policy reports that about 34 percent of all available providers actually provided services to students in 2004, 2005.

And I just want to offer some possible explanations for why so few providers are actually serving students and those include the following: Most providers require a minimum number of students to enroll before they can offer services. A large majority of providers offer their services at school sites. Parents pay careful attention to teachers and principal recommendations in signing their child up for services. Parents consider location, hours of operation, and availability of transportation in selecting a provider.

And the information that is provided by providers to parents is usually pretty uneven. Some parents report they get a great deal of information from providers, and other parents report they get precious little. Also, the kind of information parents are given by districts and by schools is very uneven. Some say they have enough information to make a decision as to which provider they want for their children, whereas others say they get so little they have no idea who to select.

And then parents sometimes opt not to enroll their children in supplemental services because there are lots of other options. There are many after-school options available in schools, and many of them are more accessible, more convenient, or more appropriate, in the parent's opinion, for their child. Or there just other activities that they would rather their children participate in that are not academically focused. That would be sports or other recreational activities or church-based activities after school.



So that's just a little bit about the background on the supplemental services program and what we know about it so far, which isn't a whole lot. We're going to learn more about faith-based providers, faith-based organizations, from some of the other panelists.

First, we're going to hear from Alma Hueston who is an associate with the Office of School Improvement and Community Services at the New York State Education Department. As coordinator for upstate supplemental service programs, Ms. Hueston's experiences, I think, will be very interesting in terms of how she developed an outreach program to increase the number of community-based and faith-based organizations on the state's approved list of supplemental service providers.

Next, we'll hear from Mrs. Eileen Dowd and her experiences as an on-the-ground faith-based supplemental service provider. Mrs. Dowd is the executive director of Mrs. Dowd's Teaching Service, a faith-based Supplemental Educational Service provider – program that has provided tutoring services to over a thousand students in Prince George's county and Montgomery counties in Maryland. Mrs. Dowd is also a senior partner for Harbor International, LLC, a broad-based consulting firm serving clients in the fields of childcare, small business development and education.

Finally, we'll turn to Joel Packer for his thoughts and concerns regarding government partnerships with religious groups in providing tutoring services through the SES provisions of NCLB. Mr. Packer is the director of educational policy and practice for the National Education Association and oversees its primary policy center on elementary and secondary education issues.

So without further ado, we'll turn to Alma Hueston.

(Applause.)



ALMA HUESTON: Thank you. I'm going to try to keep this short because I know we are the only thing that's standing between your ability to go out and enjoy this marvelous city. So we're going to keep this short.

It's very interesting; I mentioned to one of the other panelists that I was curious about the order of the presentations and was very interested to hear some of the conversation and the debate that was going on. And it's interesting that we put educating children last on this presentation as opposed to first talking about improving educational opportunities for young people. And then perhaps we wouldn't need as many substance abuse programs – (applause) – we wouldn't need abstinence training. So that's just my uninformed opinion, and it's not to say in any way that I did not enjoy the conversation, the discussion, because I did and I think it was much needed. But sometimes we don't always talk about the issues and topics in the order of importance.

I'm just going to talk briefly about two or three different aspects of the state education department's involvement with faith-based initiatives. I have had the pleasure of working over the past 12 years with an associate commissioner who is responsible for school improvement, who is also an ordained minister. And she has made it her mission and the mission of our unit, which is responsible for accountability. You know, our division identifies those schools that are in need of improvement, and we also have responsibility for Title I, which is the largest academic assistance program, the most funded program in the United States.

So our associate commissioner has made it her mission to bring in the entire community. You know, very often we talk about this village, and we talk about it taking a whole village to raise a child, and I've had the pleasure of working with somebody who not only believes that philosophy but tries at every avenue to put that philosophy into effect.

When you look at the State Education Department and you look at the Board of Regents, which establishes educational policy in New York State, you are not just talking about schools, but you're also talking about responsibilities for public broadcasting, for licensing 40 professions. We're talking about libraries, cultural institutions, museums. So the involvement of the State Education Department, the range of activities that we oversee, is very broad.



We didn't wait for NCLB to be implemented to decide that there was a need to engage the faith-based community. The commissioner of education, early on in his tenure, and his predecessor as well, always made an attempt to include faith-based organizations in educational discussions, so that we have members of the faith community that serve on advisory panels, we have members who serve on the Title I committee of practitioners. And those of you who know education know that Title I is one of the largest programs in education.

And we also invite faith-based organizations to be involved in curriculum development issues. When we create regents' examinations, we often bring people in from the outside, and we try wherever possible to make the individuals who come in to do consulting, reflect the population of students that our educational institutions are designed to serve. So we have been involved with the faith-based community prior to the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Now, the involvement increased somewhat because we saw early on that there was a need to bring in a variety of providers. It wasn't comfortable with us that we were just getting proposals for SES providers from some of the – a lot of the profit organizations, the Kaplans, the Huntingtons, and we were not getting very many applications early on from faith-based organizations.

So what we did was some outreach in some strategic cities throughout New York state in order to increase the number of faith-based organizations that are applying to become SES providers. We have currently over 300 approved New York state providers, and out of that 300 we have 20, about 20 that are faith-based organizations. So clearly we need to do much more to increase that number, but we are very happy to have the 20 that we have on staff because we feel that they provide students with a much-needed service.

When I come to some of these sessions, I hear people talk about money that faith-based organizations can get to provide SES services. If you're here to talk about SES, and you're interested in the money aspect of it, this is not the venture for you to get involved in. This has to come from a place other than the wallet, because there is very little money to be made. We're not giving out grants; we're giving people an opportunity to be approved to provide kids – youngsters who need the most academic assistance – some instruction and opportunity to increase their skills so that they can reach higher academic standards.

There are certain characteristics of faith-based organizations that make them ideal SES providers. First of all, they tend to be very rooted in the communities that they serve. Youngsters sometimes have a trust level with FBOs that they don't have with other organizations. You know, if the child comes to church on Sunday and can't read and can't follow the Sunday school lesson, chances are that when they go to school on Monday they're going to have difficulty keeping up with the other students at school.

So I think it's in the best interest of churches to help to bolster the academic skills of youngsters so that they can improve academically and meet high standards, but also those increased skills will also help them to better understand the materials that they are presented with when they're in Sunday schools, or when they attend other types of extracurricular activities at the church.

Another aspect of faith-based organizations' mission that lend itself to becoming SES providers is that many of these organizations already offer comprehensive services, so that SES would just be an extension. There are churches that have health programs running, they have substance abuse programs. And we know after the discussion earlier this afternoon, that they have abstinence programs that operate in the churches. So SES is just another component to the outreach ministry that many churches are engaged in.

Another important element is the fact that churches very often focus on building meaningful relationships with communities. And when we talk about building meaningful relationship with communities, we need to also include schools; we need to include educational institutions in that outreach, all right.

Students who are not doing well in school – if a church is located in a district where there are substantial numbers of students who are achieving below level, then it is incumbent upon that church to attempt to understand that issue so that the church can offer some type of assistance whether it's in the form of an after-school program or an SES program. And it's also important that the church is in tune with academic needs of

that community so that the church can better help the parents who are responsible for the education of those children.

We had a situation – we gave out some grants a couple of years ago to school districts to help them to develop innovative ways to increase the number of students who were involved in the SES programs. And one of the districts came to me – they had a few dollars that were left over from the grant, and they wanted to spend it, and didn't know what to do with it. And they had done all of the traditional programs. They had done community fairs, had offered workshops to parents, and they had offered professional development for teachers. And they were just – you know, at wit's end to find something innovative to do with this small pocket of money.

So one of the suggestions that I made to the district was that, you know, you have a number of churches that operate in your city. And you have students – a lot of the students that come to you during the week also go to Sunday school on the weekends, on Sunday. Why don't you do a professional development program for Sunday school teachers? You know, the whole point of this grant was to increase the number of students who were involved in SES.

So if the child is going to Sunday school, the Sunday school teacher doesn't know anything about SES, doesn't know anything about schools that are in need of improvement, why don't you do some training and introduce them to this whole topic of SES and schools that are in need of improvement so that they can better work with those youngsters on Sunday and they can offer some assistance. If they know about the program and they see that the child is struggling in reading or math, then perhaps they can suggest to the parent and to the child, you know, there are some services that are available through your school. Why don't you look into them and take advantage of those programs?



So it was a different kind of approach. And what she did was she engaged the Sunday school union. Each city, at least in the Baptist faith – each city has a Sunday school union. And she engaged them and set up a training date, and provided them with materials on NCLB and SES, and it was a very win-win situation for everybody. The school was able to bring in another partner in the SES equation, and the church was able to provide its parishioners with information about a much-needed service.

So I think that we have to sometimes think outside the box; we have to be creative. We have to attempt to be as inclusive as we can, and not look at this SES as a pot of money, but look at it as an opportunity to help children reach high learning standards.

(Applause.)

MS. ANDERSON: Next, we have Mrs. Dowd from Mrs. Dowd's Teaching Service. And as I mentioned earlier, she represents the perspective of a faith-based organization operating as a supplemental service provider for the state of Maryland.

EILEEN DOWD: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Okay, we usually say, good afternoon, Mrs. Dowd. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

AUDIENCE: Good afternoon, Mrs. Dowd.

MS. DOWD: Very good. One more time. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

AUDIENCE: Good afternoon, Mrs. Dowd.

MS. DOWD: Thank you. Good afternoon, you lovely people. Thank you so much for coming this afternoon. And thank you for moderating, Ms. Anderson; that's very kind. Ms. Hueston, it's nice to meet my new best friend. And Mr. Packer, I look forward to your comments. Thank you very much to the Roundtable, and the Rockefeller Institute of Government for allowing us to speak on SES.



As you can tell, I'm excited; I love talking with passion about children. I love teaching children. And I have a great story to tell you. In the lobby afterwards are pictures of some of our kids that we love and that we work with. And also – once a teacher, always a teacher – we brought some pencils the kids love because, you know, when you're tutoring kids you need to give them pencils and paper. These are mood pencils, folks, in the hall. And if you hold it, it'll change colors. Now, it's really cool, so help yourself – bring some home for your kids.

But let me tell you a little bit about Mrs. Dowd's Teaching Service. We are located eight miles from where you sit in Prince George's County, Maryland. We live in a small municipality called Berwyn Heights. And we know the town mayor, the town council. In fact, the postmaster is also the secretary of the council, and we even know all nine members of Chief Murphy's police department.

So we are a small company, actually founded in 2002, just a few years ago, but came together with seven women educators. We've been in the trenches; we've been teachers for 30-plus years; veteran administrators, people who really knew children. We got together, and we said, should we do a company because we know we can teach, but we really would like to tutor, and we heard about Supplemental Educational Services through No Child Left Behind. So that's what we did.

But the first thing that you have to know – and these are really important facts – is that there is a very rigorous process by which you become accredited and approved by your state. It is not an easy deal. There are some handouts in the lobby as well. And this is based on the national SES toolkit. Every state has to come up with – I'm sorry, it's kind

of a poor copy – 100 points by which you are evaluated as to whether or not you could indeed become a provider.

So as an applicant, you have to answer questions about such things as proven data; evidence of effectiveness; how you have worked and taught low-income, at-risk students. You have to show evidence between research and your program design. In other words, how we respond to the theoretical framework, and the knowledge of scientific-based research. We have to demonstrate our knowledge by showing how our curriculum – which by the way, is secular, beautiful, non-ideological, No Child Left Behind approved material in math and reading. And we have to actually show how it corresponds to the Maryland state voluntary curriculum. That’s very, very important.

And then we had to really demonstrate qualifications of instructional staff. Now, all of you know that in the school, your child’s teacher is the principal teacher. And so we come along side the teacher. So as tutors, our job is to really work with the principals, to really say to them, what do your students need because this is the key? Why are we here as providers? We’re here to partner, to come along side, to be part of the team that makes the school improve and pass – and actually pass AYP, which stands for adequate yearly progress. So that’s the deal. So we had to really go in and explain that.



Now, in Maryland, there are standards called the HOUSSE, H-O-U-S-S-E, and that is what we were able to define our teachers – High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation, which sets standards for great appropriate academic subjects matter in teaching. So that’s what happened to us.

Okay, so the question is, out of the 100 points, there really are no points for whether or not you’re faith-based. That’s just something you put in in other considerations, but it does not weigh in to whether or not you become accredited.

Just to let you know, if I had to define faith-based for our company, I would say that as Christians, we serve as Christ served. That is, we are – listen to this folks – if you were a child being taught, we are compassionate, we are peaceful, we are gentle, we are patient, we are loving, we are kind, we are self-controlled. You will never see one of our teachers speaking harshly to a child. You will never see one of our teachers who does not have nothing but a kind word to ask how the child’s day was.

Now, if you combine that with rigorous by the law, good curriculum, you’ve got a winner. You’ve got a win-win, and that’s where I think it happens. We never – and I want to say this very clearly and loudly from the rooftops – our job is never to teach religion. It is math and reading. And as an English teacher and a reading specialist, we do that.

Okay, so once approved then, what does this really mean? It means that we won an award based on our model. Let me tell you the model. There are three children for every teacher, tops; we never extend that. So that's real tutoring. I mean that's really small, kind of family style. And if there is someone – someone in the school that does apply –

Now, first of all, how do you get to be an SES student? Two things. One, you have to be on free and reduced meals. And we don't know that. As providers, we're not given that information; the schools have that information. But they are on free and reduced meals, and therefore it's a free program to the parents. So that's kind of neat. So it's a free program, free and reduced meals.

But we also have – if a child is limited English-speaking, we will bring the ratio down to one to two, maybe two children with one teacher. We had an autistic child that came to us just in September, and we immediately just loved – he's just a beautiful little guy, who told me he put his homework in the blender. And I thought that was kind of nice, so cute. So we have a one-to-one, a wonderful teacher with him.

We offer seven weeks of math and reading. We have a pre- and a post-assessment, and that is also state regulated. It's Wide Range Achievement Test – educators in the room, you'll know it. It's about 70 years old and still working. We meet two days a week; we meet two hours, one hour of math and one hour of reading. And in between we have a little snack time, and a little food is given by USDA the first time. The second time it's our company.

I want to say something real clear now – that 30 minutes is not paid by the state. That is a gift, gratis of every teacher at Mrs. Dowd's Teaching Service. We just give it because we love it. So that's not billed to the state.

Okay. Basically then, if you're thinking about this – and I liked what Ms. Hueston had to say. Once you become a provider, then how do you get the students to enroll? That's been the question throughout. And it's real simple. The parents drive the enrollment process, and reputation is what the parents – they will talk to one another.

In Prince George's County, we have about 12 providers; nine pretty serious. And I think as a Title I group, all together, our county has enrolled 2,000 students, of which about 900 have come through our doors – will be coming through our doors. But they do that because there is a very definite reason. If a parent is engaged, if a parent is interested in the life of their child after school, and they see progress – we send weekly reports home. We send a newsletter home. We meet with the teachers. We ask for the weekly reports to go to the teachers and the principals. And the families, we constantly send them electronic, on-line surveys. If we keep that playing field really open, then we find that the dialog is great, and the children are learning.

The other thing that we do is that in every school where we have a Latino population, we have a Team Español. We have teachers who also speak Spanish who work in the

community, and also, just to let you know, our teachers – the certified teachers that come to us come from the school system. In our county, we’re allowed to hire the teachers in the system. And so they come afterwards, and so they’re a great source of communication with making sure we get feedback from everyone. It’s a great community partnership.

One of the things, too, is that when we first started, we didn’t start without having help from our community partners. I call them the local heroes. End Time Harvest Ministries was one of our very first contracts – it’s a small company – before SES – and we were allowed to go into Bladensburg Elementary School with 25 children. And we won that contract and worked diligently with Reverend Gail Addison, and we had a great time.

So when we did win as providers, we went back to the school and said, remember us? We were there, and would you mind if we come in again? And the answer was “of course.” Go to the open house. Go to the fairs, just like every other provider. But we did. And the first summer we went right next door because we weren’t allowed to go into the schools at first. And then that changed; they turned it around next year. So the first year, we went into a little church next door, and we started with 162 children, and that was pretty phenomenal for us. The next year, which is just recently passed, we served over 500. And this year we’ve already enrolled 725, and 900 have applied and we’re still waiting to hear – pending approval by Title I.



So how do we – the big [question] here is how do you know if you’re successful? You know, you’ve been working with the teachers, the principals, the families, good rapport. It’s simply whether or not the school makes AYP. Last year, three of our four schools made AYP, and that was big; that was really big. It was big for them. We were excited to be part of it, and we believed since we were the largest providers in their schools that that was one of the reasons, and we were thanked by the principals as well. And that’s kind of nice.

Let me summarize, then.

One, we weren’t handed SES. We earned it through specific equitable evaluators, with a 100-point system, and none were faith-based.

Two, Team Español is at every one of our schools with a Latino population.

Three, we partner with Title I offices and our local school system. And they are the local heroes. They really are.

Four, we love our families, and the parents, and the teachers, and we communicate frequently with them, with monthly newsletters, weekly reports, on how their children are doing.

Five, we are the guest of each school, so we come in as the guest. And we therefore, leave the school better than when we left. I can't say that enough because it is really a partnering situation.

Six, as a faith-based provider we serve from the heart. We touch the lives of children, and we do it with an excellent secular, neutral curriculum and a wonderful compassionate spirit.

Eight, low-income at-risk children are being served with compassion and dignity.

Nine, we are blessed to have this chance, and we are willing to believe the odds that if American families knew what we were doing, they'd pay for it again and again, because why? We're a nation of caring, giving people. Our children learn this best by our example.

Thank you very much. God bless you.

(Applause.)

MS. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mrs. Dowd.

Next we have Joel Packer from the National Education Association. Mr. Packer is here to share with us his thoughts and concerns about government partnerships with faith-based organizations that are providing supplemental services through the No Child Left Behind Act.



MR. PACKER: Thank you. Good afternoon, everybody. It's always a little tough being the last panelist on the last panel of a late afternoon.

I'm going to take a little bit broader view first. A little bit about No Child Left Behind and why Supplemental Services are in the law and what they're supposed to accomplish. I don't know how many of you have ever – probably none of you, is my guess – actually read the No Child Left Behind law. It's 1,100 pages – someone here has – 1,100 pages.

I was at another conference and someone described No Child Left Behind as being like a Russian novel: it's long, it's complicated, and at the end everybody dies – (laughter) – because increasing numbers of schools are failing to meet the standards the federal government has set up, and we can have a whole other discussion about that, you know at a different time.

But the goals of No Child Left Behind are ones that NEA strongly supports: improving student achievement for all students, closing achievement gaps among different groups of students, ensuring all students have a highly qualified teacher. We do not oppose Supplemental Educational Services; some people think we oppose that.

The reason Supplemental Educational Services, or SES for short, were put in the law in the first place: President Bush, when he first proposed No Child Left Behind, literally I think the second day he was president in 2001 – part of his plan was that students in schools that don't meet these federal standards, Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP, would, among other options, have a right to take some of their public dollars, federal Title I dollars, and take them to private schools; kind of a private school voucher program.

We are opposed to that. The Congress rejected that on an overwhelming, bi-partisan basis in both the House and the Senate; that was dropped. One of the compromises, if you will, was Supplemental Educational Services: that students would have a right – parents, really, have a right – to use a portion of the school's Title I dollars to get after-school tutoring.

The concerns we have with supplemental services are a couple. Number one, there is a sequence of consequences or actions that happen based on how many years a school doesn't meet Adequate Yearly Progress. So if a school doesn't meet Adequately Yearly Progress for two years the first thing that happens is all students in the school, regardless of income, regardless of academic ability, have a right to transfer to another public school in the same school district that did make Adequate Yearly Progress. The second consequence, if the school doesn't meet AYP for another year, is that parents in that school have a right to have their child get Supplemental Educational Services.

So one concern we have is that the federal government – the Congress has decided that these two interventions, public school choice and after-school tutoring, are the two most important, or best, or presumably effective outcomes as a way to improve education for students because they're the only two absolutely mandated consequences, if you will. If schools continue to fail AYP there's a menu of different things that happen, increasingly serious, eventually saying their school is taken over by the state, or turned into a charter school, or turned over to a for-profit company.

So one would think that there was a strong research base that either public school choice –we're also not opposed to public school choice – or supplemental services or after-school tutoring automatically helped improve student achievement. But, there really hasn't been. And in fact, as was mentioned briefly, I just want to reinforce it, according to the Department of Education itself, there's been virtually no evaluation of the effectiveness of supplemental services.

According to a report in May of this year, the U.S. Department of Education said states report they are working to develop and implement systems for monitoring and evaluating the performance of supplemental service providers, but as of early 2005, 15 states had not established any monitoring process, 25 states had not yet established any

standards for evaluating provider effectiveness, and none had finalized their evaluation standards.

So our concern is, is this really the most effective use of public tax dollars? Our concern about that has been compounded because there is no real, separate new money for this. It comes out of school districts' existing Title I budgets.

Now, when No Child Left Behind was passed, it was passed somewhat under the assumption – at least by the Democrats – that there was going to be significant increases in funding. Again, we can debate whether all of No Child Left Behind is good or bad,

and whether tests are the right way to measure and hold schools accountable, and whether AYP is a fair system or not – and I would answer no on all of those. But the issue was, there was going to be lots of money to help schools implement and meet these mandates. The reality is there was some increase in the first year, a little bit less in the second year. The last couple of years, money has been going down.



So in this current school year, 62 percent of all school districts are getting less Title I money than they got last year. So that means that most school districts, out of an already smaller amount of money, have to take out as much as 15 percent of their Title I funds to pay for after school tutoring. It's actually combined 20 percent for choice and after-school tutoring. So we're not opposed to

supplemental services, but one of our proposals is that there should be a separate funding stream. So as opposed to a school that is not doing well, having money taken out of classroom services to pay for tutoring, there should be a separate federal pot of money, since the federal government is mandating this is one of the outcomes or consequences.

Another concern we have is just the issue of a level playing field. Any kind of entity, or any kind of person, can be a supplemental service provider. There are, as it's been said, some federal parameters, and each state has to put in place criteria, as was mentioned. Some of them are pretty lax in actually enforcing their own criteria. So you can be a for-profit company – and the majority of providers are for-profit companies; you can be a non-profit community-based group; you can be a faith-based organization; you can be a public school; you can be a private school. You can be an NEA affiliate – we have two NEA affiliates that are supplemental service providers. So any kind of person can be a supplemental service provider, but there are some key differences in what laws apply, or what requirements apply, to these different people.

Example one: All public school teachers, by No Child Left Behind, are required to meet another federal standard called Highly Qualified Teachers. And we can debate whether that's good, bad, or meaningless, but there's certain requirements about subject matter knowledge, and credentials and things like that. And by the end of this current school year, 100 percent of all public school teachers of core academic subjects, which is basically everything other than physical education, have to meet this standard.

Not only are supplemental service providers not required to only use highly qualified teachers, states are prohibited from requiring them to do so. And that's a decision the U.S. Department of Education made. The federal government could have said either we'll mandate that they all must use highly qualified providers or we'll take a middle ground; we'll let each state decide if they have to do that. But the U.S. Department of Education took a third option and said, we're prohibiting states from even having the option to do that. So that's one issue where we have a concern.

And then the second one we're really concerned about is, we worked very hard when No Child Left Behind was put in the law – and Senator Kennedy was one of the champions of this –and said, since we're really for the first time opening up who can get federal elementary and secondary education dollars beyond states and public schools to a whole range of other entities, we want to ensure that they're covered by civil rights laws.

So there's a section of No Child Left Behind toward the very end – I think it's Section 95.34, but I might be wrong about the exact number – that says any entity getting funds under this act is covered by all applicable federal civil rights laws including Title VI, Title IX, et cetera, based on race and gender, and other kinds of discrimination.

Well, very interestingly, the U.S. Department of Education in its regulations and guidance focused on the word, “applicable,” and they determined that private supplemental service providers, faith-based providers, were not covered by civil rights laws because the civil rights laws were not applicable to them. And they determined they weren't applicable to them because they said they're not actually getting the money. The money goes through the school district, which actually contracts with the provider, and the school district pays the provider.



It's public dollars; that's who is paying for the services, but the U.S. Department of Education has said they're not recipients of federal funds, so they're not actually covered by civil rights laws, which we think is a huge problem. The burden is then on the school district, as the contractor to ensure there is no discrimination, which is really not the job or role of public school districts.

Thirdly, religious-based providers are explicitly allowed to hire people as tutors based on their religion, so that a Catholic provider could, if it so choose, say we're only going to have Catholic people be reading tutors. Or a Jewish provider, [could say] we're only going to have Jewish people be math tutors. Now, there's obviously reasons for religious organizations to hire people of their own faith for certain jobs, but we don't understand why there needs to be a federal exemption that says someone has to be of a certain religion to be able to teach a kid reading or math.

The other concern we have is that the U.S. Department of Education also has said in its regulations that private non-governmental supplemental service providers are not required to serve either students with disabilities or limited-English-proficient students, and if in a geographic area of a school district, there are no such providers – no providers willing to serve such students – then the school district has to serve those students, even if the school district is otherwise barred from being a supplemental service provider.

So it creates a double standard where certain school districts are actually not allowed to be providers because they haven't made Adequate Yearly Progress, but they are the provider by default, so to speak, for limited-English-proficient or special education students.

So our proposals, just to sum up, are not to eliminate supplemental services, but provide a separate funding stream to ensure that all providers are covered by the same civil rights laws; to ensure that they all have to use the same highly qualified teachers as instructors; and to ensure that all providers have to serve all eligible students. You may have to hire other kinds of instructors to help provide the services to those students, and I was very pleased to hear Mrs. Dowd talk about the kind of students that her organization serves, so it's obviously possible for an organization to do that.

In fact, if anything, we are actually promoting, in some ways, an expansion of supplemental services because we think the order right now under No Child Left Behind that says the first consequence or action, or whatever you want to call it, is public school choice, and only the next year is supplement services doesn't make sense. Supplemental services should actually come a year earlier. It makes sense to provide help to kids in the school they're in first, before you say let's send them to another school. So we're not opposed to faith-based providers being in the program. We're not opposed to private providers being in the program. We just think there should be adequate funding, level playing field, and some quality assurances for what they're providing. So I will stop there.

(Applause.)



MS. ANDERSON: Thank you very much. We're going to open it up for questions. Sure.

Q: This is Lola Montgomery. My question is about what constitutes a highly qualified teacher? I can get behind you on almost everything, and certainly the funding stream, all that. I am the mom of two kids with severe learning disabilities and have been doing homework for 30 years. I would think that in some places, there would be persons like myself who don't have teaching credentials, but who would certainly be capable of providing some services.

MR. PACKER: I guess my answer would be that we think that the primary instructors should – if they're getting public dollars under No Child Left

Behind – have the same qualifications as in the classroom. Many classrooms have power educators, or teachers’ aides, or whatever you want to call them, to provide additional tutoring or one-on-one assistance. I think the kind of role you mentioned would fit in a provider as well. But the primary instructors, we think, should have – and Mrs. Dowd indicated her instructors do have – the same kind of credentials.

MS. DOWD: I just want to say something real quickly. Not all of our teachers, Mr. Packer, are highly qualified. We have teachers who have a tremendous background. They might have Master’s in public administration. We have pharmacy students; we have people learning in the Master’s level, doctors. We have ministers. We have social workers. And so my – but we do have also many certified teachers.

So if you look at it, I would agree that there needs to be some recognition that we are not the principal classroom teacher. We would agree that whatever the definition is of what makes a good teacher in the classroom – I was certified myself back in the day when I was in the classroom. But to be a tutor afterwards, when you’re working with specific in-house good training that we do on a monthly basis with math and reading curriculum, it is perfectly appropriate, I think, for us to have teachers who have varied backgrounds.

MS. HUESTON: The way the regulation is written in New York state, all the tutors don’t have to be certified teachers; however, the program has to be supervised by a licensed New York state teacher. And I think that if you look across the nation, probably the majority of the tutors are not certified teachers.

MS. ANDERSON: There’s a question over here.

Q: Hello, my name is Charles Brown. I work with Brown Consulting. I work across the nation in about 13 different districts. In every district except one, I’m the largest provider. I work with only faith-based organizations.

And one of the key areas that I find with faith-based organizations is the level of competition and undue fairness. And you were talking about a fair playing ground. For-profit companies such as – I don’t like to really name names – but Sylvan, Education Station have an inside track with superintendents, principals, and teachers.

And while one of the ways I did overcome that is, of course, by hiring, having a lot of the faith-based organizations hire actual teachers. And when the teachers start working, the principals start to get behind the plan; the superintendent kind of forgets who his friends are.

But I don’t know how to properly – every state I go into, I can get kicked out, told that my program is not adequate, that we’ve enroll students in an unfair manner because we



actually work inside the community that they are in, and it's not fair to large companies that work nationally that can't reach those students. So I'm not sure how – or any strategies that you guys may have to assist somebody trying to help faith-based organizations become tutoring providers.

MS. HUESTON: Well, that is an issue. And as we speak, I think the Board of Regents in New York state is looking at adding a regulation. And what you're talking about to some degree is the whole issue of incentives. And there are programs that, you know, if you're a Sylvan Learning Center or one of the other national programs, you may be in a better position to offer a child a \$25 gift certificate or a computer if you enroll in this program.

If it's a computer-based program, some of the providers say, well, we'll give you this computer. We're giving out free computers. So what we're attempting to do in New York state is regulate the language, regulate the kinds of incentives that providers can offer. I think that it's very difficult for community-based organizations and faith-based organizations to go against multi-million-dollar corporations.

I think what the bottom line is, is that you have to establish a relationship with the community. You have to be rooted in the community. And I have to believe that at some point, parents will get to the point when they understand that they're being sold a bill of goods that is not necessarily the best option for their child. I think you just have to be persistent and make inroads in those communities to build community support to the extent that when people come in, these outside companies come in, the larger companies come in, you can be on a level playing field.

So our incentive regulation is designed to limit the monetary value in order to level the playing field, as well as to – I think it's an insult when you present certain types of incentives to parents, because it shows that you don't have any respect. You know, middle-class families that find that their children are in need of tutoring, they're not swayed by the fact that they may end up getting a computer, or an iPod. They are looking for a program that is going to increase that student's achievement level. And I think we have to do a better job of professional development with parents – and I say professional development and not training; professional development with parents – to get them to understand what their options are, so that they don't fall for the programs that offer incentives that really don't translate into high student achievement.

MS. ANDERSON: I was told that we only had five minutes for questions, so I need to wrap things up now. So thank you very much to the panel and to you for coming.

(Applause.)

DR. NATHAN: Now, we are going to hear from Adelle Banks, who is the senior correspondent for Religion News Service. Adelle has graciously agreed to pull together the highlights of what we discussed today, and to identify points she thinks are striking and that we should focus on – just for a few minutes before we finish.

So, Adelle, thank you so much for agreeing to do this.

(Applause.)

ADELLE BANKS: Hello, hardy ones who stayed for the whole conference.

At Religion News Service, coverage of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and related organizations and lawsuits are just one of the many beats that I've been assigned to cover. But each day I meet with my editor and determine what's newsworthy, as far as topics to consider that we know about from what's breaking, to just story ideas.

So I thought I'd let you be flies on the wall of a potential meeting that I'll have tomorrow with my editor telling him about all the things I heard about today. And you should know that our report has these various segments. We have breaking news stories, feature stories, shorter news items and a daily digest, analytical pieces and quotes of the day, which are my favorite thing. So I'm going to try to break what I heard today down into those categories.

Something that would be a digest item or a short story that would be fairly immediate would be about Jay Hein speaking for the first time to this particular conference. I was curious as to how he might approach things differently than Jim Towey, his predecessor, and he talked about broadening the outreach to the states, and he talked about transforming the culture within the states just as he thinks the Faith-Based Initiative may have done on a national level. He mentioned he was going to meet with some liaisons from state offices tomorrow.



Of course I was curious as to whether Mr. Kuo's book "Tempting Faith" was going to come up at this particular faith-based office, and it did. He said, "Criticism about whether we're authentic and whether we did what we were promising to do I think takes the entirely wrong argument." So I think that means he disagrees with them. And he also said, I don't think there's much "weight," quote, unquote, to the notion of dollars not having increased for faith-based organizations and others or for there not being new players.

It's always helpful to me to hear new statistics or updated statistics regarding the Faith-Based Office. He said he has a staff of between six and 10, I believe he said, and a collective staff of over 60 when he includes those in the faith-based offices within the various cabinets.

He also said the federal government has been fundamentally changed as a result of this Initiative, and he mentioned that there are 33 governors with liaisons or offices related to the Faith-Based Initiative, and 100 mayors.

I thought it was interesting that somebody asked him a question about defining the faith-based organizations, and when he asked that, he didn't seem to directly answer, but instead talked about the "continuum," quote, unquote, of secular nonprofits and faith-based groups that are affiliated with his office.

So I was curious about the reaction to the Freedom From Religion Foundation case that has just been taken by the Supreme Court, and he said, "The enormity of how this is observed I think is hard to overstate." And he said it was very important. And he noted that this case that the Supreme Court is going to be looking at, they're going to be dealing with the issue of standing, a technical issue, instead of the constitutionality of the whole program.

Several of the various panels could be fodder for either a short story of a future story. Of course the abstinence issue, which is rather interesting – lots of discussion there. One of the bigger stories would be about this whole question of research and what people have found about the success of these various programs, be they secular or religious. But it's interesting to compare Teresa Thrash, from Kalamazoo, and her abstinence program, thought that additional funding would be a good thing for programs that relate in some way to faith-based organizations, while William Smith of SIECUS thought that improved monitoring was needed. He said, "...with the explosion of federal dollars in this area, oversight becomes not just a good thing, but also a duty." In response, Wade Horn, of the U.S. Health and Human Services Administration of Children and Families said that they're trying to stop any violations of the law when it



comes to faith being combined with social services, including those related to abstinence education. Quote, "If you think that's what your mission is, don't come and ask the federal government for funding," he said. And he said that they should know not to proselytize or discriminate against clients of a particular faith or no faith. And he described a seven-step process to deal with recommending how people make sure they're in compliance.

But still, there are suits and settlements such as the prominent Silver Ring Thing program, a faith-based abstinence program, whose constitutionality was questioned. But Horn also said, you could quadruple the size of ACF – that's the Administration of Children and Families' – workforce, and you would still have grantees doing things that they shouldn't be doing or delivering services that are not effective. He also said that when they do find problems, they don't issue press releases, and as someone who gets press releases all the time, I thought that was an interesting comment.

Moving on to substance abuse, Dr. Westley Clark of SAMHSA talked about how 23 percent of the providers involved with the Access to Recovery Program are faith based and there may be a sense that there's more than that, so it would be nice to get that statistic out there some day.

Cynthia Moreno Tuohy with the Association for Addiction Professionals, talked about the importance of training, and that churches should not necessarily, or other houses of worship, give love offerings or shoes to people who are having these kinds of problems because they might end up being a factor in their next drug transaction. So I think there might be a story just in how congregations are trained, what happens – what they did before they were trained versus what they do after.

Ms. Tuohy also noted that churches might be involved with helping those involved with substance abuse by being affiliated with a faith-based treatment facility – not themselves being the entity, but helping out in other ways like providing clothing or food.

And there's the question both in substance abuse and, as I move on to the workforce, employment issue of what studies, again, are there that show effectiveness. And I frankly look forward to being able to write more about these studies when they're completed since this is a big question, as to how effective faith-based social service providers are versus secular ones.

I'm afraid that I was taking notes on what I had to tell you when I was listening to the No Child Left Behind discussion and the whole education discussion, but I did notice Ms. Hueston's comment about the Sunday School Union and connecting with a denominational program to then get word to parents about academic needs; an interesting topic to possibly consider.

Then as far as an analysis piece, what I sort of saw as the overall issue today was about the question of guidance, and it seems that the courts and lawyers, not just the government, are giving people guidance as to how to approach this whole issue of faith-based organizations and government funding. And there is a question as to whether the government is giving enough guidance. And of course this Iowa case that was discussed was prominent, and this notion of that organization being, as Chip Lupu said, a poster child for how not to set up or run a state faith-based program. He talked about neutrality and the voluntary nature of these things, and the fact that there is a repayment potential of \$1.5 million that this particular faith-based organization is going to have to pay back.

Then there was the discussion of the General Accountability Office's report. That's something that gives more fodder relating to guidance. And the Silver Ring Thing settlement – ruling against that abstinence program – where Bob Tuttle said, “The Silver Ring Thing guidance got it right,” and he thinks that it's a template for adequate advice. And the gentleman from ACLU, Daniel Mach, added that he hopes that guidance will be disseminated so that more people will learn from it.

There was also a discussion as to whether there are certain things that can be funded by the government relating to prisons and certain things that cannot, and it seemed like the scholars were saying that the safe things are housing and feeding these prisoners, and Jay Hein was saying that what we need to do is rehabilitate them and reintegrate them into society. He said that they draw a very bright line and they spend a disproportionate

amount of time talking about what you can do and what you can't do. Likewise, Westley Clark of SAMHSA talked about "leveling the playing field by making it clear what the rules of the game are" and not changing the rules. But it seemed like the bottom line was what Bob Tuttle was saying. He said it was related to whether you can directly fund religious content, which he thinks you cannot. He says, "That's the big question. That is where all the lawsuits are, and with few exceptions, that's the question that has been avoided."

So there will be further guidance, I guess, when the suits that have yet to be decided – one dealing with the Northwest Marriage Initiative and another dealing with the VA and the Freedom from Religion Foundation, who are concerned about their use of chaplains in spiritual health assessments.



So I conclude with quotes of the day. Chip Lupu said that as far as the Iowa case and this repayment of possibly \$1.5 million by a faith-based organization to the government, from which it received money, "That ought to send a little chill up the spine of any faith-based organization."

And then I thought it was interesting that both from the faith perspective and from a government perspective there was a concern about working together versus fighting with each other. Reverend Steven Tucker said, "If faith and government can move 40 million people off poverty, then only those who profit from poverty will complain." And then Anthony Conyers, the commissioner of the Department of Social Services in Virginia, said, "It's not going to work as long as we gather to fuss at each other to make our academic and theological points without focusing on the fact that we do job training to help people get a job."

Thank you.

(Applause.)

DR. NATHAN: You were terrific to list off all those things that now you'll write. We'll watch you very carefully, Adelle. You said, this is an idea for a story; this is an idea for a story. We're going to watch.

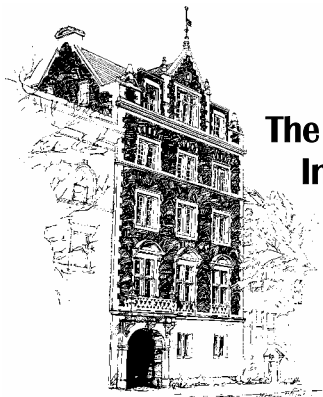
Thank you all for coming. This was a lot to take in, and the speakers I think presented things that are helpful to all of us, and the Roundtable thanks you for attending.

(Applause.)

(END)



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