The Secretary encourages studies that use these approaches to foster the full participation and maximize the achievement of students with disabilities in educational reform efforts related to the Goals 2000: Educate America Act.

(2) Projects that implement and examine a model or models for using research knowledge to improve educational practice and outcomes for children with disabilities, and that include methodologies with the capacity to judge the effectiveness of the model or models as implemented in practice settings.

(3) Projects that study the delivery of coordinated services from providers such as health, social service, and mental health agencies.

(4) Projects that study non-categorical approaches to establishing eligibility for special education.

(5) Projects that study and develop instructionally relevant assessment practices that can also be used to establish student eligibility for special education.

Project Period: The majority of projects will be funded for up to 36 months. Only in exceptional circumstances—such as projects that include repeated measurement or a longitudinal design—will projects be funded for more than 36 months or up to a maximum of 60 months.

Supplementary Information: The Secretary does not fund a project at an amount exceeding the high end of the range for this competition, as specified in Chart 6.

Absolute Priority 3—Examining Alternatives for Results Assessment for Children with Disabilities (84.023F). The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services establishes an absolute priority for research projects that meet the requirements of paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) as follows:

(a) Pursue systematic programs of applied research focusing on one or more issues related to assessment or results based accountability for students with disabilities, or both. These issues include, but are not limited to the following:

(1) Testing accommodations and adaptations. When adaptations and accommodations are made to permit students with disabilities to participate in results assessments, how are the technical characteristics of the assessments affected? How can the results be interpreted? To what degree can these scores be aggregated with nonadapted assessments? What are the best methods for selecting appropriate accommodations and adaptations? How can testing accommodations be related to instructional accommodations?

(2) Alternative assessments. If alternative assessments (such as performance assessments or portfolio assessments) are provided for students with disabilities, how can these assessments be compared with conventional assessments? What technical criteria can appropriately be applied to these assessments if used with students with disabilities?

(3) Development of assessments. How can general educational assessments be developed to be more inclusive for students with disabilities? How can problematic items and item formats be identified? How can students with disabilities be adequately represented in test development and validation samples? What are the effects if tests developed for general populations are administered to students with disabilities?

(4) Including students with disabilities in general assessments. How should decisions be made and documented to include students with disabilities in general educational assessments or alternative assessments? What factors influence these decisions?

(5) *System development.* How can assessment and accountability systems be developed with the range and flexibility to accommodate diverse student populations? How can accountability and individualization both be maintained?

(6) Basic concepts and principles. How can basic concepts and principles in assessment be revised to reflect new approaches to assessment and new roles and challenges in assessing children with disabilities?

(b) Produce and disseminate information that can be applied in educational programs, as well as in subsequent research.

(c) Coordinate their activities, as appropriate, with the Center to Support the Achievement of World Class Outcomes for Students with Disabilities and with other related projects funded under the Goals 2000: Educate America Act.

The budget for a project must provide for two trips annually to Washington, DC for (1) a two-day Research Project Directors' meeting; and (2) another meeting: to meet and collaborate with the project officer of the Office of Special Education Programs and the other projects funded under this priority, to share information, and to discuss findings and methods of dissemination.

Project Period: Up to 36 months. Supplementary Information: It is estimated that the Secretary will fund projects at a level of \$175,000 for the first year of a project. Multi-year projects are likely to be level funded unless there are increases in costs attributable to significant changes in activity level.

For Applications and General Information Contact: Claudette Carey, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW., room 3525, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202–2641. Telephone: (202) 205– 9864. FAX: (202) 205–8105. Internet: Claudette—Carey@ed.gov

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number: (202) 205–8953.

For Technical Information Contact: For Student-Initiated Research Projects (84.023B): Doris Andres, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW., room 3526, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202–2641. Telephone: (202) 205– 8125. FAX: (202) 205–8105. Internet: Doris—Andres@ed.gov

For Field-Initiated Research Projects (84.023C): Tom V. Hanley, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW., room 3526, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202–2641. Telephone: (202) 205– 8110. FAX: (202) 205–8105. Internet: Tom—Hanley@ed.gov

For Examining Alternatives for Outcome Assessment for Children with Disabilities (84.023F): David Malouf, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW., room 3521, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202–2641. Telephone: (202) 205– 8111. FAX: (202) 205–8105. Internet: Dave—Malouf@ed.gov

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Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1441–1443.

84.025C, D, and U Services for Children with Deaf-Blindness Program

Purpose of Program: To provide Federal assistance to address the special needs of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with deaf-blindness.

Eligible Applicants: Public or nonprofit private agencies, institutions, or organizations, including Indian tribes, the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of Interior (if the Bureau is acting on behalf of schools operated by the Bureau for children and students on Indian reservations), and tribally controlled schools funded by the Department of Interior.