



FOR RELEASE
Oct. 9, 2008

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**NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES TO STUDY HOW TO IMPROVE
DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TITLE III ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ACQUISITION FUNDS**

The U.S. Department of Education announced today that it has awarded a \$754,415 contract to the National Academy of Sciences to study how best to distribute Title III English Language Acquisition state grant funds.

The award follows a 2006 recommendation by the Government Accountability Office that the Education Department examine its method of allotting Title III state grants in order to ensure that the funding goes to areas with the highest concentrations of students with limited English proficiency.

"We expect this study will provide information on the most accurate, equitable way to distribute federal funds to states to ensure that students with limited English proficiency get the help they need to become proficient in English and meet high academic standards," said U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. "We are pleased to be working with the National Academy of Sciences, given their experience in this type of work."

Earlier, the academy conducted a somewhat similar analysis on methods for distributing Title I state grants that serve low-income students.

The contract called for work to begin Sept. 30 with a report due in September 2010. The report will be peer-reviewed and published by the academy, independent of any review or publishing agreement with the Education Department.

Currently, Title III grants to states amount to more than \$700 million. Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) authorizes formula grants to states based on each state's share of the nation's limited English proficient (LEP) and recent immigrant student population.

In particular, the study will examine the relative accuracy of the two allowable sources of data permitted under Title III for allocating funds to states and make recommendations to the department on whether and how current allocation practices should be changed.

Under Title III, the secretary of education is required to allocate Title III funds using the more accurate of two allowable sources of data on the population of limited English students and immigrant children and youth:

- The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) data. Or,
- State-reported data on the number of children who participate in state assessments of English language proficiency under section 1111(b)(7) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The Education Department has been using the ACS data to determine state allocations. The GAO recommendation was contained in its December 2006 report, "No Child Left Behind Act: Education's data improvement efforts could strengthen the basis for distributing Title III funds."

A summary is posted at <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-07-140>.

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