



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 5, 2003

Crawford, Texas

Mr. Askarbek E. Mambetaliev
1 Park Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108-4899

Dear Mr. Mambetaliev:

Thank you for your letter about our Nation's education system. I appreciate hearing your concerns and welcome your suggestions.

Over the last two years, my Administration has taken significant action to transform and improve public education in America. In one of the most comprehensive reforms ever passed, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* ushered in a new era of accountability, flexibility, local control, and more choices for parents. This bill affirmed our basic faith in the wisdom of parents and communities and our fundamental belief in the promise of every child. By raising expectations, insisting on results, and challenging failure, we are working to strengthen our school systems and improve education for every child in America.

Accountability is a key part of this reform. The *No Child Left Behind Act* requires annual testing of students in grades three through eight, and states must ensure that schools are helping all students make adequate progress. Schools struggling to meet high standards will get help, but they will be held accountable for increasing achievement. For the first time, historically high levels of Federal funding will be tied to measurable results.

States and local districts will also have unprecedented flexibility with Federal education dollars. This increased freedom will improve teacher quality, education for English language learners, and other programs critical to improving student performance. States will also receive assistance in implementing proven programs that teach basic skills, particularly reading in the early grades. And parents will have more options and control of their children's education. Parents and the public will be given detailed school-by-school reports on the performance of their local schools. For children in schools needing improvement, parents will have the option of transferring their child to a higher performing public school, or using federal funds for tutoring and other academic services.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

2

Across America, states, schools and school districts are working hard to implement these reforms, and my Administration is committed to supporting them with significant resources. Over the last two years, we have increased funding for elementary and secondary education by 36 percent. My fiscal year 2004 budget proposal for education places a high priority on improving overall student performance and closing the achievement gap between rich and poor students in America. I asked the Congress to help meet these goals by providing \$12.3 billion for the Title I program, which serves our neediest students. This will represent a funding increase of 41 percent since I came into office. I am also seeking to increase funds for important reading initiatives to ensure that every child is able to read by the third grade. For families with children in low-performing public schools, I have proposed a refundable tax credit that will cover up to 50 percent of the first \$5,000 of the cost of books, computers, transportation, supplies, and tuition at a school of their choice.

The difficult but essential work of reform is well under way, and my Administration is determined to continue that effort until every school in America is a place of learning and achievement. We will continue working with the Congress to enact reforms and provide support that will help build the mind and character of every child from every background in every part of America.

Thank you again for writing, and best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George W. Bush". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "B".

George W. Bush