



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20202

March 2007

Dear Colleague:

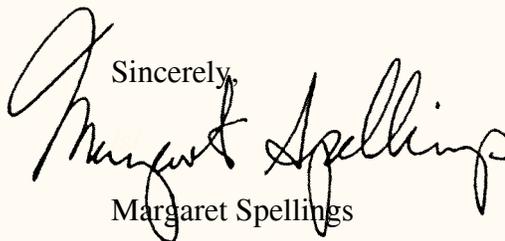
Keeping America competitive is one of our top priorities as a nation. Our success depends on making sure we have an educated citizenry and an educated workforce, and at the Department of Education we are committed to ensuring America's high school graduates are ready for the jobs of the 21st century. As President George W. Bush has said, "Our greatest advantage in the world has always been our educated, hardworking, ambitious people — and we're going to keep that edge."

America's rapidly changing economy requires an education system that ensures that all individuals, including individuals with disabilities, graduate from high school with the skills they need to be successful in postsecondary education and the workforce. The 2004 reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* called for states to set measurable targets for the progress of students with disabilities. Together with the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the *IDEA* is holding schools accountable for making sure students with disabilities achieve to high standards.

Employers know that hiring qualified, loyal employees is the cornerstone of sustained success. We are committed to preparing skilled youths and adults with disabilities to successfully attain and sustain quality employment and become contributing members of their communities.

A successful outcome depends on working closely with employers to understand and meet their recruiting, hiring and retention needs. Toward that end, I am pleased to share with you the latest update of *Disability Employment 101*, originally developed by OSERS and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for a Competitive Workforce, formerly the Center for Workforce Preparation. This popular publication has proven to be a helpful resource for employers who want to stay competitive by hiring the best people.

We look forward to continued partnerships with employers to meet America's goals of gainful employment for all and a leading position in the global marketplace.

Sincerely,

Margaret Spellings

Americans with disabilities are active and contributing members of our society, and they must have the opportunity to develop the skills they need to complete and obtain jobs in the 21st-century workforce. By reducing physical barriers and false perceptions, our country meets our commitment to millions of Americans with disabilities, and benefits from their talents, creativity and hard work.

President George W. Bush

October 2004

National Disability Employment Awareness Month Announcement Proclamation

Washington, D.C.

