

Arne Duncan Announces New Waiver Conditions **Reliving childhood joys, EdSec insists all schools install tetherball poles**

States hoping to receive waivers from the most onerous provisions of the No Child Left Behind law are now facing an additional hurdle. Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced Friday that states must have “clear and immediate” plans to require that all primary and secondary schools have at least four functional tetherball poles available for their students.

“It wasn’t so long ago that American schools towered over our international competitors. We were proud. We didn’t look longingly to Korea or Finland,” Duncan said wistfully, thinking back to his own childhood. “Tetherball might not have been the only reason for our greatness, but states can no longer hide from the clear and compelling evidence that this educational activity played an

indispensable role.”

According to Department sources, tetherball is the first of several conditions that will be announced in the upcoming weeks. “He’s become power mad,” one high-ranking official told us. “He’s now considering requiring that school cafeterias serve ‘that chocolate milk with the adorable cow on the container.’”

Another official related how Duncan would “get this faraway look in his eye and start talking about filmstrips and film projectors, how after the filmstrip they’d all chant for the teacher to run it backwards, and how the teachers almost always would.” She suggested that proactive states start purchasing projectors on eBay.

Super Committee Settles on Tax Hikes for Third Graders

Children attending third grade in America’s public schools will bear the brunt of a compromise plan ironed out by the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, referred to as the super committee. Over the next decade, the eight-year-olds will each be asked to pay a one-time tax of \$50,000 upon their enrollment in the fall.

Sources close to the negotiations described how the committee members were divided along party lines, with Democrats wanting to tax seventh graders and Republicans wanting to tax second graders. Likewise, Democrats wanted to tax all students, including those enrolled in private and parochial school, while Republicans wanted to tax only public school students – as reflected in the final agreement.

“We won on the second-grade issue,” declared an obviously pleased Senator Patty Murray of Washington. But Republican leaders expressed concern that the move from second-graders to third-graders would be unacceptable to many members of their caucus.

After months of give and take, the congressional negotiators decided that tax on schoolchildren made more sense than taxing the wealthy. “There are over four million third graders, but there are only three million people in the top one percent,” explained Senator Patrick J. Toomey of Pennsylvania.

Many of the specific final terms of the legislation have yet to be ironed out. But one key element will be a federal guarantee given to financial institutions willing to make the risky loans that will be necessary for the nation’s lower-income third graders.

Representative Fred Upton of Michigan pointed out that third graders are an untapped resource, rarely contributing directly to the economy. “My experience has been that these youth squander their energies on unproductive activities. Our proposal makes reasonable demands, constituting only a small portion of the overall personal indebtedness they will have incurred by their early thirties.”