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**Series:** Speech File Draft Files  
**Subseries:** Chron File, 1989-1993

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**OA/ID Number:** 13480  
**Folder ID Number:** 13480-013

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**Folder Title:**  
Junior and Community Colleges 3/30/89

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Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

March 28, 1989

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: MARK DAVIS  
Speechwriter

SUBJECT: Speech before the American Association of Junior and  
Community Colleges, March 30.

This draft begins by thanking them for recognizing the First Lady's efforts in fighting illiteracy. It frames the standards of American education today as a threat to our competitive position. And it concludes by identifying business/community college partnerships as part of the solution.

\*\*\* Despite the title of their organization, these institutions no longer wish to be called "junior colleges."

Davis/Blessey  
March 28, 1989  
6 p.m.  
Draft 3  
Title: Junior

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: AMER. ASSOC. OF COMMUNITY & JR. COLLEGES  
WASHINGTON HILTON  
MARCH 30, 1989/ 1:40 p.m.

Thank you. Dale (Parnell), Jim (Brady), Governors Martin and Campbell.

((Bar, I am delighted that this distinguished group has recognized your efforts to promote literacy . . . And to think, all this time I thought she was cheating at Scrabble . . .))

((As you know, Barbara has taken the lead in promoting literacy for eight years now, traveling to schools across America. One day she came back from Boston and told me that she saw a gentleman sitting in the corner of a school room, surrounded by children who were enraptured by his story-telling and good-natured kidding. Every now and then, this man would ask a child to spell a word by tracing the letters in the palm of his hand, and he would tell them whether they got it right or not. Barbara thought this was strange, and wondered if this was some new kind of teaching technique. "No," the superintendent told her, "he has to teach this way. You see, he's blind."))

Think of it. This man was retired. He could have found a thousand excuses to retreat into his own world of darkness. And yet he ventured out into the light, to teach children to read books that he would never again see. It is moments like these that make Bar's effort against illiteracy so rewarding.))

You have bestowed on her an honor that will be treasured by Barbara and the whole Bush family for years to come. Still, Bar and I can't get over the feeling that we should be giving you an award. After all, you provide adult basic education on a scale that is nothing short of heroic.

Benjamin Franklin was once asked what was the most pitiful thing that could befall a human being. After a moment's reflection, he replied: "A lonesome man on a rainy day who does not know how to read." The costs of illiteracy can be calculated in labor lost, and education dollars wasted. But we cannot calculate the loss of human happiness caused by illiteracy -- all the men and women across this country who will never hear the narrative voice of Dickens, Twain, or for that matter Larry McMurtry; who will never know that a book can be a true friend in the still hours of the night.

Barbara and I are deeply moved by the plight of those who lack the skills most of us take for granted. Rest assured, we will continue to work with you to promote literacy skills . . .

This nation grew into greatness because early Americans met the challenge of building an educational system second to none. With the dawn of a new century only eleven years away, we are faced with a new challenge -- to revitalize and restore that system our forebears bequeathed to us; to ensure that an American education is once again the best in the world. In this crusade, we can look to leadership from an American innovation in education -- our nation's community colleges, more than a thousand strong.

You best represent the American philosophy of education, for all, for life. Americans believe that education is not a phase to be successfully completed. We believe that education is a lifelong endeavor. What scholars call the "life of the mind" is as essential to the complete man or woman as water and air.

In fact, whole communities are enriched and enlightened by the cultural resources you provide, from vast libraries, to night schools, to stages for local theatrical productions. This attitude toward education -- as something more than a requirement of an industrial society, as an embellishment of life -- is uniquely American.

Community colleges provide ten million Americans with educational choice. A wide range of students benefit from your institutions: from those in high school who are looking for advanced courses; to low-income students who need a stepping stone to a four-year program; to those who seek a 2-year degree; to mature students who are returning to school to round out their education. This is what we need more of up and down the line -- choice.

Secondary and even elementary schools can learn a lot from the way in which you tap local talent, drawing on the knowledge of experts from the private sector. When I lived in Odessa, Texas, I wanted to share my knowledge as a teacher in the local public school system. But I didn't have a teaching certificate, and I was rejected. That seemed wrong to me then, and it seems wrong to me now. We should open our classroom to every qualified person with the talent, the knowledge and the desire to teach -- ((just as the Boston school did for that blind gentleman.)) With this in mind, I have proposed extending this same practice, often called Alternative Teacher Certification, right down to the first grade.

Accountability is the key to your success. State and private universities, which accept your students, count on you to instill a precise curriculum. The businesses of your city count

on you to match skills to the demands of the job market. And most of all, students count on you to provide a ladder of opportunity.

Opportunity is our most basic shared principle. Everyone should have a high school education; especially those with high school degrees. We share the conviction that there is no such thing as an expendable student. We will never accept the notion that vast numbers of illiterate and undereducated Americans can be offset by a well-educated elite. That's not the American way.

For years, rescuing underachieving students has been a quest of the heart. Today, it is also a test of national will, a test critical to the very future of America. This may sound like an overstatement. America, after all, is still a world leader when it comes to producing Nobel Prize winners in physics, economics and literature. But what is the advantage for a nation with Nobel Prize-winning novelists, if their books are largely unread in their own country? What is the advantage for a nation that can invent the computer chip, if it doesn't have a skilled work force that can use computers?

I am committed to increased investment in basic research. But America can continue to lead the world in theoretical science, and still lose the race in the application of knowledge. H.G. Wells wrote that "human history becomes more and more a race

between education and catastrophe." Catastrophe may not be around the corner, but what had a ring of truth in the 1920s, sounds ominously true in the 1980s, with our highly competitive international market. Let me share a few stark facts with you.

In Japan, levels of functional literacy and student achievement are extremely high, while the Japanese drop-out rate remains very low. In America, however, functional literacy is around 80 percent. The national drop-out rate is 28 percent. And of those Americans who do graduate from high school and don't graduate from college, as many as 27 percent cannot read or write at the intermediate level. As many Americans become less educated, the standards of the work place are becoming ever more rigorous.

In the past, business could simply ignore the unlettered few. But the balmy days of the baby boom are passing us by. Between now and the year 2000, we will face a "baby bust," or a shrinkage of the labor pool. According to Business Week, we will have to train or retrain as many as 50 million workers in the next dozen years alone. Think of it -- 50 million!

There is more opportunity today than ever before -- but only for those who are prepared to take advantage of it. For those workers who lack skills and basic education today, a comfortable middle-class existence will be harder and harder to come by.

When some high school graduates can't find jobs in a market begging for workers, then we've got a serious social imbalance, an education gap. Let's bridge that gap. Let's bridge it as fast as possible.

Community colleges provide such a bridge to higher education, a ready resource for vocational training and adult remedial education. You provide access for older citizens, women, minorities, and the handicapped -- precisely the very people who are being summoned to alleviate the coming labor shortage. Your programs spell opportunity for the most disadvantaged members of the work force. But they also spell opportunity for business. The disadvantaged and business are coming together in hundreds of programs from Colorado, to Kansas, to Kentucky, called employer-college partnerships. This friendly merger of business and academia is a sweeping force for social improvement.

Let me conclude by paraphrasing a few words of advice, offered at the turn-of-the century, but so appropriate for our modern quest for excellence in education:

"Make no little plans: they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably in themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble (idea)

once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing."

These are the words of Daniel Burnham, who was the architect of such a big plan -- Washington's Union Station, which stands out as a visual delight in a city already crowded with great monuments and statuary. Burnham's legacy is a truly living monument, with its vaulted ceilings and gilded geometry above bustling crowds of shoppers and commuters. But it would be nothing but a wreck, an eyesore, if it had not been lovingly restored. As important as it is to reclaim our civic capital of burnished brass and polished marble, how much more important it is to reclaim our human capital.

Think, then, of our educational system in this way, as a vast and beautiful inheritance, which must be lovingly restored; not once, but every generation. In this effort, make no little plans. Think big. Aim high in hope and work. Continue to work together, as a community, to help your students, to lift their vision and lengthen their horizon.

For this, and all you do, you are earning the gratitude of a nation. Thank you, and God Bless America.

# # #

**REMARKS: AMER. ASSOC. OF COMMUNITY & JR. COLLEGES**

**WASHINGTON HILTON**

**MARCH 30, 1989/ 1:45 P.M.**

**THANK YOU. DALE (PARNELL), JIM (BRADY), GOVERNORS  
MARTIN AND CAMPBELL, JESS PARRISH. JIM TATUM, GOOD TO  
SEE YOU AGAIN.**

**- 2 -**

**((BAR, I AM DELIGHTED THAT THIS DISTINGUISHED GROUP  
HAS RECOGNIZED YOUR EFFORTS TO PROMOTE LITERACY . . .  
AND TO THINK, ALL THIS TIME I THOUGHT SHE WAS CHEATING  
AT SCRABBLE . . .))**

**((AS YOU KNOW, BARBARA HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN  
PROMOTING LITERACY FOR MORE THAN EIGHT YEARS NOW,  
TRAVELING TO SCHOOLS ACROSS AMERICA.**

- 3 -

ONE DAY SHE CAME BACK FROM BOSTON AND TOLD ME THAT SHE SAW A GENTLEMAN SITTING IN THE CORNER OF A SCHOOL ROOM, SURROUNDED BY CHILDREN WHO WERE ENRAPPED BY HIS STORY-TELLING AND GOOD-NATURED KIDDING. EVERY NOW AND THEN, THIS MAN WOULD ASK A CHILD TO SPELL A WORD BY TRACING THE LETTERS IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND, AND HE WOULD TELL THEM WHETHER THEY GOT IT RIGHT OR NOT.

- 4 -

BARBARA THOUGHT THIS WAS STRANGE, AND WONDERED IF THIS WAS SOME NEW KIND OF TEACHING TECHNIQUE. "NO," THE SUPERINTENDENT TOLD HER, "HE HAS TO TEACH THIS WAY. YOU SEE, HE'S BLIND."

THINK OF IT. THIS MAN WAS RETIRED. HE COULD HAVE FOUND A THOUSAND EXCUSES TO RETREAT INTO HIS OWN WORLD OF DARKNESS.

- 5 -

AND YET HE VENTURED OUT INTO THE LIGHT, TO TEACH CHILDREN TO READ BOOKS THAT HE WOULD NEVER AGAIN SEE. IT IS MOMENTS LIKE THESE THAT MAKE BARBARA'S EFFORT ON BEHALF OF LITERACY SO REWARDING.))

WE ARE DEEPLY MOVED BY THE PLIGHT OF THOSE WHO LACK THE SKILLS MOST OF US TAKE FOR GRANTED.

- 6 -

REST ASSURED, WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH YOU TO PROMOTE LITERACY SKILLS . . .

YOU HAVE BESTOWED ON HER AN HONOR THAT WILL BE TREASURED BY ALL IN OUR FAMILY FOR YEARS TO COME. STILL, BARBARA AND I CAN'T GET OVER THE FEELING THAT WE SHOULD BE GIVING YOU AN AWARD.

- 7 -

**AFTER ALL, YOU PROVIDE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION ON A SCALE THAT IS NOTHING SHORT OF HEROIC.**

**THIS NATION GREW INTO GREATNESS BECAUSE EARLY AMERICANS MET THE CHALLENGE OF BUILDING AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM SECOND TO NONE.**

- 8 -

**WITH THE DAWN OF A NEW CENTURY ONLY ELEVEN YEARS AWAY, WE ARE FACED WITH A NEW CHALLENGE -- TO REVITALIZE AND RESTORE THAT SYSTEM OUR FOREBEARS BEQUEATHED TO US; TO ENSURE THAT AN AMERICAN EDUCATION IS ONCE AGAIN THE BEST IN THE WORLD.**

- 9 -

**IN THIS CRUSADE, WE CAN LOOK TO LEADERSHIP FROM AN AMERICAN INNOVATION IN EDUCATION -- OUR NATION'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES, MORE THAN A THOUSAND STRONG.**

**WHOLE COMMUNITIES ARE ENRICHED AND ENLIGHTENED BY THE CULTURAL RESOURCES YOU PROVIDE, FROM VAST LIBRARIES, TO NIGHT SCHOOLS, TO STAGES FOR LOCAL THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS.**

- 10 -

**THIS ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATION -- AS SOMETHING MORE THAN A REQUIREMENT OF AN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY, AS AN EMBELLISHMENT OF LIFE -- IS UNIQUELY AMERICAN.**

**I BELIEVE SECONDARY AND EVEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS CAN LEARN A LOT FROM YOUR SUCCESS, STARTING WITH YOUR POLICY OF FLEXIBILITY.**

- 11 -

BY THIS I MEAN THE WAY IN WHICH YOU TAP LOCAL TALENT AND DRAW ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF EXPERTS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR. WHEN A PH.D. ON SABBATICAL CANNOT VOLUNTEER AS A TEACHER IN MANY SCHOOL DISTRICTS, SOMETHING IS VERY WRONG.

- 12 -

THAT IS WHY I HAVE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION, TO OPEN CLASSROOMS TO EVERY QUALIFIED PERSON WITH THE TALENT, THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE DESIRE TO TEACH.

WE MUST ALL PITCH IN TO RESTORE OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. BUSINESS MUST GET INVOLVED AND WORK WITH OUR SCHOOLS, TO ENSURE AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS.

- 13 -

**STUDENTS MUST UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF A SOLID EDUCATION AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN TODAY'S JOB MARKET. AND EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS MUST FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE SET BY COMMUNITY COLLEGES, WHICH ARE DIRECTLY ACCOUNTABLE TO THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS, COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES. THIS PRINCIPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY SHOULD BE UNIVERSALLY APPLIED TO ALL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.**

- 14 -

**YOU ALSO SERVE A PARTICULAR NEED WITH THE DISADVANTAGED AND THE DISABLED -- PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY AND CHOICE FOR OLDER CITIZENS, WOMEN, MINORITIES, AND THE HANDICAPPED.**

**BUT EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION IS OUR MOST BASIC SHARED PRINCIPLE. WE SHARE THE CONVICTION THAT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN EDUCATIONAL DEFICIT.**

WE WILL NEVER ACCEPT THE NOTION THAT VAST NUMBERS OF ILLITERATE AND UNDEREDUCATED AMERICANS CAN BE OFFSET BY A WELL-EDUCATED ELITE. THAT'S NOT THE AMERICAN WAY.

FOR YEARS, RESCUING UNDERACHIEVING STUDENTS HAS BEEN A QUEST OF THE HEART. TODAY, IT IS ALSO A TEST OF NATIONAL WILL, A TEST CRITICAL TO THE VERY FUTURE OF AMERICA. THIS MAY SOUND LIKE AN OVERSTATEMENT.

AMERICA, AFTER ALL, IS STILL A WORLD LEADER WHEN IT COMES TO PRODUCING NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS IN PHYSICS, ECONOMICS AND LITERATURE. BUT WHAT IS THE ADVANTAGE FOR A NATION WITH NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING NOVELISTS, IF THEIR BOOKS CANNOT BE READ BY 27 MILLION FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATES IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY?

- 17 -

**I AM COMMITTED TO INCREASED INVESTMENT IN BASIC RESEARCH. BUT AMERICA CAN CONTINUE TO LEAD THE WORLD IN THEORETICAL SCIENCE, AND STILL LOSE THE RACE IN THE APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE. H.G. WELLS WROTE THAT "HUMAN HISTORY BECOMES MORE AND MORE A RACE BETWEEN EDUCATION AND CATASTROPHE."**

- 18 -

**CATASTROPHE MAY NOT BE AROUND THE CORNER, BUT WHAT HAD A RING OF TRUTH IN THE 1920s, SOUNDS OMINOUSLY TRUE IN THE 1980s, WITH OUR HIGHLY COMPETITIVE INTERNATIONAL MARKET. LET ME SHARE A FEW STARK FACTS WITH YOU.**

**IN JAPAN, LEVELS OF FUNCTIONAL LITERACY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT ARE EXTREMELY HIGH, WHILE THE JAPANESE DROP-OUT RATE REMAINS VERY LOW.**

- 19 -

IN AMERICA, HOWEVER, FUNCTIONAL LITERACY IS MUCH LOWER. ABOUT ONE IN FIVE AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS DROP OUT. AND OF THOSE AMERICANS WHO DO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL, ALMOST ONE IN FIVE CANNOT READ OR WRITE AT THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL.

- 20 -

WHILE MANY AMERICANS BECOME LESS EDUCATED, THE STANDARDS OF THE WORK PLACE ARE BECOMING EVER MORE RIGOROUS. AND THE BALMY DAYS OF THE BABY BOOM ARE PASSING US BY.

- 21 -

BETWEEN NOW AND THE YEAR 2000, WE WILL FACE A "BABY BUST," A SHRINKAGE OF THE LABOR POOL. ACCORDING TO BUSINESS WEEK, WE WILL HAVE TO TRAIN OR RETRAIN AS MANY AS 50 MILLION WORKERS IN THE NEXT DOZEN YEARS ALONE. THINK OF IT -- 50 MILLION!

- 22 -

THERE IS MORE OPPORTUNITY TODAY THAN EVER BEFORE -- BUT ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ARE PREPARED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT. FOR THOSE WORKERS WHO LACK SKILLS AND BASIC EDUCATION TODAY, A COMFORTABLE MIDDLE-CLASS EXISTENCE WILL BE HARDER AND HARDER TO COME BY.

- 23 -

WHEN SOME HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES CAN'T FIND JOBS IN A MARKET BEGGING FOR WORKERS, THEN WE'VE GOT A SERIOUS SOCIAL IMBALANCE, AN EDUCATION GAP. LET'S BRIDGE THAT GAP. LET'S BRIDGE IT AS FAST AS POSSIBLE.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES PROVIDE SUCH A BRIDGE TO HIGHER EDUCATION, A READY RESOURCE FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND ADULT REMEDIAL EDUCATION.

- 24 -

YOU PROVIDE ACCESS FOR PRECISELY THE VERY PEOPLE WHO ARE BEING SUMMONED TO ALLEVIATE THE COMING LABOR SHORTAGE. YOUR PROGRAMS SPELL OPPORTUNITY FOR THE MOST DISADVANTAGED MEMBERS OF THE WORK FORCE. BUT THEY ALSO SPELL OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESS.

- 25 -

**THE DISADVANTAGED AND BUSINESS ARE COMING TOGETHER IN HUNDREDS OF PROGRAMS FROM COLORADO, TO KANSAS, TO KENTUCKY, CALLED EMPLOYER-COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS. THIS FRIENDLY MERGER OF BUSINESS AND ACADEMIA IS A SWEEPING FORCE FOR SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT. EVERYONE MUST WORK TOGETHER IF AMERICA IS TO REMAIN PROSPEROUS AND COMPETITIVE IN THE YEARS AHEAD.**

- 26 -

**LET ME CONCLUDE BY PARAPHRASING A FEW WORDS OF ADVICE, OFFERED AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, BUT SO APPROPRIATE FOR OUR MODERN QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION:**

**"MAKE NO LITTLE PLANS: THEY HAVE NO MAGIC TO STIR MEN'S BLOOD AND PROBABLY IN THEMSELVES WILL NOT BE REALIZED.**

**MAKE BIG PLANS; AIM HIGH IN HOPE AND WORK, REMEMBERING THAT A NOBLE (IDEA) ONCE RECORDED WILL NEVER DIE, BUT LONG AFTER WE ARE GONE WILL BE A LIVING THING."**

**THESE ARE THE WORDS OF DANIEL BURNHAM, WHO WAS THE ARCHITECT OF SUCH A BIG PLAN -- WASHINGTON'S UNION STATION, WHICH STANDS OUT AS A VISUAL DELIGHT IN A CITY ALREADY CROWDED WITH GREAT MONUMENTS AND STATUARY.**

**BURNHAM'S LEGACY IS A TRULY LIVING MONUMENT, WITH ITS VAULTED CEILINGS AND GILDED GEOMETRY ABOVE BUSTLING CROWDS OF SHOPPERS AND COMMUTERS. BUT IT WOULD BE NOTHING BUT A WRECK, AN EYESORE, IF IT HAD NOT BEEN LOVINGLY RESTORED.**

**AS IMPORTANT AS IT IS TO RECLAIM OUR CIVIC CAPITAL OF  
BURNISHED BRASS AND POLISHED MARBLE, HOW MUCH MORE  
IMPORTANT IT IS TO RECLAIM OUR HUMAN CAPITAL.**

**THINK, THEN, OF OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THIS WAY,  
AS A VAST AND BEAUTIFUL INHERITANCE, WHICH MUST BE  
LOVINGLY RESTORED; NOT ONCE, BUT EVERY GENERATION. IN  
THIS EFFORT, MAKE NO LITTLE PLANS.**

**THINK BIG. AIM HIGH IN HOPE AND WORK. CONTINUE TO  
WORK TOGETHER, AS A COMMUNITY, TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS,  
TO LIFT THEIR VISION AND LENGTHEN THEIR HORIZON.**

**FOR THIS, AND ALL YOU DO, YOU ARE EARNING THE  
GRATITUDE OF A NATION. THANK YOU, GOD BLESS YOU, AND  
GOD BLESS AMERICA.**

**# # #**

**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES  
SPEECH INSERT**

**BEFORE I BEGIN, I KNOW THAT YOU, LIKE MOST AMERICANS, ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE MASSIVE OIL SPILL OFF THE COAST OF ALASKA. THERE IS NO DOUBT THIS IS A MAJOR TRAGEDY, BOTH FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND FOR THE PEOPLE OF ALASKA.**

**- 2 -**

**THIS MORNING I MET WITH EPA ADMINISTRATOR WILLIAM REILLY, TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY SAMUEL SKINNER, AND COAST GUARD COMMANDANT ADMIRAL PAUL YOST. THEY HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM SURVEYING THE DAMAGE AND ASSESSING THE PROGRESS OF CLEAN-UP EFFORTS. WE ARE DOING ALL WE CAN AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL TO SPEED UP THIS UNDERTAKING. I HAVE DIRECTED THAT DOT, EPA, AND THE COAST GUARD CONTINUE TO GIVE THIS MATTER TOP PRIORITY.**

*\*  
names  
reversed  
to:  
Skinner  
Reilly*

- 3 -

**I HAVE ALSO DIRECTED BILL REILLY TO REPORT BACK TO ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE REGARDING THE SEVERITY OF DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT, PARTICULARLY TO MARINE LIFE AND THE ALASKAN COASTLINE. THE CLEAN-UP FROM THIS DISASTER WILL NOT BE EASY. BUT, AS WITH OTHER SERIOUS DISASTERS, WE MUST AND WILL WORK TOGETHER AT ALL LEVELS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, TO REMEDY THE DAMAGE THAT HAS BEEN DONE.**

**# # #**

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 30, 1989

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

The Washington Hilton Hotel  
Washington, D.C.

1:42 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: To Dale Pernell and Jeff Parish, others, thank you for that warm reception for Barbara and for me. And I'm just delighted to be here. I understand we do have two governors here -- Jim Martin, whom I saw over here, and somebody told me Carole Campbell was here, and I want to pay my respects to them -- both leaders in the field of education.

Before making my remarks, I do want to make a comment on a subject that is of concern to all Americans today. I know that you, like most Americans, are concerned about this massive oil spill off the coast of Alaska. And there's no doubt this is a major tragedy, both for the environment and for the people up there.

This morning I met with the Secretary of Transportation, Sam Skinner; with our new able EPA Administrator, Bill Reilly; with our Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Yost. And they've just returned from surveying the damage and assessing the progress of the cleanup effort. And we're doing all we can at the federal level to speed up this undertaking. I've directed the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency and the Coast Guard to continue to give this matter top priority. I've directed Bill Reilly to report back to me as soon as possible regarding the severity of damage to the environment, particularly to marine life and the Alaskan coastline, with suggestions as to what we might do to ameliorate the situation. The cleanup will not be easy. It's in remote areas and it's very complicated. But as with other serious disasters, we must and we will work together at all levels, public and private to remedy the damage that has been done, and then to safeguard the precious environment for the future.

But I wanted you to know that we did have a good meeting. The report was not all negative, but there -- let's be frank, there's some very serious problems up there right now. But I'm confident with this able team and with the work of the Alaskan citizens there who are concerned, that we can do our very best to see that the damage is restricted.

Now, on to the business at hand. I am delighted, Barbara, that this distinguished group has recognized your efforts. Or put it in the third person -- I'm grateful to all of you that have recognized her efforts to promote literacy. And to think, all this

eight years now, traveling to the schools across this country. And one day she came back from Boston and told me that she'd seen a gentleman sitting in a chair in the corner of a schoolroom surrounded by children who were enraptured by his storytelling and his good-natured kidding. Every now and then, this man would ask a child to spell a word by tracing the letters in the palm of his hand and he would tell them whether they got it right or not. Barbara thought that this is strange -- wondered if this was some new kind of teaching technique that you may have designed. And, no, the superintendant told her, "He has to teach this way. You see, he's blind."

Think of it. He's retired. He could have found a thousand excuses to retreat into his own world of darkness. And yet, he ventured out into the light to teach children to read books that he would never again see. And it's moments like these that make her efforts on behalf of literacy so very rewarding. (Applause.)

We are deeply moved by the plight of those who lack the skills that most of us just simply take for granted. And rest assured, we're going to continue to work with you -- those of you out there on the cutting edge -- to promote literacy skills. You've bestowed on Barbara an honor that will be treasured by all in our family for years to come. And still, she and I can't get over the feeling that we should be giving you, the people in this room, an award. After all, you provide adult basic education on a scale that is nothing short of heroic.

This nation grew into greatness because early Americans met the challenge of building an educational system second to none. And with the dawn of a new century only 11 years away, we're faced with a new challenge -- to revitalize and restore that system that our forebears bequeathed to us; to ensure that an American education is once again the best, the very best in the world. In this important mission, we can look to leadership from an American innovation in education -- our nation's community colleges, more than a thousand strong.

Whole communities are enriched and enlightened by the cultural resources you provide; vast libraries, and night schools, and stages for local theatrical productions. And on and on it goes. This attitude toward education as something more than a requirement of an industrial society, as an embellishment of life, rather -- is uniquely American.

I believe secondary and even elementary schools can learn a lot from your success, starting with your policy of flexibility. And by this I mean the way in which you tap local talent and draw on the knowledge of experts from the private sector. When a Ph.D. on sabbatical cannot volunteer as a teacher in many of our schools, something's wrong. And that's why I've have proposed Alternative Teacher Certification, to open classrooms to every qualified person with the talent, and the knowledge, and mainly the desire to help the kids, to teach.

principle. We share the conviction that there is no such thing as an expendable student. We will never accept the notion that vast numbers of illiterate and undereducated Americans can be offset by a well-educated elite. That is not the American way. (Applause.)

For years, rescuing underachieving students has been a quest of the heart. And today, it's also a test of our national will, a test critical to the very future of America. This may sound like an overstatement. America, after all, is still a world leader when it comes to producing Nobel Prize winners in physics, in economics and literature. But what's the advantage for a nation with Nobel Prize-winning novelists, if their books cannot be read by 27 million functional illiterates in their own country? (Applause.)

I am committed to increased investment in basic research. But America can continue to lead the world in theoretical science and still lose the race in the application of knowledge. H.G. Wells wrote that "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." Catastrophe may not be around the corner, but what had a ring of truth in the 1920s sounds ominously true in the 1980s, with our highly competitive international market. Let me share a few stark facts with you.

In Japan, levels of functional literacy and student achievement are extremely high, while the Japanese drop-out rate remains very low. In America, however, functional literacy is much lower. About one in five American high school students drop out. And of those Americans who do graduate from high school, almost one in five cannot read or write at the intermediate level.

While many Americans become less educated, the standards of the workplace are becoming ever more rigorous. And the balmy days of the Baby Boom are passing us by. Between now and the year 2000, we're going to face a "baby bust," a shrinkage of the basic labor pool for this country. According to Business Week, we will have to train or retrain as many as 50 million workers in the next dozen years alone. Think of it -- 50 million.

There is more opportunity today than ever before -- but only for those who are prepared to take advantage of it. For those workers who lack skills and basic education today, a comfortable middle-class existence will be harder and harder to come by. And when some high school grads can't find jobs in a market begging for workers, then we've got a serious social imbalance, we have an education gap. Let's bridge that gap. Let's bridge it as fast as we possibly can. (Applause.)

You're doing it. Community colleges provide such a bridge to higher education, a ready resource for vocational training and adult remedial education. You provide access for precisely the very people who are being summoned to alleviate the coming labor shortage. Some of your programs spell opportunity for the most disadvantaged members of the work force. But they also spell opportunity for business at the same time. The disadvantaged and business are coming together in hundreds of programs -- from Colorado to Kansas, to Kentucky -- called employer-college partnerships. And

These are the words of Daniel Burnham, who was the architect of such a big plan -- Washington's Union Station, which stands out as a visual delight in a city already crowded with great monuments and statuary. Burnham's legacy is a truly living monument, with its vaulted ceilings and its gilded geometry above bustling crowds of shoppers and commuters. But it would be nothing but a wreck, an eyesore, if it had not been lovingly restored. As important as it is to reclaim our civic capital of burnished brass and polished marble, how much more important it is to reclaim our human capital.

Think, then, of our educational system in this way -- as a vast and beautiful inheritance, which must be lovingly restored; not once, but every generation. And in this effort, make no little plans. Think big. Aim high in hope and work. Continue to work together as a community, to help your students, to lift their vision and lengthen their horizon.

For this, and all you are doing, and for those that walked across this platform, a hardy thanks for all you have done. For this, for all you do and for what you have done, you have earned and you are earning the gratitude of a nation.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America. Thank you all very, very much. (Applause.)

END

1:58 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 30, 1989

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

The Washington Hilton Hotel  
Washington, D.C.

1:42 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: To Dale Pernell and Jeff Parish, others, thank you for that warm reception for Barbara and for me. And I'm just delighted to be here. I understand we do have two governors here -- Jim Martin, whom I saw over here, and somebody told me Carol Campbell was here, and I want to pay my respects to them -- both leaders in the field of education.

Before making my remarks, I do want to make a comment on a subject that is of concern to all American today. I know that you, like most Americans, are concerned about this massive oil spill off the coast of Alaska. And there's no doubt this is a major tragedy, both for the environment and for the people up there.

This morning I met with the Secretary of Transportation, Sam Skinner; with our new able EPA Administrator, Bill Reilly; with our Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Yost. And they've just returned from surveying the damage and assessing the progress of the cleanup effort. And we're doing all we can at the federal level to speed up this undertaking. I've directed the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency and the Coast Guard to continue to give this matter top priority. I've directed Bill Reilly to report back to me as soon as possible regarding the severity of damage to the environment, particularly to marine life and the Alaskan coastline, with suggestions as to what we might do to ameliorate the situation. The cleanup will not be easy. It's in remote areas and it's very complicated. But as with other serious disasters, we must and we will work together at all levels, public and private to remedy the damage that has been done, and then to safeguard the precious environment for the future.

But I wanted you to know that we did have a good meeting. The report was not all negative, but there -- let's be frank, there's some very serious problems up there right now. But I'm confident with this able team and with the work of the Alaskan citizens there who are concerned, that we can do our very best to see that the damage is restricted.

Now, on to the business at hand. I am delighted, Barbara, that this distinguished group has recognized your efforts. Or put it in the third person -- I'm grateful to all of you that have recognized her efforts to promote literacy. And to think, all this

KG  
DAVIS

eight years now, traveling to the schools across this country. And one day she came back from Boston and told me that she'd seen a gentleman sitting in a chair in the corner of a schoolroom surrounded by children who were enraptured by his storytelling and his good-natured kidding. Every now and then, this man would ask a child to spell a word by tracing the letters in the palm of his hand and he would tell them whether they got it right or not. Barbara thought that this is strange -- wondered if this was some new kind of teaching technique that you may have designed. And, no, the superintendent told her, "He has to teach this way. You see, he's blind."

Think of it. He's retired. He could have found a thousand excuses to retreat into his own world of darkness. And yet, he ventured out into the light to teach children to read books that he would never again see. And it's moments like these that make her efforts on behalf of literacy so very rewarding. (Applause.)

We are deeply moved by the plight of those who lack the skills that most of us just simply take for granted. And rest assured, we're going to continue to work with you -- those of you out there on the cutting edge -- to promote literacy skills. You've bestowed on Barbara an honor that will be treasured by all in our family for years to come. And still, she and I can't get over the feeling that we should be giving you, the people in this room, an award. After all, you provide adult basic education on a scale that is nothing short of heroic.

This nation grew into greatness because early Americans met the challenge of building an educational system second to none. And with the dawn of a new century only 11 years away, we're faced with a new challenge -- to revitalize and restore that system that our forebears bequeathed to us; to ensure that an American education is once again the best, the very best in the world. In this important mission, we can look to leadership from an American innovation in education -- our nation's community colleges, more than a thousand strong.

Whole communities are enriched and enlightened by the cultural resources you provide; vast libraries, and night schools, and stages for local theatrical productions. And on and on it goes. This attitude toward education as something more than a requirement of an industrial society, as an embellishment of life, rather -- is uniquely American.

I believe secondary and even elementary schools can learn a lot from your success, starting with your policy of flexibility. And by this I mean the way in which you tap local talent and draw on the knowledge of experts from the private sector. When a Ph.D. on sabbatical cannot volunteer as a teacher in many of our schools, something's wrong. And that's why I've have proposed Alternative Teacher Certification, to open classrooms to every qualified person with the talent, and the knowledge, and mainly the desire to help the kids, to teach.

principle. We share the conviction that there is no such thing as an expendable student. We will never accept the notion that vast numbers of illiterate and undereducated Americans can be offset by a well-educated elite. That is not the American way. (Applause.)

For years, rescuing underachieving students has been a quest of the heart. And today, it's also a test of our national will, a test critical to the very future of America. This may sound like an overstatement. America, after all, is still a world leader when it comes to producing Nobel Prize winners in physics, in economics and literature. But what's the advantage for a nation with Nobel Prize-winning novelists, if their books cannot be read by 27 million functional illiterates in their own country? (Applause.)

I am committed to increased investment in basic research. But America can continue to lead the world in theoretical science and still lose the race in the application of knowledge. H.G. Wells wrote that "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." Catastrophe may not be around the corner, but what had a ring of truth in the 1920s sounds ominously true in the 1980s, with our highly competitive international market. Let me share a few stark facts with you.

In Japan, levels of functional literacy and student achievement are extremely high, while the Japanese drop-out rate remains very low. In America, however, functional literacy is much lower. About one in five American high school students drop out. And of those Americans who do graduate from high school, almost one in five cannot read or write at the intermediate level.

While many Americans become less educated, the standards of the workplace are becoming ever more rigorous. And the balmy days of the Baby Boom are passing us by. Between now and the year 2000, we're going to face a "baby bust," a shrinkage of the basic labor pool for this country. According to Business Week, we will have to train or retrain as many as 50 million workers in the next dozen years alone. Think of it -- 50 million.

There is more opportunity today than ever before -- but only for those who are prepared to take advantage of it. For those workers who lack skills and basic education today, a comfortable middle-class existence will be harder and harder to come by. And when some high school grads can't find jobs in a market begging for workers, then we've got a serious social imbalance, we have an education gap. Let's bridge that gap. Let's bridge it as fast as we possibly can. (Applause.)

You're doing it. Community colleges provide such a bridge to higher education, a ready resource for vocational training and adult remedial education. You provide access for precisely the very people who are being summoned to alleviate the coming labor shortage. Some of your programs spell opportunity for the most disadvantaged members of the work force. But they also spell opportunity for business at the same time. The disadvantaged and business are coming together in hundreds of programs -- from Colorado to Kansas, to Kentucky -- called employer-college partnerships. And

These are the words of Daniel Burnham, who was the architect of such a big plan -- Washington's Union Station, which stands out as a visual delight in a city already crowded with great monuments and statuary. Burnham's legacy is a truly living monument, with its vaulted ceilings and its gilded geometry above bustling crowds of shoppers and commuters. But it would be nothing but a wreck, an eyesore, if it had not been lovingly restored. As important as it is to reclaim our civic capital of burnished brass and polished marble, how much more important it is to reclaim our human capital.

Think, then, of our educational system in this way -- as a vast and beautiful inheritance, which must be lovingly restored; not once, but every generation. And in this effort, make no little plans. Think big. Aim high in hope and work. Continue to work together as a community, to help your students, to lift their vision and lengthen their horizon.

For this, and all you are doing, and for those that walked across this platform, a hardy thanks for all you have done. For this, for all you do and for what you have done, you have earned and you are earning the gratitude of a nation.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America. Thank you all very, very much. (Applause.)

END


1:58 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 27, 1989

Memorandum to Chriss Winston

From: Jim Pinkerton   
Re: Jr. + Comm. Coll. Drft.

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Overall, I think this is a good speech. It covers the major themes in a lively and well-written manner. But I do have some specific comments.

Pg.1, graf 2, line 2 I know that jokes are virtually impossible to clear through a committee process...and this joke, as is, should be no exception! As the draft reads now, the audience will dwell on the word "cheating." However, I do think it can be saved by adjusting it as follows: "Now I know how she got so good at Scrabble!" My rewrite is not exactly a knee-slapper, but people will at least recognize it as a lite attempt at humor.

2,1,3 To emphasize the transition from classic authors like Dickens and Twain to the less-heralded McMurtry, I would insert "for that matter" in front of "Larry McMurtry."

2,3,5 "than" should be "that"

2,3,7 I think of junior colleges as a "recent American innovation." I hope that's a defensible statement!

2,4,1-2 The interpolation of "based on accessibility for all" is clumsy and detracts from the profound point about "education for life." I would save the accessibility point for a separate sentence.

3,1,5 I wouldn't use "embellishment." It sounds as if we think education is some sort of frill. I might try "but as a vital part of the good life."

4,1,1-2 I am sure that many private schools accept jr. college graduates as well. As is, the draft sounds elitist.

4,3,4 "countrymen" is sexist

4,4,7 so is "his"

2-2-2

5,2,4 The quote from Wells is way to alarmist. By our way of thinking, "catastrophe" is not in the cards after 8 peaceful and prosperous Reagan-Bush years. Our program is reformist, not revolutionary. Let's not let our rhetoric get away from us; lest we lest we elevate the sense of urgency so much that we lose control of the issue.

6,2,1-2 This invocation of the 50s is empirically incorrect. Worse, it plays into the hands of our political opponents because it lends credence to their arguments about the allegedly "disappearing middle class." I would get rid of the first four lines and emphasize the importance of transmitting skills that will enable all Americans to enter the economic mainstream.

#

cc: Roger Porter  
Bill Roper

March 27, 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR JIM CICCONI

FROM; DENISE SCHWARZ *DS.*  
OFFICE OF CABINET AFFAIRS

SUBJECT; PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS; AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES

LOG #020358

We have reviewed the attached and have no comments.

Attachment

cc: **Chriss Winston**

## WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 03/24/89 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: C.O.B. Monday 03/27

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES (03/23 6 p.m. draft)

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	STUDDERT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BATES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMAYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BREEDEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>PINKERTON</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>ROGERS</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>PORTER-ROSE</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>WINSTON</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS: Please provide any comments/recommendations directly to Chriss Winston (Rm. 122, x2930) by close of business on Monday, 03/27, with an info copy to my office. Thanks.

RESPONSE:

James W. Cicconi  
Assistant to the President  
and Deputy to the Chief of Staff  
Ext. 2702

Davis/Blessey  
March 23, 1989  
6 p.m.  
Draft 2/28/89  
Title: Junior

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: AMER. ASSOC. OF JR. & COMMUNITY COLLEGES  
WASHINGTON HILTON  
MARCH 30, 1989/ 1 p.m.

Thank you. Dale, Jim (Brady), Governors Martin and  
Campbell. (Further acknowledgements.)

((Bar, I am delighted that this distinguished group has  
recognized your efforts to promote literacy . . . And to think,  
all this time I thought she was cheating at Scrabble . . .))

In all sincerity, this honor will be treasured by Barbara  
and the whole Bush family for years to come. Still, Bar and I  
can't get over the feeling that we should be giving you an award.  
After all, you provide remedial literacy training on a scale that  
is nothing short of heroic.

Benjamin Franklin was once asked what was the most pitiful  
thing that could befall a human being. After a moment's  
reflection, he replied: "A lonesome man on a rainy day who does  
not know how to read." The costs of illiteracy can be calculated  
in labor lost, and education dollars wasted. But we cannot

calculate the loss of human happiness caused by illiteracy -- all the men and women across this country who will never hear the narrative voice of Dickens, Twain or Larry McMurtry; who will never know that a book can be a true friend in the still hours of the night.

Barbara and I are deeply moved by the plight of the illiterate. And rest assured, we will continue to work with you to promote literacy skills . . .

This nation grew into greatness because early Americans met the challenge of building an educational system second to none. With the dawn of a new century only eleven years away, we are faced with a new challenge -- to revitalize and restore that system our forebears bequeathed to us; to ensure that an American education is once again the best in the world. In this crusade, we can look to leadership from a recent American innovation in education -- our nation's community colleges, more than a thousand strong.

You best represent the American philosophy of education, based on accessibility for all, for life. Americans believe that education is not a phase to be successfully completed. We believe that education is a lifelong endeavor. What scholars call the "life of the mind" is as essential to the complete man or woman as water and air.

In fact, whole communities are enriched and enlightened by the cultural resources you provide, from vast libraries, to night schools, to stages for local theatrical productions. This attitude toward education -- as something more than a requirement of an industrial society, as an embellishment of life -- is uniquely American.

Inspired by your success, I am going to challenge our educational system at every level to adopt a few creative practices pioneered by the community colleges of America.

Community colleges provide ten million Americans with educational choice. A wide range of students benefit from your institutions, from those in high school who are looking for advanced courses; to low-income students who need a stepping stone to a four-year program; to those who seek a 2-year degree; to mature students who are returning to school to round out their education. This is what we need more of up and down the line -- choice.

Secondary and even elementary schools can learn a lot from the way in which you tap local talent, drawing on the knowledge of experts from the private sector. With this in mind, I have proposed extending this same practice, often called Alternative Teacher Certification, right down to the first grade.

Perhaps accountability is the key to your success. State universities, which accept your students, count on you to instill a precise curriculum. The businesses of your city count on you to match skills to the demands of the job market. And most of all, students count on you to provide a ladder of opportunity.

And opportunity is our most basic shared principle. We share the conviction that there is no such thing as an expendable student. We will never accept the notion that vast numbers of illiterate and undereducated Americans can be offset by a well-educated elite. That's not the American way.

We will not rest until we have found a way to school every young American in the romance of our history and literature, and the wonders of science. Until we can accomplish this, millions of our countrymen will be unable to fully participate in, or even understand, the civic life of their homeland.

For years, redeeming these underachieving students has been a quest of the heart. Today, it is also a test of national will, a test critical to the very future of America. This may sound like an overstatement. America, after all, is still a world leader when it comes to producing Nobel Prize winners in physics, economics and literature. But what is the advantage for a nation with a Nobel Prize-winning novelist, if his books are largely

unread in his own country? What is the advantage for a nation that can invent fiber optic cable, if the art of splicing these delicate strands is beyond the skills of our work force?

I am committed to increased investment in basic research. But America can continue to lead the world in theoretical science, and still lose the race in the application of knowledge. H.G. Wells wrote that "human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." What had a ring of truth in the 1920s is ominous in the 1980s, with its highly competitive internationalized market. Let me share a few stark facts with you.

Last year, Japan's functional literacy rate was better than 95 percent. In America, it's down to about 80 percent. The national drop-out rate is <sup>over 25%</sup> XX percent. And of those Americans who do graduate from high school, as many as 25 percent cannot read or write at the eighth-grade level. As many Americans become less educated, the standards of the work place are becoming ever more rigorous.

In the past, business could simply ignore the unlettered few. But the balmy days of the baby boom are passing us by. Between now and the year 2000, we will face a "baby bust." According to Business Week, this shrinkage of the labor pool will make it necessary to train or retrain as many as 50 million

workers in the next dozen years alone. Think of it -- 50 million!

Back in the Eisenhower years, high-school drop-outs, if they worked hard, could still enjoy a comfortable middle-class life. A large suburban home, a new car in the driveway, and tuition money -- this was a very attainable dream, the American dream. But for those workers who lack skills and basic education today, a comfortable middle-class existence will be harder and harder to come by. When a high school graduate can't get a job in a market begging for workers, then we've got a serious social imbalance, an education gap. Let's bridge that gap. Let's bridge it as fast possible.

Excellence in education is critical at all levels. But at a minimum, we need to assure that the work force has the basic skills needed to keep America competitive.

Community colleges are the starting gate for higher education, a ready resource for vocational training and remedial schooling. You provide access for older citizens, women, minorities, and the handicapped -- precisely the very people who are being summoned to alleviate the coming labor shortage. Your programs spell opportunity for the most disadvantaged members of the work force. But they also spell opportunity for business. The disadvantaged and business are coming together in hundreds of

programs from Connecticut to California called employer-college partnerships.

This friendly merger of business and academia is a sweeping force for social improvement. Look at Dallas, where more than one thousand businesses have "adopted" the city's 200 secondary schools. Just look at North Carolina and South Carolina, where state governments have brought businesses and community colleges together to foster customized training and technical education. You have shown that by working together, as communities, as partners in progress, we can match people to jobs, bring hope to the despairing, and build a world-class work force. I challenge every state, every college, every business, to follow your example.

Let me conclude by paraphrasing a few words of advice, written at the turn-of-the century, but so appropriate for our modern quest for excellence in education:

"Make no little plans: they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably in themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble (idea) once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing."

The man who wrote these words, Daniel Burnham, was the architect of such a big plan -- Washington's Union Station, which stands out as a visual delight in a city already crowded with great monuments and statuary. Burnham's legacy is a truly living monument, with its vaulted ceilings and gilded geometry above bustling crowds of shoppers and commuters. But it would be nothing but a wreck, an eyesore, if it had not been lovingly restored. As important as it is to reclaim our civic capital of burnished brass and polished marble, how much more important it is to reclaim our human capital.

Think, then, of our educational system in this way, as a vast and beautiful inheritance, which must be lovingly restored; not once, but every generation. In this effort, make no little plans. Think big. Aim high in hope and work. Continue to work together, as a community, to help your students, to lift their vision and lengthen their horizon.

For this, and all you do, you are earning the gratitude of a nation. Thank you, and God Bless America.

# # #

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

March 27, 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR CHRISS A. WINSTON  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT  
FOR COMMUNICATIONS

FROM: MICHAEL J. ASTRUE *MJA*  
ASSOCIATE COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Presidential Remarks: American Association of  
Junior and Community Colleges

Counsel's office has reviewed the above-referenced Presidential remarks, and we have no legal objection to their delivery.

Thank you for submitting these remarks for our review.

cc: James W. Cicconi

**WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM**

DATE: 03/24/89 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: C.O.B. Monday 03/27

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RESPONSE: *OK*  
*GBW*  
*3/27*

James W. Cicconi  
Assistant to the President  
and Deputy to the Chief of Staff  
Ext. 2702

Davis/Blessey  
March 23, 1989  
6 p.m.  
Draft 2  
Title: Junior

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WASHINGTON HILTON  
MARCH 30, 1989/ 1 p.m.

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Secondary and even elementary schools can learn a lot from the way in which you tap local talent, drawing on the knowledge of experts from the private sector. With this in mind, I have proposed extending this same practice, often called Alternative Teacher Certification, right down to the first grade.

Perhaps accountability is the key to your success. State universities, which accept your students, count on you to instill a precise curriculum. The businesses of your city count on you to match skills to the demands of the job market. And most of all, students count on you to provide a ladder of opportunity.

And opportunity is our most basic shared principle. We share the conviction that there is no such thing as an expendable student. We will never accept the notion that vast numbers of illiterate and undereducated Americans can be offset by a well-educated elite. That's not the American way.

We will not rest until we have found a way to school every young American in the romance of our history and literature, and the wonders of science. Until we can accomplish this, millions of our countrymen will be unable to fully participate in, or even understand, the civic life of their homeland.

For years, redeeming these underachieving students has been a quest of the heart. Today, it is also a test of national will, a test critical to the very future of America. This may sound like an overstatement. America, after all, is still a world leader when it comes to producing Nobel Prize winners in physics, economics and literature. But what is the advantage for a nation with a Nobel Prize-winning novelist, if his books are largely

unread in his own country? What is the advantage for a nation that can invent fiber optic cable, if the art of splicing these delicate strands is beyond the skills of our work force?

I am committed to increased investment in basic research. But America can continue to lead the world in theoretical science, and still lose the race in the application of knowledge. H.G. Wells wrote that "human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." What had a ring of truth in the 1920s is ominous in the 1980s, with its highly competitive internationalized market. Let me share a few stark facts with you.

Last year, Japan's functional literacy rate was better than 95 percent. In America, it's down to about 80 percent. The national drop-out rate is XX percent. And of those Americans who do graduate from high school, as many as 25 percent cannot read or write at the eighth-grade level. As many Americans become less educated, the standards of the work place are becoming ever more rigorous.

In the past, business could simply ignore the unlettered few. But the balmy days of the baby boom are passing us by. Between now and the year 2000, we will face a "baby bust." According to Business Week, this shrinkage of the labor pool will make it necessary to train or retrain as many as 50 million

workers in the next dozen years alone. Think of it -- 50 million!

Back in the Eisenhower years, high-school drop-outs, if they worked hard, could still enjoy a comfortable middle-class life. A large suburban home, a new car in the driveway, and tuition money -- this was a very attainable dream, the American dream. But for those workers who lack skills and basic education today, a comfortable middle-class existence will be harder and harder to come by. When a high school graduate can't get a job in a market begging for workers, then we've got a serious social imbalance, an education gap. Let's bridge that gap. Let's bridge it as fast possible.

Excellence in education is critical at all levels. But at a minimum, we need to assure that the work force has the basic skills needed to keep America competitive.

Community colleges are the starting gate for higher education, a ready resource for vocational training and remedial schooling. You provide access for older citizens, women, minorities, and the handicapped -- precisely the very people who are being summoned to alleviate the coming labor shortage. Your programs spell opportunity for the most disadvantaged members of the work force. But they also spell opportunity for business. The disadvantaged and business are coming together in hundreds of

programs from Connecticut to California called employer-college partnerships.

This friendly merger of business and academia is a sweeping force for social improvement. Look at Dallas, where more than one thousand businesses have "adopted" the city's 200 secondary schools. Just look at North Carolina and South Carolina, where state governments have brought businesses and community colleges together to foster customized training and technical education. You have shown that by working together, as communities, as partners in progress, we can match people to jobs, bring hope to the despairing, and build a world-class work force. I challenge every state, every college, every business, to follow your example.

Let me conclude by paraphrasing a few words of advice, written at the turn-of-the century, but so appropriate for our modern quest for excellence in education:

"Make no little plans: they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably in themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble (idea) once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing."

The man who wrote these words, Daniel Burnham, was the architect of such a big plan -- Washington's Union Station, which stands out as a visual delight in a city already crowded with great monuments and statuary. Burnham's legacy is a truly living monument, with its vaulted ceilings and gilded geometry above bustling crowds of shoppers and commuters. But it would be nothing but a wreck, an eyesore, if it had not been lovingly restored. As important as it is to reclaim our civic capital of burnished brass and polished marble, how much more important it is to reclaim our human capital.

Think, then, of our educational system in this way, as a vast and beautiful inheritance, which must be lovingly restored; not once, but every generation. In this effort, make no little plans. Think big. Aim high in hope and work. Continue to work together, as a community, to help your students, to lift their vision and lengthen their horizon.

For this, and all you do, you are earning the gratitude of a nation. Thank you, and God Bless America.

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