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Lanny Biffert

(Lange/Simon)
June 12, 1991
3:00 P.M.
[LEARN.TPS]

TALKING POINTS: EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE
GRAND JUNCTION, CO
MONDAY, JUNE 17, 1991
[TIME]

- * A pleasure to join you today. The work you do ^{are doing (passive)} in this committee takes up the challenge of education reform -- and takes it seriously.

- * ^{At the national level, we have set our six education goals--} ~~It's important to set goals~~ but the real work ^{will be done at} is in ^{the local level of} implementing those goals.

- * Your efforts ^{illustrate} ~~highlight~~ the difference between being merely involved, and being truly committed. [[Reminds me of the old story about making bacon and eggs: the chicken is involved, but the pig is committed.]]

- * No one can afford to sit on the sidelines. Important to bring diverse perspectives to the challenge of reinventing our schools: teachers, parents, school board members, business people, students, and community organizations of every kind. Yours is just the kind of group that offers ^{real} the greatest promise of progress.

- * With the AMERICA 2000 strategy, we will work hard to raise expectations and standards, to provide the research and flexibility you need to get the job done. ~~It is~~

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- * ~~You know better than to look elsewhere for answers. The hard work of meaningful reform won't just happen amid the big bureaucracies and marble monuments of Washington D.C. The hard work happens here -- and in communities across this country.~~

*I'm here to say I
want to work with you.*

- * So I'm not here to preach to you -- instead, I want to hear about what you're doing. I'm really excited about your efforts.
- * They say the scariest words in the English language are, "I'm from the government, and I'm here to help." Well, I am from the government -- but I'm here to listen.
- * So if you don't mind, I'll just sit here quietly for a while -- to listen, and to learn.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Grand Junction, Colorado)

For Immediate Release

June 17, 1991

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN ADDRESS TO GRAND JUNCTION COMMUNITY

Mesa County Courthouse
Grand Junction, Colorado

12:18 P.M. MDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all. What a day. What a magnificent day. (Applause.) Thank you very, very much, Governor Romer, and all of you. Let me just say at the outset, I wish all of you -- not all at the same time -- but all of you could have been riding in that limousine from the airport. There is no way that I can begin to tell you how emotional Barbara and I felt about that warm welcome to this wonderful corner of God's Earth. You really made us feel at home. And you talk about patriotism and values. It's right here. (Applause.) Thank you very, very much. (Applause.)

Let me, first, salute the Governor -- about whom I'll have more to say in a minute -- doing an absolutely sensational job chairing our National Education Goals Panel. I want to single out our leaders of the state legislature who are partners with the Governor in this effort. My friend, longtime friend, Ted Strickland, the President of the Colorado Senate; Chuck Barry, the Speaker of the Colorado House; and all the other distinguished individuals on the steering committee for Colorado 2000.

And it's not just the big names. I just met with the leaders in this community who are leaders for revolutionary change in education. We had a fascinating seminar and I learned a lot from them. I salute your Congressman Ben Campbell, who's doing a great job for this district. (Applause.) Dr. Rosier, President Kieft and others who -- those are just two of the many that joined us for this panel I referred to. And, of course, to our outstanding Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander. He is leading this country in a wonderful new direction. (Applause.)

A word about your geography. On the way in I was struck by the majestic views of the Grand Mesa -- that great, big table that looks like just the kind of place where God might have done His homework, or put down the palette He used to paint the sky. Some beauty. You are very, very lucky. (Applause.)

And I thought, as we drove in, about the vast frontiers that lie out here. And some will say that America's frontiers have been fully explored, developed; some will even say lost. But one frontier knows no limits, needs constant development, and cannot be lost. And that's the frontier of the American mind -- the unlimited vista of American imagination.

As a people, our love of learning has guided every step of our progress. I love it when Barbara Bush, committed to literacy and education as she is, comes home and tells me these moving tales of how kids are trying to struggle against adversity to learn; how adults learning to read create a new dimension in their lives. And I might say with some little husbandly pride, the Silver Fox is doing one heck of a job for education. (Applause.)

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 declared this:

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"Knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

Now, that same need to encourage education brings us together today, 204 years later. You can think of education as a competitiveness issue, or an economic issue -- but above all, education in America is a moral imperative.

Thomas Jefferson knew -- and Eastern Europe recently reminded us -- that the powers of any society rest ultimately with the people themselves. Education provides the grounding in ideas and values crucial to maintaining democracy and prosperity. It serves as our greatest source of social, economic and, yes, moral power.

No domestic program has greater influence over our future. None attracts more attention or generates more passion on the part of our people. And none will have a higher priority with this President than educational excellence. (Applause.) And that's why, together with all of the nation's governors and with dedicated citizens across the nation, we set six ambitious national education goals for Americans of all ages. This wasn't a White House initiative; wasn't just by the governors. It was a combined partnership in setting these education goals for the first time in our country's history.

We cannot achieve these goals without declaring a revolution in American education. This revolution demands far more than revolving-charge, blank-check spending. It demands that every community raise expectations, accelerate accountability through parental choice, and reward results. And that's exactly what Grand Junction is doing in leadership in this great country of ours. (Applause.)

Our America 2000 Education Strategy challenges all Americans to raise expectations -- to pledge genuine accountability and to create a new generation of American schools. It sets out to transform a nation at risk into a nation of students. It calls for cultivating communities where learning can and will happen.

All of you here have been doing just that, and I congratulate you. You're part of a national crusade for reform -- I should interject, a state crusade. And I'm so impressed with the connected television program that Governor Romer has just told us about. You're part of this national crusade which is a movement that takes different forms in different communities all across our nation, depending upon local needs and resources.

Local businesses need a talented labor pool. Schools need guidance in developing programs and curricula. Every citizen needs to know that the kid standing on the street corner is going somewhere -- and isn't just another lost soul waiting to become a statistic -- no one knowing his name. (Applause.)

And we need you. We need every citizen to join this revolution for American education: whether it's the business executive who takes time out to visit a classroom; the older American who knows so much and has so much to share, tutoring kids at the local library; or especially the parent who takes a few extra minutes each night to read with a child. (Applause.)

Every one of our national education goals relies on everyone, in every community across this nation. And I'm confident that in Grand Junction, if Grand Junction is any example at all, we can achieve each and every one of these national goals. (Applause.)

And that's so impressive -- what's so impressive about what your state is doing, why I'm so pleased with Colorado 2000. Governor Romer's leadership in responding to my call for America 2000 communities has been outstanding. He's been way out front in a leadership role. And tonight, virtually -- as you heard him say, virtually all of Colorado's 176 school districts will meet --

connected by high technology -- to adopt goals, set strategy, and, yes, measure results. And that's just the kind of thoughtful, community-based action that we'll need to reinvigorate and transform America's schools. (Applause.)

You see, we haven't just launched "Washington, DC, 2000," it's America 2000. And what that means is Colorado 2000, Grand Junction 2000.

And I challenge every community in America to do what what you are doing -- to become an America 2000 community -- to embrace the national education goals and accomplish them.

Community involvement -- and community innovation -- will enable students of the future to set and meet world-class standards of achievement. But world-class standards begin here -- in the hearts and imaginations of people who care about education, who care about their kids, and who care about the future.

About 150 miles from here, in a little town called Norwood, Colorado, a woman named Carolyn Sharp is doing what students of the past couldn't have dreamed possible. Seventy-four years old, she's too far away to get radio or TV broadcast. But now she gets satellite. She gets satellite-delivered programming through the Mind Extension University and does her learning long-distance. (Applause.)

Seventy-four, and here's what she says: "I'd already been boning up, doing some history research on my own, and I wanted to take a class." And now, by satellite, she's studying French, history, and physics.

She's a great role model. And for my part, I've been trying to learn how to use a computer -- (applause) -- and I'm going to keep on trying. I will not challenge any of the 12 kids in Nintendo, however.

At its most fundamental, learning involves ambition and imagination. We Americans have never been known for a lack of imagination, and we've set goals for education as ambitious as any that we've had for the West, for space, or for any other American frontier.

With the active support of people like you, I'm confident that we will meet these national goals and help our children toward the future that they deserve. (Applause.)

May I thank you for your leadership and interest in educating not just the kids in Grand Junction, not just the kids in Colorado, but by example you are demonstrating an interest in helping kids all across the country.

May God bless our young people. May God bless our teachers. And may God bless each and every one of you that's willing to take a leadership role in making America 2000 a fantastic education success.

Thank you all, and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

12:32 P.M. MDT