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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

October 21, 1997
(House Rules)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

(THIS STATEMENT HAS BEEN COORDINATED BY OMB WITH THE CONCERNED AGENCIES.)

H.R. 2646 - Education Savings Act for Public and Private Schools
(Archer (R) Texas and Gingrich (R) Georgia)

If H.R. 2646 were presented to the President, the Secretaries of Education and the Treasury would recommend that he veto the bill because it is bad education policy and bad tax policy.

Every American child deserves a high-quality elementary and secondary education. Targeting limited Federal resources to build stronger public schools will help ensure that all our Nation's children receive the education they need to become productive citizens. H.R. 2646 would divert needed resources from these schools.

H.R. 2646 would disproportionately benefit the most affluent families and provide little benefit to lower- and middle-income families. Families in the highest income bracket that saved the maximum amount permitted by H.R. 2646 would receive more than twice the benefit of families in the lowest tax bracket that saved the same amount. Moreover, the bill would not create a significant incentive for families to increase their savings for educational purposes; it would instead reward families, particularly those with substantial incomes, for what they already do.

* * * * *

October 22, 1997

Honorable William Archer
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We write once again to express our strong opposition to H.R. 2646, the Education Savings Act for Public and Private Schools, on which the House of Representatives is scheduled to vote this week. Last summer, when a similar proposal was passed by the Senate, the President stated that he would veto the legislation that contained it. This bill raises the same concerns as the proposal in the Senate bill. We would recommend that the President veto this bill should it reach his desk.

Every American child deserves a high quality elementary and secondary education. We believe that targeting our limited Federal resources to build stronger public schools will help ensure all our children receive the education they need to be productive citizens. Public schools serve approximately 90 percent of students in grades K-12 and currently face record-breaking enrollments. By focusing resources on public schools, we can leverage community investment to help parents, teachers and administrators meet the important educational challenges they face in serving the vast majority of our children: meeting high standards for learning and discipline, fixing school buildings, and providing a safe, drug-free environment for children. In contrast, the Education Savings Act for Public and Private Schools diverts needed attention and resources from our public schools.

The bill disproportionately benefits the most affluent families and provides little benefit to lower and middle-income families. First, the average family typically saves a modest amount, and, therefore, would get little reward from the compounding of tax-free earnings in an Education IRA. By contrast, wealthy families save more, and, therefore, would have greater accumulations of tax-free earnings in an Education IRA. Second, the benefit of tax-free accumulation under the bill increases with a family's marginal tax rate. Thus, for example, a family in the 31 percent marginal tax bracket that saved \$2,500 per year for six years would realize twice the tax benefit under the bill (\$1046) as a family in the 15 percent bracket saving the same amount (\$514).

We are also concerned the bill would create significant tax compliance problems. The legislation allows tax-free withdrawals from Education IRAs for "supplementary expenses required for [the child's] enrollment or attendance at a public, private or sectarian school," but provides no

Page 2 - Honorable William Archer

guidance in identifying what these expenses are. Distinguishing between an appropriately tax-free withdrawal and one that should be subject to tax and penalty would lead to significant additional tax complexity for families.

Finally, we do not believe that increasing the contribution limits for tax-preferred saving opportunities will generate much additional saving and instead, will reward families, particularly those with significant means, for what they would otherwise do.

We understand that Congressman Rangel intends to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute that would use the revenue that would be lost by the Education Savings Act for Public and Private Schools to increase the volume of qualified zone academy bonds. We strongly prefer the Rangel proposal and other alternatives that devote Federal revenue to improving the public schools, rather than legislation having the effect of subsidizing private alternatives, so that a high-quality education is available to every American child regardless of their family income. The qualified zone academy bond program helps public schools with a substantial number of low-income students afford improvements in their infrastructure, their equipment and their teacher training. Therefore, we support Congressman Rangel's substitute.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Rubin
Secretary of the Treasury



Richard W. Riley
Secretary of Education

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION****NEWS****FOR RELEASE: January 20, 1998****Contact: Julie Green (202) 401-3026****STATEMENT BY U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION RICHARD W. RILEY
regarding release of Senate Republican education agenda**

The American people have made education a national issue and President Clinton has made education his number one priority. I look forward to working with members of both parties to advance the President's agenda. The Senate Republicans have come a long way since the days when they wanted to eliminate the U.S. Department of Education. I appreciate their focus on reading, charter schools and support for special education.

Unfortunately, the Senate agenda is too narrow. School construction is an urgent concern in many states, yet the Senate leadership proposal pays scant attention to this pressing need. This proposal also includes plans to divert public tax dollars to support private school vouchers, unaccountable block grants and provisions that would divert resources from America's public schools that educate 90% of America's children. Many of these same proposals were rejected by the full Congress last year.

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THOMAS A. DASCHLE
SENATOR, SOUTHERN DAKOTA

United States Senate
Office of the Democratic Leader
Washington, DC 20510-7020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 20, 1998

Contact: Ranit Schmelzer
Molly Rowley
(202) 224-2939

Package may not deserve an F, but it's clearly incomplete

**Daschle Calls Republican Education Plan a
Repackaging of Old, Rejected Ideas**

**Following is a response from Senate Democratic Leader to the education
agenda outlined today by Senate Republicans:**

**"The *rhetoric* Senate Republicans use to describe their education agenda has
improved dramatically from just two or three years ago, when the sum total of their
agenda seemed to be eliminating the federal Department of Education.
Unfortunately, the *substance* of their agenda hasn't changed much.**

**"There are some areas in which we all agree Congress should act. Those areas
include: helping children learn to read, expanding charter schools to give parents
more and better choices about the public schools their children attend, and making
sure our teacher corps is second to none. I'm hopeful we will find bipartisan
solutions to all of these concerns.**

**"Beyond that, however, the Republican education agenda amounts to little
more than a repackaging of old solutions that Congress -- and in many cases, voters --
have already rejected. They want to funnel federal dollars to private schools in
the form of vouchers. They want to eliminate guaranteed funding for programs
like safe and drug-free schools, computers in the classroom, and math and science
training for teachers. They offer no real help to communities that need to rebuild or
replace aging or overcrowded school buildings. And, instead of making *all* public
schools safer, they propose to send a few students to private schools and leave the
vast majority of students and teachers to fend for themselves.**

**"Their agenda may not deserve an F, but it is clearly incomplete. Senate
Democrats are committed to improving every public school in America. We hope
that Republicans will join us in that effort. America's children are depending on us
to work together."**

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**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION****NEWS**

November 18, 1997

Contact: Julie Green (202) 401-3206

**STATEMENT OF U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION RICHARD W. RILEY
On Rejection of Grant Application submitted by Professor John Gardner**

I am troubled by the circumstances under which Professor Gardner's application was rejected. Rules should not be applied so rigidly that they do not meet the test of good common sense. This is not how we reinvent government.

Professor Gardner's sighted assistant who completed the application did not follow all of the instructions and those instructions only exist to provide a fair and level playing field for all applicants. By the same token we did not do a very good job of informing Professor Gardner of the mistake in a timely manner.

Our intent is always to provide reasonable accommodations and we currently provide application packages in braille and other alternate formats such as disc. I have asked the Office of Special Education to review their grant process immediately to make sure that technical criteria do not get in the way of good ideas. A new grants process begins in the Spring and we look forward to reading Professor Gardner's application.

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RON WYDEN
OREGON

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3703

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Budget
Commerce, Science
& Transportation
Energy & Natural Resources
Environment & Public Works
Special Committee on Aging

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PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

November 14, 1997

The Honorable Richard Riley
Secretary of The Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Riley:

I am writing to request your assistance in correcting what appears to be a case of bureaucracy prevailing over common sense. In my opinion, government research assistance should be based on the quality of the research project, not on strict adherence to the minutiae of application rules. The merits of the ideas should be more important than their presentation. Yet, the recent rejection of a grant proposal to the Department of Education suggests that the agency is placing adherence to bureaucratic standards over substance in the evaluation of grant proposals.

On September 29, 1997, the Department of Education rejected a grant proposal submitted by my constituent, Professor John Gardner of Oregon State University (OSU), because, according to a letter written by the Department, his "application was not double-spaced and a smaller than 12 point font was used." Professor Gardner submitted his proposal to the Department of Education prior to the April 14, 1997, deadline, and five and a half months later, he was informed that the proposal had been rejected without review, because of a typographical quibble.

Professor Gardner, an OSU faculty member and acknowledged expert in both materials physics and new technologies for information access by the disabled, appealed to the Department, pointing out that he was blind and had been unaware that his assistant had single-spaced the proposal in a font smaller than the Department prefers. Mr. Gardner's appeal was apparently then rejected on the sole basis that his proposal did not meet the "stated criteria." A member of my staff was similarly informed by the Department of Education that Mr. Gardner's proposal was rejected due to his failure to double-space.

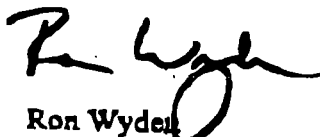
On its merits, the proposal certainly seems worthy of recognition. Professor Gardner is the inventor of DotsPlus, a software program for printing tactile graphics for the visually-impaired. One of his students developed an embosser that prints graphical information for the visually-impaired. Together, the embosser and software could revolutionize access by the visually impaired to math, science, graphs, maps and almost all other graphical information. Professor Gardner's proposal would fund a program to test the embosser and Dotsplus software, potentially opening up a whole new world of learning to the visually-impaired. Additionally, I have reviewed the proposal and found it nicely prepared and easy to read. When a proposal of this nature is rejected because of rigid enforcement of bureaucratic standards, everyone loses.

In 1993, Vice President Gore undertook the monumental task of reinventing the Federal government. To date, that effort has successfully eliminated much government waste, while promoting a number of good ideas to make the Federal government work better for the people who pay its bills. With regard to Mr. Gardner's grant proposal to help the visually-impaired, however, I don't believe this is what Vice-President Gore had in mind when he undertook to reinvent government.

It certainly seems that the public interest would be best served if the Department of Education would reevaluate Mr. Gardner's proposal, and make its decision on the basis of the merits of the proposal. It is common practice at other agencies, such as the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy, to contact proposers who have made similar format mistakes and permit them to correct minor irregularities in their proposals. The Department of Education would be well-served to adopt a similar, common sense approach so that millions of vision-impaired Americans are not denied an equal opportunity to learn and work using the latest computer technologies.

I would greatly appreciate your personal attention to this very important matter. At a minimum, I would ask that the Department provide Mr. Gardner with an adequate opportunity to revise his proposal to meet the Department's technical specifications, so that his proposal can be weighed on the merits. I look forward to your timely response. Please feel free to contact me, or my Legislative Assistant, Lindsay Rosenberg, at 224-5244, if you have any questions concerning this request.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator

POTUS Trip to Michigan
March 5, 1997

- President Clinton will travel to Lansing, MI tomorrow to address a special session of the Michigan State Legislature. The President will highlight the education (see attached) [and welfare] initiatives he outlined in his State of the Union speech and in his address to the Maryland State Legislature on February 10.
- The President will arrive in Lansing at 10:15 a.m., address the legislature at the State Capitol at 11 a.m., do a meet and greet with members of the legislature (WH photo only) at 12:15 p.m., depart Lansing at 1:45 p.m. and arrive at the White House at 3:25 p.m.
- Governor John Engler will endorse the President's National Standards and Testing Proposal and announce that the State of Michigan will participate in the program. Engler's endorsement indicates bi-partisan support for the President's program and demonstrates the President's leadership on this issue. (See attached 3/4/97 Detroit Free Press article on testing.)

MURCHINSON
Conversation w/Mike Cohen

MASTERING THE BASICS: NATIONAL TESTS IN 4TH GRADE READING AND 8TH GRADE MATH

Overview

February 10, 1997

Tonight, I issue a challenge to the nation: Every state should adopt high national standards, and by 1999, every state should test every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math to make sure these standards are met. President Clinton, State of the Union Address, Feb. 4, 1997

A CHALLENGE TO EVERY STATE: MAKE SURE EVERY STUDENT MASTERS THE BASICS IN READING AND MATH. Every parent has the right to know how well his or her child is doing compared with students in other schools, states, and countries. The U.S. Department of Education will give every state, school district and parent the opportunity to use voluntary national tests of 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, beginning in 1999. These tests will help states and local communities raise standards of excellence for teaching and learning in every classroom, and provide parents with accurate information about their children's academic performance. These rigorous tests will provide scores for individual students, measured against widely accepted national standards, that show whether students have mastered critical basic skills. **This will be the first time rigorous tests of reading skills at grade 4 and math knowledge and skills at grade 8, tied to national standards, are available to measure individual student and school performance throughout the nation.**

WIDELY RECOGNIZED TESTS BASED ON WIDELY RECOGNIZED NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS. These new tests will be based on two existing, widely accepted tests: the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 4th grade reading test, and the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) 8th grade math test. Currently, these tests are used to assess the overall performance of the nation as a whole or of interested states. In their current form, they cannot be used to measure the academic performance of individual students.

The NAEP reading test is based on widely accepted national content standards -- developed by local teachers, reading specialists, curriculum specialists, parents, and researchers -- reflecting a national consensus on what students should know and be able to do when they reach the 4th grade.

The TIMSS test is also based on widely accepted content standards -- in this case developed by representatives of the 41 participating countries -- reflecting an international consensus on what students should know and be able to do in mathematics by the eighth grade. In addition, these international standards are highly consistent with the national math standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), which are used extensively by virtually every state.

A NEW GENERATION OF TESTS MEASURING INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS AS WELL AS STATES. The current NAEP and TIMSS tests are designed to assess how the entire nation, or individual states, perform in these subject areas. They do not show how individual students perform. The tests are administered to a sample of students in participating states or districts, rather than to all students. Each student in the sample takes only a portion of the total test questions. As a result, no student receives a score for these tests.

President Clinton's plan is to develop a new generation of the NAEP 4th grade reading test and the TIMSS 8th grade math test, that can be given to all students in the appropriate grades, and which will provide meaningful scores comparing individual student performance to these widely accepted national standards. These new tests will be ready for use in schools by the Spring of 1999.

4TH GRADE READING AND 8TH GRADE MATH ARE KEY. Reading and math skills provide foundation for future learning. Research shows that students who fail to read English well by the end of grade 3 have a greater likelihood of dropping out, and risk a diminished chance of success in school and in life. Students who master the basics of math, including the essentials of algebra by the end of grade 8 have the foundation to take tough math and science courses in high school to prepare for college and high-skill jobs.

THESE TESTS WILL BE RIGOROUS AND CHALLENGING. Though the focus is on basic skills, these tests are challenging, not low level. While many U.S. fourth graders perform well on the NAEP reading assessment, 40% of our students do not reach the "basic" achievement level. In TIMSS, the U.S. average score for 8th grade math is below the international average, and only 5% of U.S. eighth grade students score in the top 10% internationally.

THESE TESTS WILL ASSIST TEACHERS, PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND LOCAL AND STATE LEADERS. While most states assess their students in reading and math, they generally set their proficiency levels lower than the challenging levels in the NAEP. These voluntary national tests will give parents and communities reliable benchmarks for student performance which will show how well their students are progressing toward meeting challenging national standards of excellence. These new standard measures of excellence can help parents hold schools accountable for improved performance, can help teachers and principals improve curriculum and instruction, and can give students a guide for charting their own progress. They can identify students and schools that need extra help.

DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THESE TESTS. The new tests will be based on NAEP and TIMSS, and will measure the performance of individual students and schools. The U.S. Department of Education will contract with independent test developers to produce the new tests, which will be available for the first time in the Spring of 1999. The test will be updated each year. Guidance for the test development will come from the most successful math and reading teachers from across the country, parents, governors, and local and state education, civic and business leaders. Interested test publishers, states, and local school districts will be licensed to administer the tests each year.

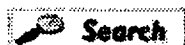
States and school districts can administer the test as part of their local testing program. After each test's administration, the entire test (along with answers, scoring guides) will be released to the education community. At that time, the test along with supporting materials will be available on the Internet so that students, parents and teachers can know what is expected to reach standards of excellence in reading and math. A new test each year will keep the content of the test current. These tests will help show who needs extra help, what changes schools need to make in teaching and the curriculum, and which schools need to be improved.

TESTING TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING. President Clinton challenges the nation not only to take these new rigorous tests of reading and math but also to do the hard work of preparing schools, teachers, and students to reach these high standards. We will work with schools, school districts and states as they move forward to meet this challenge. The President's America Reads initiative will help mobilize an army of 1 million volunteer tutors to help children reach the basic level of performance on the NAEP reading test. His education budget -- with investments in teacher preparation, teaching the basics and advanced skills, technological literacy, choice and charter schools, and grass roots education reform -- will help improve teaching and learning in schools throughout the nation.

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Test us, Engler suggests

He offers Michigan for a national exam

March 4, 1997

BY JACK KRESNAK

Free Press Staff Writer



Gov. John Engler said Monday that Michigan should become a testing ground for a national student achievement exam and parents should welcome the chance to see how their children stack up against their peers.

"I believe deeply that our success will be on benchmarking how we're doing against the rest of the world. It's really as simple as: You've got the best schools, you win," Engler said in a wide-ranging interview on education and child welfare issues.

Engler also said the state would hire more Children's Protective Services workers soon to provide better protection for abused and neglected children, that he expects childhood immunization rates to surpass 90 percent in a few years and that the key to keeping children out of trouble is to get them to stay in school until they graduate.

To do that, charter schools and school districts must compete to provide the best education possible, he said.

"I think that it is a moral crusade," Engler said. "It is a campaign that has to be waged, and we can't have people opting out. Everybody ought to join in that. Certainly, you know, the religious community ought to join in that, but so should the community leadership at large."

Engler's comments come a few days before

President Bill Clinton is to arrive in Michigan to address the Legislature on Thursday on education reform.

The governor said he believes Clinton was drawn to Michigan in part because of Engler's bid to have the state test a new National Assessment of Educational Progress exam that Clinton supports.

Currently, NAEP testing is done in a few school districts in Michigan. Engler, who chaired the national educational goals panel last year for the National Governors Association, would like to see all students participate.

"What I've been arguing is that there has to be a way . . . to take the NAEP test and imbed that in our state test," Engler said, referring to the Michigan Educational Assessment Program.

"Then I could compare, and every parent could compare, their students' performance to the rest of the country. . . . We'd like to be the pilot in the '98-'99 school year."

Engler said charter schools have had a dramatic impact on education in Michigan, though only about 12,000 of the state's 1.7 million public school students are in them. More competition for the privilege of teaching children inevitably will lead to better education, he said.

"I think you're going to see alternative public schools being developed; I think some may be developed by the Detroit public school system itself, I hope," Engler said.

"I hope that just as Romulus is now running programs for dropout students in Detroit, other suburban districts or districts wishing to expand their educational programming have the legal right to offer everything from elementary education to a high school education in the city of Detroit. And I certainly would encourage that."

To compete with charter schools, some astute superintendents have provided better and more

classes, Engler said.

"That's what the marketplace is all about.
That's what McDonald's is trying to do when
they cut their burgers to 55 cents."

Engler, who has suggested that the state may
have to take over districts that consistently fail
to educate children, said local control of
schools is important but so is accountability.

"It's local control with public accountability to
the local community and to the state," the
governor said.

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4-2-97

Roundtable Participants and Suggested Questions**(IN SPEAKING ORDER)**

The President - makes opening remarks.

Delaine Eastin - California State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Delaine is very supportive of national standards. As an elected official and the highest ranking education official in the state she has been part of elevating standards at the state level.

The Vice President - makes remarks and introduces John Doerr.

John Doerr - Partner in the venture capital firm of Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers. He will announce that a group of over 200 high-tech industry leaders who hire graduates from across the country have endorsed your standards and testing initiative. He will then introduce Jim Barksdale.

Jim Barksdale - Jim Barksdale, CEO & President of Netscape Communications. Jim Barksdale will speak to you via satellite from San Jose. He will be joined by Mayor Susan Hammer, and students of the Stonegate School.

QUESTION: *From your perspective, as a leader in the technology industry, what do you see as the most important benefits of national standards?*

The President - You will then say goodbye to those attending the event Satellite Site, and return to ask a question of Carmen Cortez.

Carmen Cortez - First Grade Teacher from the Olive Street School in Porterville, CA. She has been a reading Specialist and elementary school teacher for 30 years. She is a member of the statewide coordinating committee on standards.

QUESTION: *In your experience as a teacher, do you find that students perform better when you expect more of them?*

Lydia Perez-Howard - Parent of a 3rd grade daughter who attends Cleveland Elementary School in Pasadena. Lydia is the PTA Vice President and is active on the School Advisory Council and Neighborhood Strengthening Project. She works for an Investment Management Firm, Scutter, Stevens & Clark in Los Angeles.

QUESTION: *Why are high national standards important to you as a parent?*

Secretary Riley - will make remarks about the Administration's ongoing efforts on standards.

The Vice President - will make closing remarks.

Q's and A's on the California Sign-On/CEO Event -- April 1, 1997

Q: Does Governor Pete Wilson support the President's testing proposal? Does Superintendent Eastin have the authority to commit California to taking the tests?

A: Eastin is the elected Superintendent of Public Instruction in California. She is pledging her personal support for this initiative and is committing to work with other public officials in California to enable students there to take part in the tests. Governor Wilson has been notified of Eastin's decision; we are not aware that he has made any public comment at this time. We would welcome his support, just as we have received strong support from Governor Engler in Michigan.

Q: Do you anticipate more states endorsing the President's proposal soon?

A: We are talking to a wide range of states that are interested in participating in the tests in 1999. Each state has to move at its own pace and work through the advantages to students, parents, and teachers, as well as how the proposal relates to the state's school improvement efforts. We are pleased with the strong support we have received so far, and expect that today's announcement will help us build momentum for the effort.

Q: What kind of response is the President's testing plan getting on Capitol Hill?

A: Administration officials are talking with Members and staff to help them better understand the President's plan and to work through issues such as oversight of the tests. Both Chairman Goodling and Subcommittee Chairman Riggs have publicly expressed their view that this is an important initiative. We believe that we can work to achieve bipartisan support.

Q: Does Eastin really represent the wishes of Californians on this?

A: Superintendent Eastin was elected statewide by the citizens of California to take a leadership role on educations like higher standards. But Eastin isn't here alone. Instead, she came here with a parent of a third-grader and a first-grade teacher educator who described--in very personal terms-- why they feel that the President's initiative is so important to students and communities throughout California. Business leaders, local superintendents, representatives of local school boards, teachers, and parent organizations are also here today supporting the effort in California.

Guidance on West Virginia Trip May 21, 1997

Tomorrow the President will visit Clarksburg, WV to hold a town hall meeting on education at Robert C. Byrd High School. Secretary Riley will accompany the President. This visit is part of the President's continued effort to build public support for the education initiatives he outlined in his State of the Union Address and has been discussing at state legislatures across the country. (The last town hall the President held was June 1, 1995 at a tv station in Billings, MT). After the town hall meeting, the President will make remarks to the people of Clarksburg at the airport before departing West Virginia.

Format?

* The town hall meeting will be moderated by School District Superintendent Bob Kittle. A local high school student will introduce the President who will make opening remarks explaining what education standards are and their importance nationwide. The discussion will then open to Q/A from the audience. The 150-person audience is composed of teachers, parents, students and education administrators from throughout the state of West Virginia.

If asked:

Audience members were chosen by the school district superintendent after receiving recommendations from local government and education officials. The White House did not choose audience participants. You should know, however, that we have requested that the school select one teacher and one student from the final audience list to ask questions on a specific topic as a means of transitioning the dialog.

Why this school?

* Robert C. Byrd High School is a state of the art facility in Clarksburg and a model for what schools should be like, in terms of educational curriculum, architecture, and technical advances, as we prepare students for the 21st century. With a strong technology infrastructure, school amenities include: computers in every classroom, computer labs, a performing arts auditorium used as a community events and arts center; and a tv studio and instructional electronic classroom with a centralized video distribution system.

News?

* The President will announce tomorrow that the states of West Virginia and Massachusetts will endorse the need for national standards. He will also announce that today the National Alliance of Business is endorsing the Administration's testing proposal (Voluntary national tests of 4th grade reading and 8th grade math).

Drafted: J. Green

DRAFT

**Education Town Meeting
Clarksburg West Virginia**

President Holds Town Meeting to Promote His Plan for National Standards and Tests

Today President Clinton held an Education Town Meeting at Robert C. Byrd High School in Clarksburg West Virginia. West Virginia has been a leader in the use of technology in schools, in increasing achievements of their students, and today has signed onto the President's national standards and testing proposal. The President met with 160 parents, students, teachers, business and community leaders and others interested in education, to discuss his plans for national standards and tests and how we can prepare young people for the future. Participants in the meeting were selected by Robert Kittle, Superintendent of the local Harrison County school system.

West Virginia has been a national leader in the use of technology in classrooms. The state's 11 - to- 1 student-computer ratio in elementary schools is one of the lowest in the nation. To date, 14,000 educators have been trained to use computers for basic skills instruction. Forty percent of West Virginia's schools are now connected to the Internet, and state officials plan to reach 85% in 1997.

West Virginia has demonstrated substantial improvement in 4th grade and 8th grade math during the 1990s. Between 1992 and 1996, West Virginia's average 4th grade math score increased by 8 points, together with a 6 point increase for 8th grade math, on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), which tests a sample of students in each participating state. Among all of the states, West Virginia tied for the third highest improvement at both grade levels on NAEP.

In his State of the Union Address, President Clinton called on every state to adopt high national standards and tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, in order to make sure that every student masters these basic skills. The new tests will be based on the widely used National Assessment of Education Progress, and will measure individual student performance against widely accepted content standards used by NAEP. The tests will be available for use in the Spring of 1999.

Growing Bipartisan Support for National Tests in 4th Grade Reading and 8th Grade

Math. President Clinton's call for national standards and tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math received additional bipartisan support today, as Governor Underwood and state education officials in West Virginia, and Governor Weld and state education officials in Massachusetts, announced plans to participate in the testing initiative. These states join [top officials in] Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, and the Department of Defense schools, which have pledged to participate in this testing initiative in 1999.

Growing Business Support. Yesterday, James Orr, CEO of UNUM Insurance and Chairman of the Board of the National Alliance of Business, announced NAB's endorsement of the President's testing initiative. NAB represents small, medium and large size businesses. Following a survey of its members which revealed strong overall support for the President's testing initiative, NAB announced its full support for President Clinton's testing initiative, and promised to bring this message to other business organizations. NAB now joins the Business Roundtable and more than 240 high-tech CEO's who have already endorsed these tests. The strong support of the business community underscores the fact that in order for individuals to compete in a global economy and a geographically mobile society, our nation must set and our students must meet challenging national standards.

President Explains Standards

Using an example of the kind of questions students will be expected to answer on the 4th grade reading test, President Clinton helped town meeting participants understand clearly the kinds of knowledge and skills students must master in order to meet national standards. The President called on 4th grade student Hannah Galey to read a passage from Charlotte's Web as he worked through the sample reading question for the audience.

Draft 5/20/97 7:30 pm

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
OPENING REMARKS
EDUCATION TOWN HALL MEETING
CLARKSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA
MAY 22, 1997**

We are here today to talk about what we must do together to set high standards that will ensure that all our children have the knowledge and skills to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Standards are the key to making sure every 8-year-old can read, every 12-year old can log on to the Internet, and every 18-year-old can go to college.

I came to Clarksburg because of the great strides you are making in the national movement for standards. And because I know that this challenge can not be met in Washington alone. We can articulate a vision, but it is up to parents, teachers and community leaders like you to really make it work. I want to thank our host, Gov. Underwood, for his leadership in raising standards and achievement in this state. In 1996, West Virginia tied for third in improvement since 1992 in 4th grade and 8th grade math.

Education is my top priority. It has always been the heart of opportunity in America. It is the embodiment of everything we must do to prepare for the jobs and careers of the 21st century. If we all have the tools to succeed, we can build a strong, united community and move forward as one America.

The balanced budget agreement we reached with Congress funds the largest investment in education in a generation; the largest increase in higher education since the G.I. Bill in 1945, more than 50 years ago: expands Head Start; funds America Reads; \$35 billion in tax relief for higher education, including HOPE Scholarship and \$10,000 tax deduction and will help us wire every classroom by the year 2000.

I want to thank former Gov. Caperton for his pioneering efforts to make West Virginia a national leader in the use of technology in schools. This state is now well on its way to putting a computer in every elementary school by 1999. Innovative use of "distance learning." This town meeting is being broadcast live on the Internet here in West Virginia and across the country.

But nothing we do matters as much as what our children learn each day. Our success depends upon holding our students to the highest standards -- making sure they learn the basics that will be the foundation of success in the next century.

We must have high standards of excellence that all states -- from West Virginia to Nevada -- can agree on. That is why in my State of the Union address, I called for national standards of excellence in the basics -- not federal government standards, but national standards for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, representing what all our students must know to succeed in the 21st century.

I have proposed national tests, based on widely used National Assessment of Educational Progress test. Today, I am pleased to announce that Gov. Underwood, along with the state board of ed. and state superintendent has agreed that W. VA. Should participate in this test. In addition, Massachusetts and the National Alliance of Business are endorsing our call for national tests. West Virginia, Massachusetts and the NAB are now on board with MD, NC, MI and the Department of Defense Schools in this growing national consensus for standards.

This is great news, but we must do even more. We all talk about standards, but today I want to walk through with you just what we mean when we talk about standards. [GO TO CHARTS]

CHART ONE: describes fourth grade reading standards -- what it means to meet basic, proficient and advanced standards.

CHART TWO: ask a student [Hannah Galey, a 4th grader from Nutter Fort Intermediate] to read passage from *Charlotte's Web*.

CHART THREE: Based on the above passage, how would you describe Charlotte to a friend? Three descriptions match three standard levels.

CHART FOUR: Shows how America's fourth graders are doing.

Reading is the key to everything we are trying to do to prepare our children for the next century -- from opening up a new world of knowledge on the Internet to opening the doors of college to getting them ready for the high-tech jobs of the future. We know we have a lot to do to lift the reading levels of our students up, but we know from the progress you have made here in West Virginia, that our students can do better. We know our children can meet high standards if they are challenged to do so.

That is why this meeting is so important. Standards are a way of making sure our children can learn and compete with students anywhere in the country and anywhere in the world. Now I want to hear from you...

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 20, 1997

BRIEFING FOR EDUCATION TOWN HALL

DATE: May 21, 1997
LOCATION: Oval Office
EVENT TIME: 4:00 pm - 4:45 pm
FROM: Sylvia Mathews
Bruce Reed

I. PURPOSE

To brief you on the substance and format for the upcoming Education Town Hall in Clarksburg, West Virginia on Thursday.

II. BACKGROUND

You will be holding a town hall meeting at the Robert C. Byrd High School attended by 160 students, parents, teachers, principals, school administrators, and other individuals interested in education from throughout the state. This an opportunity for you to highlight the importance of national standards and, for the first time, explain in detail what standards are and why they are important. In your opening remarks, you will walk through a sample reading question. You will also be announcing that West Virginia and Massachusetts have agreed to participate in your national standards and testing initiative, and that the National Alliance of Business has just endorsed your proposal. Following your remarks, you will call on members of the audience to ask you questions and pose questions to audience members in return. Bob Kittle, the County Superintendent of Schools will serve as the moderator.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Sylvia Mathews
Rahm Emanuel
Bruce Reed
Michael Cohen
Ann Lewis
Terry Edmonds

Mike McCurry
Eli Attie
Linda Moore

IV. PRESS PLAN

Closed Press.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Participants in the briefing will review the following items:

- 1) The overall event format and message.
- 2) Substance of your opening remarks, including the sample reading question.
- 3) Questions you may be asked on education.
- 4) Questions you may be asked Other issues Q&A.

VI. REMARKS

None.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- Outline of Event.
- Background on Education in West Virginia.
- Draft Remarks.
- Sample Reading Question (to be incorporated in your remarks).
- Suggested Questions from President to Audience.

OUTLINE OF EVENTS
EDUCATION TOWN HALL
MAY 22, 1997

- 1:00-1:05 MODERATOR BOB KITTLE, Superintendent of Harrison County Schools, will welcome audience and introduce Mary Helen Shields, senior at the Robert C. Byrd High School.
- HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR MARY HELEN SHIELDS, will introduce the President.
- 1:05-1:15 **THE PRESIDENT MAKES OPENING REMARKS: EXPLANATION OF STANDARDS/POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS.**
- THE PRESIDENT will make remarks about education as the highest priority, the need to focus on standards, and announce new state and business endorsements.
- THE PRESIDENT will walk-through charts explaining 4th grade reading standards which will be displayed for the audience on an overhead projector. THE PRESIDENT will invite 4th grade student Hannah Galey to read a passage from Charlotte's Web.
- 1:15-1:35 **THE PRESIDENT** takes/asks questions.
- 1:35-1:40 MODERATOR HIGHLIGHTS TEACHER
Moderator calls on Donna Rose, Reading Specialist at the Lost Creek Elementary School, who speaks about meeting standards, what schools and teachers will need.
- 1:45-2:00 **THE PRESIDENT** takes/asks questions.
- 2:00-2:05 MODERATOR HIGHLIGHTS STUDENT
Moderator calls on Jeremy Thompson, National Merit Finalist from the Bridgeport High School, who talks about how high standards/good education has helped him.
- 2:05-2:15 **THE PRESIDENT** takes/asks questions.

(Total time: 1:15)

BACKGROUND ON EDUCATION IN WEST VIRGINIA

SCHOOL REFORM EFFORTS

West Virginia's reform efforts have been piecemeal rather than comprehensive, but nevertheless have received high marks from outside observers. As both one of the nation's poorest states and one of its most rural, West Virginia faces some unusual challenges in education. Efforts to overcome these challenges in the past fifteen years have included a substantial investment in information technology for the classroom; raising teacher salaries to near the national average (when adjusted for cost of living); a statewide effort to replace and renovate decaying schools; and, most recently, a restructuring of the high school curriculum to focus on job skills and vocational training as well as academics. If the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress in Mathematics results are any guide, West Virginia's schools are improving. The state tied for third in improvement over 1992 in both 8th grade and 4th grade scores.

Standards and Testing

West Virginia has not made a substantial investment in development of its own standards. This year, students will be taking the nationally normed Stanford Achievement Test. State Superintendent Henry Marockie suggests that with adequate norm-referenced tests available, state education funds can be better spent in other areas. He says West Virginia has spent less than \$100,000 on its standards program, whereas its neighbor, Kentucky, has spent nearly \$29 million.

Rather than establishing academic standards and then developing tests aligned to the standards, West Virginia started with the test first. Once selected the Stanford Achievement Test, the state developed specific instructional objectives for each subject area, based on the content of the test.

School Finance

In April 1997, a West Virginia judge held that the state has not complied with a 1982 decision ordering higher quality and greater statewide equity in schools. The original decision, which included unusually detailed specifications for curriculum, personnel, materials, equipment and facilities in 16 academic areas as well as in guidance, health services and transportation, served as a catalyst for many of the reforms that have been enacted in the past 15 years. However, although the state attempted to equalize funding among districts by guaranteeing a minimum per-pupil allocation to every district, substantial inequities remain because districts may impose excess levies on their residents to generate higher per-pupil spending.

Technology

Both Gov. Caperton and now Gov. Underwood have made technology a major priority in education. As a result, West Virginia is a national leader in the use of technology in classrooms. In 1989, the legislature launched the computer-assisted basic skills program, a ten-year effort to place computers in every elementary school classroom. Since then, the state has purchased

19,500 computers for local districts and expects to meet its ten-year goal. The state's 11-to-1 student-computer ratio in elementary schools is one of the lowest in the nation, and in 1996 the legislature appropriated \$8.8 million to increase technology in middle and high schools. To date, 14,000 educators have been trained to use computers for basic skills instruction.

Forty percent of West Virginia's schools are now connected to the Internet, and state officials plan to reach 85% in 1997. Bell Atlantic has been a major partner in this effort, called WORLD SCHOOL. The state has 320 distance learning downlink sites across the state. Students may take a number of courses through the system, including advanced placement and foreign language classes.

In February 1997, West Virginia received a Technology Innovation Challenge Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which will help 152 schools in eight county school districts (including Harrison County, in which Clarksburg is located), the West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation, and several other partners increase the use of computers in the classroom. Part of the grant will also support Technology Opportunity Centers, at which students, parents and displaced workers can receive computer training and use computers for job searches.

Teachers

West Virginia teacher salaries in 1990 were the among the lowest in the country, but are now 17th in the nation when adjusted for cost of living. The state's student-teacher ratio, at about 15-to-1, is one of the lowest anywhere. Last year the West Virginia Education Fund, a statewide fund established by business leaders in 1983 to foster innovation and excellence in the public schools, helped overhaul West Virginia University's teacher education program. Students now will study for five years and will earn a bachelor's degree in a subject area and a master's degree in education. Students also will receive three years of internship experience through "professional development schools" run by colleges and universities.

School Construction

A 1989 law created the statewide School Building Authority (SBA) to fund the construction and renovation of schools. The SBA has funded the construction of 61 new schools and renovations or additions to 780 schools.

Full-day Kindergarten

In 1993, the state legislature required all districts to offer full-day kindergarten classes to all eligible students by 1996. A 1996 law allowed the state superintendent to grant extensions to systems with significant school building projects or sizable enrollment growth.

Jobs Through Education Act

A 1996 law requires teachers and counselors to work with eighth grade students to establish five-year job skills plans. High schools must offer students choices of career clusters, each incorporating both academic and vocational skills. The state's Certificate of Proficiency will be replaced by a CD-ROM electronic portfolio containing students' academic records, awards, test scores and exemplary work. Some groups oppose the reform due to its emphasis on early career preparation, and a bill has been introduced in the legislature to repeal the law.

1997 Legislative Session

There were no new initiatives proposed or enacted in the last legislative session. The Governor's major education priority was continued support for technology implementation.

One controversial issue that arose during the legislative session pertained to funding for 4yr olds in kindergarten. The state's school finance formula provides addition funds for 4yr olds who participate in kindergarten programs. During the legislative session it became apparant that a number of local superintendents were using this financial incentive to aggressively recruit 4yr olds in order to boost state funding. Several legislators threatened to cut off this program because they viewed the local behavior as an abuse of the funding mechanism. As a compromise, the legislature delayed the termination of this component of the formula until school year 98-99, since student placement and teacher hiring decisions had already been made for the coming school year.

There was also an unsuccessful move in the legislature to end the state's participation in the federal School-to-Work program, which has come under attack by far right groups. Supporters of School-to-Work were able to turn this effort back.

WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOLS STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

SIZE

Enrollment: 310,511 (95% White, 4% Black, less than 1% all other groups)

School Districts: 55

Public Schools: 848

STATE DEMOGRAPHICS

Population: 1.8 million

Children in Poverty: 29%

Single Parent Families: 24%

SCHOOL SPENDING

State Spending: \$1.783 billion

Per Pupil: \$5,713 (1993-94 school year)

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

MATH:

West Virginia's 4th and 8th graders have improved their performance in mathematics during the 1990's.

1996 4th Grade NAEP Math

Proficient or Advanced -- 19% (Nation: 20%)

At or above basic -- 63% (62%)

Below basic -- 37% (38%)

Average public school 4th grade math scores increased significantly from 1992 to 1996; in 1996 students performed near the national average. The percentage at or above proficient increased from 12% to 19%.

1996 8th Grade NAEP Math

Proficient or Advanced -- 14% (Nation: 23%)

At or above basic -- 54% (Nation: 61%)

Below Basic -- 46% (Nation: 39%)

Average public school 8th grade math scores increased significantly from 1990 to 1996, and from 1992 to 1996, although average student performance remained below the national average. In addition, the percentage of students at or above proficient increased from 1990 to 1992, and from 1992 to 1996.

READING:

On reading, West Virginia performed about the same in 1992 and 1994. Students performed near the national average.

1994 4th Grade NAEP Reading

Proficient or advanced -- 26% (Nation: 28%)

At or above basic -- 58% (Nation: 59%)

Below Basic -- 42% (Nation 41%)

SCIENCE:

1996 8th Grade NAEP Science

Students performed near national average (Test is not yet nationally normed)

DROPOUTS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

16-19-Year-Old Dropout Rate: 10.6% (National: 11.2%)

College Attendance Rate: 49.5% (National: 57.5%) (Estimates)

**NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS:
FOURTH-GRADE READING**

BASIC:

- CAN RECOGNIZE MOST WORDS, IDENTIFY MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION

PROFICIENT:

- CAN SUMMARIZE PASSAGE, FIND SPECIFIC INFORMATION, DESCRIBE THE WAY AUTHOR PRESENTS INFORMATION

ADVANCED:

- CAN PROVIDE A MORE DETAILED AND THOUGHTFUL EXPLANATION

SAMPLE PASSAGE FROM E.B. WHITE'S *CHARLOTTE'S WEB*:

HAVING PROMISED WILBUR THAT SHE WOULD SAVE HIS LIFE, SHE WAS DETERMINED TO KEEP HER PROMISE. CHARLOTTE WAS NATURALLY PATIENT. SHE KNEW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT IF SHE WAITED LONG ENOUGH, A FLY WOULD COME TO HER WEB; AND SHE FELT SURE THAT IF SHE THOUGHT LONG ENOUGH ABOUT WILBUR'S PROBLEM, AN IDEA WOULD COME TO HER MIND. FINALLY, ONE MORNING TOWARD THE MIDDLE OF JULY, THE IDEA CAME. "WHY HOW PERFECTLY SIMPLE!" SHE SAID TO HERSELF. "THE WAY TO SAVE WILBUR'S LIFE IS TO PLAY A TRICK ON ZUCKERMAN. IF I CAN FOOL A BUG," THOUGHT CHARLOTTE, "I CAN SURELY FOOL A MAN. PEOPLE ARE NOT AS SMART AS BUGS."

UNDERSTANDING *CHARLOTTE'S WEB*:

Q: BASED ON THE ABOVE PASSAGE, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE CHARLOTTE TO A FRIEND?

BASIC

- CHARLOTTE KEEPS HER PROMISE

PROFICIENT

- CHARLOTTE WORKS HARD TO KEEP HER PROMISE

ADVANCED

- CHARLOTTE PLANS TO KEEP HER PROMISE TO SAVE WILBUR'S LIFE BY TRICKING ZUCKERMAN

**MEETING NATIONAL STANDARDS IN FOURTH GRADE READING:
HOW AMERICA IS DOING**

<u>BELOW BASIC:</u>	40%
BASIC:	30%
PROFICIENT:	23%
ADVANCED:	7%

QUESTIONS FROM PRESIDENT TO AUDIENCE:

Student Expectations and Parent/Teacher Support

West Virginia recently adopted new instructional goals in core subject areas (its own effort at standards); education is improving steadily. In 1996, the state tied for 3rd in improvement over 1992 in both 8th grade and 4th grade math -- very impressive, since it is 49th in per capita income.

Q: A recent survey of high school students by Public Agenda showed that more than 70% felt students would pay more attention to school and learn more if standards were raised and enforced. Do you think we are challenging our students enough, or expecting too little?

Q: [To students:] Do your teachers and parents push you to work as hard as you can? Is schoolwork more interesting when the teachers demand more, or just harder? Could most of your classmates learn more if they worked harder?

Q: [To teachers:] How can parents help teachers achieve higher standards for students? What can teachers do to help parents be more supportive?

Q: What are some of the ways that parents are involved in schools here -- and do you think that role needs to increase?

Q: [To parents:] How do you find the time to know what your child is doing in school, and to help them? How do you let them know that they must work hard and do well? What could the schools do to help you do a better job? Will it be useful for you to have the kinds of individual test results for your child that our standards plan will provide?

Teaching

West Virginia has one of the lowest student-teacher ratios anywhere (15 to 1). Teacher salaries, among the lowest in the nation in 1990, have been raised to 17th in the nation -- the biggest 3-year salary increase in the country.

Q: What do you do in this community to attract the best teachers and reward excellence in teaching?

Q: What do you do about the few teachers who aren't effective in the classroom?

Q: [To teachers:] Were you adequately prepared by your teacher training programs for the challenges you face in the classroom? Do you get the kind of support you need to stay current, grow professionally, and become more effective?

Q: [To students:] Tell me about your best teachers. What makes them so good?

Accountability

Q: How can we reward schools that are doing a good job?

Q: What do you do here in Clarksburg, and throughout West Virginia, if there is a school that is not meeting standards? How do you give a school the help it needs to improve?

Technology

West Virginia is a national leader in the use of technology in schools -- well on its way to your goal of a computer in every elementary classroom by 1999. By the end of this year, 85% of all schools will be connected to the Internet. So far, 14,000 teachers have been trained to use computers to teach basic skills.

Q: How do computers in the classroom help prepare students? What do they enable teachers and students to do?

Q: How are classrooms making use of the Internet? What kinds of resources and Web sites are useful for students and teachers?

Q: Can new technology play a role in teaching the basic subjects, such as reading and math?

Q: Does it make a difference to have that background in technology for life after school?

Q: What kind of special training do teachers need to use technology in the classroom? Who provides it, and how can more teachers get involved?

Community Support

Examples: Last year, a new statewide fund (the West Virginia Education Fund) established by business leaders overhauled the state's teacher education program to make it more rigorous. A partnership between Bell-Atlantic and the state's Department of Education is giving all public schools access to the Internet. West Virginia is one of the top 10 states in offering service learning opportunities to students.

Q: What is the larger community doing to improve education here?

Q: What do higher standards and better education in the basics mean to West Virginia's businesses? What can the business community do to help raise standards?

Q: I've been asking America's colleges to encourage their students to work as reading tutors, to help 8-year-olds learn to read. Are there other ways in which colleges and universities can play a role in K-12 education in West Virginia?

School Vouchers

October 8, 1996

- Regarding private school vouchers, there is nothing new in the President's position as presented in the debate.
- The President supports giving families and students more choices in public education and the best example of that is funding for charter schools (i.e. 3000 are funded over 7 years in his balanced budget plan). Moreover, the President has urged every state to pass laws allowing parents to send their children to the public school of their choice. As a result of his leadership when he was Governor of Arkansas, Arkansas became one of the first states in the country to pass such a public school choice law.
- At the same time, the President opposes the use of Federal funds for private school vouchers. As the President said the other night, he cannot support taking limited federal funds away from public schools -- which educate 90 percent of American children.
- The President is a strong supporter of state and local control of education. When it comes to the use of non-federal funds, the president believes these are state and local decisions. At the same time, the President personally would not support a voucher plan that was unconstitutional or that would shift funds from public school to private schools. In 1993 in California, he said: " ... if I were a citizen of the state of California, I would not vote for Proposition 174, the Private Voucher Initiative."
- The federal government helps disadvantaged children regardless of where they go to school, public or private, through Title I and the school lunch program. This administration stood up against the Republican Congress when they tried to take funds away from those programs.
- The President has made improving elementary and secondary education and providing financial aid for students to attend college a high priority throughout his entire Administration and is continuing to work on these critical issues.

Drafted and Cleared: Kathy McKiernan, Mike Cohen DPC 6-5575

School Choice
December 17, 1996

BACKGROUND: Bill Galston co-wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post today with a Bush education staffer advocating scholarships for poor public school children, which could be used for tuition at private or religious schools. The "scholarships" for each student would equal the average per-pupil expenditure of the public school district where the child is currently enrolled, plus whatever federal funds (Title I or special education) the student would ordinarily be entitled to receive. Galston argues for a limited test of his proposal over five years.

- The op-ed is attached. Bruce Reed is providing talking points. Also attached here are the two occasions in the past year on which the President has spoken out most directly on school choice.

Drafted: KMcKiernan

POTUS ON SCHOOL CHOICE AT PRESS CONFERENCE 12-13-96

Q Mr. President, when you begin your campaign to improve public education in this country, are you going to follow up on a suggestion that you made in the first presidential debate, which is to encourage states and cities to offer vouchers for private school choice?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe I made that suggestion.

Q You said that states and cities should be allowed to do it.

THE PRESIDENT: No -- well, I've always thought they should be allowed to do it. I supported Milwaukee's right to do it. But I'm not going to encourage or discourage. I think it should be made based on the facts of the case. I am opposed to the federal government doing it. Our aid is too limited and it is too targeted and it is too much needed for what is done now. And if I were at the state and local level, I would not be in favor of it because I think the schools are underfunded. I don't think they're overfunded. But I do believe that they have the legal right to do it and I don't support any action to take that legal right away from them. And if they think the situation is totally out of hand and they want to try what they did in Milwaukee, I think they ought to have the right to do it.

POTUS ON SCHOOL CHOICE AT FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE 10-7-96

MR. LEHRER: Mr. President, what's wrong with the school choice proposal?

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I support school choice. I support school choice. I have advocated expansions of public choice alternatives, and the creation of 3,000 new schools that we are going to help the states to finance.

But if you're going to have a private voucher plan, that ought to be determined by states and localities where they're raising and spending most of the money. I simply think it's wrong to take money away from programs that are helping build basic skills for kids -- 90 percent of them are in the public schools -- to take money away from programs that are helping fund the school lunch program, that are helping to fund the other programs, that are helping our schools to improve their standards.

Our schools are getting better. And our schools can be made to be even better still with the right kind of community leadership and partnership at the school level. I have been a strong force for reform.

I was able, for two years when I was a very young boy, to go to a Catholic school, but I basically went to public schools all my life, and I've worked hard for a long time to make them better. Ninety percent of our kids are there.

It's amazing to me -- you are all for having more responsibility at the local level for everything except schools, where we don't have very much money at the federal level to spend on education. We ought to spend it helping the 90 percent of the kids that we can help. If a local school district in Cleveland or anyplace else wants to have a private school choice plan like Milwaukee did, let them have at it. I might say the results are highly ambiguous, but I want to get out there and give a better education opportunity to all of our children.



REED_B @ A1
12/17/96 11:32:00 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Kathleen M. McKiernan
cc: COHEN_M @ A1@CD@LNGTWY
Subject: Galston talking points

Talking Points
Galston/Ravitch School Voucher Op-Ed

1. The President opposes the use of limited federal funds for private school vouchers. It would be a mistake to take money away from student loans, education technology, charter schools, and other important federal efforts.

2. The President has said that a school district or state certainly has the right to experiment with vouchers if they choose to. But he has also said that if he were working at the state or local level, he would not support private school vouchers, because they are likely to drain money from an already overburdened public school system.

3. The President has a better approach to save the public school. He supports public school choice to give all parents the right to choose which public school is right for their child. He supports high standards for all schools, and meaningful tests so parents can compare how well their children are doing with children in other schools and other countries. He has challenged every state to adopt charter school laws, and we are providing seed capital to charter school start-ups in 19 states. The President has challenged states and communities to shut down failing schools and re-open them as charter schools with high standards, and to provide children who have been trapped in failing schools with tutoring after school, on weekends, and over the summer so they can catch up.

[If he gets asked about the DC charter school fiasco, he should say, failing charter schools should be shut down just like any other school that fails.]

Gorton block grant amendment passed 51-49 this morning
9-16-97
9-11-97

Statement of
Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education

ON BLOCK GRANTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDING

The effort to block grant virtually all of the Department of Education's funding is another back-door attempt to kill the Department of Education. The same people who two years ago were willing to close down the government in order to eliminate the Department now want to find another way to attack President Clinton's effort to improve education.

The President has put the national spotlight on the need to make sure that every child has mastered the basics of reading and math. The President has set the goal of making sure we get computers into every classroom, increased funding for teacher training, given charter schools the financial support they need, created Goals 2000 to raise standards, increased funding to fight drug use by young people, rebuilt the Title I program to make it effective, and consistently increased support for the highly successful Trio program.

Once again, the only response to these many positive efforts to improve education is an attempt by Congressional critics to kill off the Department. ~~The proposed amendment would shift funding away from the poorest school districts in the nation, that need the most help, to wealthier school districts.~~ In addition, there is no accountability for how the funds will be used. Under this approach funds could be squandered instead of being used in ways that clearly help children learn in the classroom.

The Congressional majority is showing yet again that it is out of step with mainstream America when it comes to education. The American people have made education a national priority and they support the President when it comes to education.

I urge members of the Senate to vote against the amendment.

TO: Interested parties
FR: Erica Lepping
RE: Voluntary National Tests -- COST
DT: September 9, 1997

TOTAL Money earmarked to develop the vnt...

- FY '97 \$15 million
- FY '98 \$16.25 million

In other words, approximately \$32 million will be spent on producing the test before 1999.

Estimated cost to *administer* per year (@ \$10-12 per student) = \$100 million

Of the earmarked monies:

- \$13 million has been contracted out for the test development.
- \$1 million will be used by CCSSO's for work developing the test.
- \$1 million will be used for a National Academy of Science evaluation.

School Testing
September 11, 1997

- Today, the Senate rejected the status quo in education and joined the Administration in moving forward on a bipartisan plan for national tests in the basic skills. President Clinton's proposal to set high national standards and test students in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math gained the strong, bipartisan support of the Senate. This helps to insure that parents, teachers, students and communities will receive high quality information on whether students are reaching high standards, allowing us to hold schools accountable and get extra help to those students who need it.
- The bipartisan agreement reached today adopts the President's proposal to give authority for the Voluntary National Tests to the bipartisan, independent National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). NAGB currently oversees the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which tests a nationwide sample of students.
- The agreement also makes NAGB more independent, helping to insure that the National Tests will be free from politics in the years ahead.
- Under the agreement, NAGB will gain an additional Governor from the other party, as well as adding Mayors and additional businesspeople. The Board will continue to have strong representation of teachers, principals, school board members and other educators.
- We are delighted that we will be able to move forward without further delay on the President's plan, first announced in his State of the Union address this year.

If asked about Senate passage of Gorton block grant amendment:

* We have serious concerns with any approach that would block grant key elementary and secondary education programs. This was a close Senate vote and we do not expect it to be included in final conference legislation.

Per DPC

Senate Bipartisan Agreement in Support of the President's Voluntary National Testing Initiative

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Per APC