



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

February 8, 1995

TO: Phil Caplan
Office of Cabinet Affairs

FROM: Terry Dozier *T. Dozier*
Special Advisor to the Secretary

RE: National Teacher of the Year Ceremony

I believe the attached proposal offers the Administration an opportunity to be proactive about our education agenda and to gain valuable support at the grassroots level. It also provides a White House experience for many groups who often seek individual events, thereby making more efficient use of the President's time. **This whole proposal, however, hinges on one thing -- ensuring that we have award-winning teachers from each state in the audience.** Unlike other professionals, teachers do not have travel budgets nor can they simply accept an invitation -- even to the White House -- at the drop of a hat. They must make arrangements for substitutes, get clearance from their administration, and find some means to finance their attendance. Therefore, **the invitations must go out to the teachers so that they have at least three weeks to make these arrangements.**

Last year, for the GOALS 2000 White House ceremony, we were frantically calling people three days before the event because the White House had not given final approval to the invitation list. Because teachers don't have telephones and cannot be interrupted during class, this was almost an impossible task. It accounted for the fact that only about ten teachers could actually attend the ceremony.

Because it will be viewed as a public relations coup for the district and the school, I believe most administrators would support the teacher's attendance. Even if an administrator is resistant, once word gets out in the community that a teacher has been invited to the White House, there will be pressure put on the district to fund the teacher's attendance. However, school and community leaders will want to extract maximum media benefit from the invitation. This cannot be done at the last moment. The Department will gladly handle all pre and post-ceremony press releases so that the Administration can get maximum coverage at the grassroots.

If the White House is serious about gaining grassroots support and being proactive, it must be willing to make a commitment with enough advance notice to allow teachers to realistically participate. **Offering an invitation to the White House, with no time for teachers to make the necessary arrangements to really accept it will cause frustration and lead them to conclude that the Administration doesn't really understand "ordinary" people.**

Schedule Proposal

Date _____

ACCEPT

REGRET

PENDING

TO: Phil Caplan
Office of Cabinet Affairs

FROM: Frank Holleman
Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Education

REQUEST: Present the 1995 National Teacher of the Year to the American people in a South Lawn Ceremony attended by 750--1000 award winning teachers and other educators from around the country

PURPOSE: To honor and celebrate the teaching profession through the recognition of one of its most exemplary practitioners, the National Teacher of the Year. According to Harold Ickes, the White House is seeking opportunities to get its message out to the grassroots. By expanding the invitation list to include all state teachers of the year, principals of the year, superintendents of the year, and others who have been recognized for educational excellence, the Administration can use the ceremony as a forum to present its education agenda and the Middle Class Bill of Rights, thereby gaining grassroots support in all fifty states.

Polls consistently show that communities trust and respect teachers to tell them the truth about education. Our meetings with religious groups have confirmed this. These groups told us that no national or federal figure can carry our message. It must come from local individuals that people trust. If these outstanding educators learn about and publicly support our efforts, we have gained valuable allies.

Teachers who attended the White House GOALS 2000 ceremony last May left firmly convinced that this administration is pursuing the right course in education. They have been some of our most ardent supporters, making presentations on GOALS 2000 in their communities, responding to negative newspaper editorials, and defending our education initiatives with skeptical religious groups.

BACKGROUND: The classroom teacher is the backbone of the American educational system. We know that our efforts at education reform will succeed only with the full support and participation of teachers. Therefore, it is fitting that we recognize and honor the contributions of the American classroom teacher. The National Teacher of the Year Program is the oldest and most prestigious awards program to focus public attention on excellence in teaching. Now celebrating its 44th year, the National Teacher of the Year Program is sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with Scholastic, Inc.

Each year chief state school officers from the fifty states, the extra-state jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Dependents Schools are invited to nominate a candidate from their state (or jurisdiction). The methods and materials used to select the State Teacher of the Year vary from state to state.

PREVIOUS PARTICIPATION: In each of the forty-three years of the Program the National Teacher of the Year has been introduced to the nation by the President and honored at the White House. Last year, the President presented the 1994 National Teacher of the Year, Sandra McBrayer, in a White House Rose Garden Ceremony on April 21, 1994.

DATE AND TIME: Date: Anytime during the week of April 24.
First choice is Tuesday, April 25.
Second choice would be Wednesday, April 26.

DURATION: Short speech, presentation of the National Teacher: 30 minutes

LOCATION: White House South Lawn

PARTICIPANTS: 750-1000 - 1995 National Teacher of the Year and family, representatives of: the sponsoring organizations, major national education organizations, the National Teacher's home state and school district, all state teachers of the year, principals of the year, superintendents of the year and other award winning educators. List will be provided.

OUTLINE OF EVENTS: Exhibits outlining the National Education Goals and the Clinton Administration's major education initiatives will serve as a backdrop to a simple ceremony in which the President presents the National Teacher of the Year with a crystal apple. The President will use this opportunity to promote the Middle Class Bill of Rights and the rest of his education agenda to an audience of outstanding educators from every state.

An invitation to a White House ceremony will elicit a great deal of local press coverage. Therefore, the Department will coordinate with the White House press releases to local media and arrange interviews for attendees with their hometown press.

Either before or after the event, participants will be invited to the Department to learn more about the Administration's programs. They also will be encouraged to become a part of a computer network that links outstanding educators to the Department and its work.

REMARKS

REQUIRED: Short speech honoring the teacher and promoting the Administration's education agenda and the Middle Class Bill of Rights.

MEDIA COVERAGE: National Networks, local print and television coverage

FIRST LADY'S

ATTENDANCE: Not required, but invited

VICE PRESIDENT'S

ATTENDANCE: Not required, but invited

SECOND LADY'S

ATTENDANCE: Not required, but invited

RECOMMENDED BY: Richard Riley, Secretary of Education

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