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DRAFT

**REMARKS BY PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION -- EDUCATION SUMMIT
PALISADES, NY
MARCH 27, 1996**

Acknowledgements: Governor Thompson; Louis Gerstner, CEO of IBM; governors and distinguished guests...

First of all, I want to applaud this bipartisan gathering of governors and business leaders for your attention to the pressing issue of preparing America's young people to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Nothing is more critical to the progress of our country than the education of our children. Your presence here underscores the fact that we all have a stake in improving the quality and performance of our schools -- and we all have a role to play.

Eight years ago, President Bush convened the last Governors' summit on elementary and secondary education in Charlottesville, Virginia. I was privileged at that time, as Governor of Arkansas, to serve as co-chair of the NGA's Education Task Force. At that meeting we agreed that education is a national priority that requires a partnership between Washington and the states. And we put forth an aggressive agenda calling for greater state flexibility and accountability in the pursuit of national goals established by each state.

The big difference between the summit in 1989 and this gathering today is the co-sponsorship of IBM and the active participation of business leaders from across the country. Your presence here sends a clear message: Education is everybody's business: parents, teachers, students, states, communities, and corporations. Divorcing business from education would be like removing the hoop from the basketball court. Talk about March Madness...We'd just be left shooting in the dark at an undefined goal that we could never achieve. On the other hand, it benefits business to make sure our schools are turning out high achievers and high thinkers who can keep American corporations at the top of the competitive mountain well into the 21st century. So, I am pleased that business is now more engaged in this process and I encourage more corporations to get involved and stay involved in the schools in your community. We will all be better for it.

As your President, I have worked hard to fulfill the mandate of that 1989 summit. As a former governor, I understand the need to free you from federal red-tape so you can solve your problems with local ingenuity and energy. That's why I am proud that the Department of Education has eliminated over 50 percent of its regulations and revised almost all the remaining ones to emphasize flexibility and results.

State flexibility has been the linchpin of all our efforts to improve education: From the bipartisan enactment of Goals 2000 to the overhaul of programs in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to efforts like School-to-Work. All of these innovations rest on the solid foundation of greater state flexibility.

But our job is far from over. I want to talk with you today about the education challenges that lie ahead and about how we can work together to craft a common vision for meeting those challenges. As I said in my State of the Union address, America has entered a great age of possibility. I believe that all Americans who are poised to take advantage of it will have more opportunities to live out their dreams than any generation in history. At the same time, we all know that this is a time of great change in which many Americans feel deeply frustrated and worried that they and their children will not be able to reap the benefits of the new global economy.

The cause of this uncertainty is the historic nature of the change we are experiencing. We have not experienced this much upheaval in 100 years, since the we went through the transformation from being a rural and agricultural society to a more urbanized and industrial society. Now we are moving into an age dominated by information and technology and the markets of the global village.

The nature of work has also changed. Work contains more mind and less muscle...more information and technology. And the changes are occurring so fast that you not only need to know more, you need to be able to learn more. The nature of work organizations is also changing. More and more people are self-employed. More and more people can work at home because of computer hook-ups. And more and more decisions in organizations are being made farther down the line. Old-style top-down bureaucracies are going the way of the dinosaur.

The nature of our markets are also changing. Both the financial and the goods and services markets are rapidly, and sometimes ruthlessly increasing on a global scale, because of their ability to seek the area of greatest opportunity in a split second. All these things have opened up vast new opportunities, but they have also imposed greater challenges on our ability to maintain our old fashioned values and a sense of national community. They are putting pressure on all our institutions to pull apart and break down, leaving more people feeling isolated.

The dichotomy growing out of these changes is striking. For the past three years, the United States has enjoyed the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 27 years. Four years ago the deficit was \$290 billion -- the highest level in history. Today, it is \$164 billion -- nearly cut in half and the lowest as a share of the economy of any major economy in the world. Homeownership is at a 15-year high. And two weeks ago, we announced the creation of 8.4 million jobs -- exceeding my projection by one full year. But there is another side to this story.

With all this growth, more than half of all employed people are working for the same or lower wages than they were making a decade ago. The average working family is spending more hours on the job, but they are more insecure about those jobs, their health care, their retirement and their ability to educate their children.

You see the same thing on the social front, where more Americans are coming together around our basic values. The crime rate is down. The welfare, food stamp and poverty rolls are down. The teen pregnancy rate is down for the last two years. That's the good news. The bad news is that there are still too many neighborhoods in this country where citizens are afraid to sit on their front steps and visitors are afraid to ask directions. There are still too many young people wasting their lives with drugs. And there are still too many urban and isolated rural areas in this country which have been completely untouched by our economic recovery. So we still have a lot of work to do.

The questions before us are: how can we make the American Dream available to everyone who is willing to work for it? And how can we pull this country together when there are so many forces working to divide us?

As I've been saying for months now, the first thing we have to do is get beyond the partisan bickering in Washington and pass the seven-year balanced budget plan that protects education, the environment, Medicare and Medicaid. I submitted such a budget last week. We now have a window of opportunity to get the job done. Both sides have agreed to common savings of \$700 billion. Congress should pass these common savings and give the American people the balanced budget they deserve.

Once we get beyond this budget battle, we can begin to focus on the seven major challenges confronting our future that I outlined in my State of the Union. I will just repeat them briefly and then focus on the one we are all here to discuss -- education.

The first challenge we face is to strengthen families, so they can do a better job of raising their kids. Second, we have to provide more economic security for families in this new economy. Third, we have to join together to take back our streets from crime and drugs and gangs. Fourth, we have to protect the environment for future generations. Fifth, we have to continue to meet our responsibility to lead the fight for peace and freedom around the world. Sixth, we have to change the way our government works so it inspires more confidence, does more good, and still meets the demands of a modern era. But, none of these things will matter unless we meet the seventh challenge: We must renew our schools for the new century and open wide the doors of college for our young people. The only way we are going to meet any of these challenges is if we work together, as one America. As I have said many times, When Americans are divided we defeat ourselves. But, when we work together, we never fail. That's why we are here today -- to work together to improve American public education.

First of all, let me say that I did not come here to bash teachers, students or our schools. In fact, I want to begin by telling you what I think is right with American education. Some of us are old enough to remember what it was like to grow up in the 50's. There is a tendency by some of our fellow citizens to look back to the 50's as a time when everything was right about American education and nothing was wrong.

But let's look at the facts. In 1950, seventeen percent of our children were not even in school. Very few Americans sent their children to kindergarten, much less pre-school. Our public schools were segregated and the majority of African American children never finished the 8th grade. And having a child in college was still a very rare and unusual thing for the average American family. Only 6 percent of all Americans had a bachelors degree. In my own home state of Arkansas as recent as 1970, only 60 percent of the population had twelve years of schooling.

We have come a long way since that time and we have made some important progress since 1983 when Terrence Bell gave America a wake-up call with the release of his seminal report **A Nation at Risk**. School enrollment, beginning with kindergarten, is now universal. And many of you are taking the lead in making pre-school attendance the norm. Half of all 4 year olds now attend pre-school and 82 percent of all of our young people are getting a high school diploma.

The high school drop-out rate has been going down, and most dramatically for African Americans. We have a lot more to do when it comes to improving literacy, and that's something which is very much on the agenda of Secretary Riley, but the number of young people taking the tough core courses has jumped from 13 percent in 1982 to 47 percent in 1992 -- and the national math and science scores are up one full grade since 1983 -- that's progress.

Public education is also becoming more flexible. We now have public school choice, charter schools, magnet schools, schools-within-school. We need to support this trend. As I said in the State of the Union, every state should give parents the right to choose which public school their children will attend. We ought to let teachers form new schools with a charter they can keep only if they do a good job. Public education is not stuck in the past. It is moving forward. And we should not stand in the way.

What is truly astonishing is the progress we have made in opening the doors to college even wider. The number of high school students going on to college has increased 62 percent and one-half of all low income high school graduates are going on to college compared to just one-third in 1983.

The American middle class is what it is today in large part because we have made access to college part of our national purpose. Our universities are the best in the world and our system of community colleges remains one of the great untold success stories of American higher education. They are in many ways at the center of our nation's economic revival.

Having said all this, it is clear that there are some real problems with the performance of our schools and our students. We are not moving fast enough to prepare young people for life in the 21st century. And I want to talk about two areas where we all have to work together to do better: setting high standards for students and teachers and making sure our

students have the technological literacy they need to succeed in the global economy. We must no longer accept standards that are too low, schools that are too outdated, and teachers who just can't make the grade.

Standards

It is too easy to say that the children of today are just not as smart or as studious as we were when we were growing up. But we would be forgetting one important fact: education equals expectations. As Lady Bird Johnson once said, "Children are likely to live up to what you believe of them." I have personally visited children all across this country for the past three years. I have seen how eager they are to learn. I have watched the lightbulb go off as they embrace a new idea. I have seen what happens when you literally put the future at the fingertips of every child through interactive computer technology.

In this last decade of the 20th century, some Americans are separated from each other by the pernicious belief that children who are poor or disadvantaged or immigrant do not have what it takes to reach high levels of achievement -- and too many of the young people who come from those backgrounds have come to the conclusion that excellence is only for other people -- that using their mind is a sign of weakness. Both of those attitudes are lies that have to be extinguished once and for all. There can never be true equity in this society until all of us make a commitment to excellence. So let's not lower our standards -- let's raise our expectations. As I have often said, every child can learn more -- but we need to teach them, believe in them and challenge them to do so.

How do we do this? Through setting real standards and making sure our students meet them. I applaud this summit's call for clear academic standards, agreed upon at the state level. And I know that many of your states are taking the lead in this important area. We are beginning to see real progress in states like Maryland and Kentucky where standards and assessments are in place. But we must do more.

Before I talk about academic standards, let me say something that I know is on the minds of millions of parents all across this country. Excellent academic standards won't make a bit of difference if the standard of conduct in our schools is poor. We cannot educate our children in schools where weapons, gang violence and drugs threaten their safety. Every parent who walks a child to the bus stop and waves goodbye in the morning should not have to wonder if that child will return safely when the last bell rings. We, as parents, have a right to expect our children will be safe in school. That's why my Administration has instituted a zero tolerance policy for violence in our schools.

We are keeping guns out of our schools with the help of the Gun Free Schools Act. We are educating our children about the dangers of drugs with the help of the Safe and Drug Free Schools initiative. We are tackling student drug use through our support of random drug testing of student athletes. We are teaching our children the values of hard work, discipline, study and respect through the introduction of character education. And we are

supporting the use of school uniforms for local school districts who want to make them a part of their overall efforts to promote safety and discipline.

But we can and must do more. We should look at what Governor Glendening is doing in Maryland to help shield schools and teachers from liability when they have to take disciplinary action against a disruptive student. Charleston, South Carolina police chief Reubin Greenberg is also having great success with the tough enforcement of truancy laws. And more schools should stay open after school, when most juvenile crimes are committed, to give kids whose parents may be working, a safe place to study.

At the same time we raise the decorum standards in our schools, we must raise the academic standards. Too many students in too many schools are passed from grade to grade without ever really being taught or challenged. Schools that routinely promote students who are failing are doing those children a terrible injustice. There's a lot that we can do to stop this, but I want to focus on just two ideas today. First, we need to end the entitlement mentality that is cursing too many children with low expectations. **We should not promote students from grade school to middle school or middle school to high school unless they can pass a test that proves they are ready. If a student isn't ready to move onto the next level, we should tell their parents: work with them after school and over the summer -- and if necessary hold them back until they are ready.** This is what we did in Arkansas when I was governor. Nobody should just get by without getting a real education. And that includes student athletes.

The other thing I am proposing is that schools adopt a **no pass, no play** policy. No student should be able to represent their school outside the classroom unless they are making the grade inside the classroom. Education must come first. So, I challenge governors, businesses and colleges to team up with teachers and parents to compare their education standards against the best standards from all the states and the best schools. Each governor, state legislature and school district should find a way to reward those schools that make significant progress in achieving tough standards. And governors ought to take stronger action to redesign or shut down failing schools.

Teachers

We also need to find ways to keep the best teachers in the classroom to weed out teachers who just can't cut it and to have the good sense to counsel teachers to leave the profession when they have lost the enthusiasm and energy to teach. Right here in the state of New York, it costs \$200,000 to fire a teacher who is incompetent or burnt out. We should be spending more resources on honoring good teachers, not protecting those who can't make the grade. I was pleased to serve as the commencement speaker last fall at the first graduating class of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, chaired by Governor Hunt, with Jim Kelly as president. This organization rewards teachers for meeting high standards and puts them in a better position to move up in their profession. Once tough academic standards are met, we ought to get out of the way and give teachers the power to

be good teachers.

We should also make it easier to get good teachers into the profession. Next year we will enroll more young people in our schools than at any time in our nation's history -- 51.7 million. We desperately need good, creative, energetic young teachers to meet this challenge. The good thing is that there are thousands of college students who want to go into teaching. But too many of them are turned off by the stringent certification requirements. Every state ought to be open to making it easier for more people with experience, competence and desire to become teachers.

Technology

We also need to prepare our schools and our children for the challenges of the age of technology. The microchip and the global marketplace are opening up vast new opportunities. If we want to keep the American Dream alive for every single person who is willing to work for it, we have to give all Americans the skills and the education they need to be winners in this time of change. We must not send our children into a 21st century unprepared for the world they will inhabit and the jobs they will have to fill. That's why I have issued a Technology Literacy Challenge to bring the information and technology revolution into every classroom in America. I have seen what this can mean in schools. After computers were introduced in a Union City, New Jersey school, test scores, attendance and graduation rates all shot up.

A few weeks ago, the Vice President and I participated in a remarkable event in California called Net Day. It was like an old fashioned barn-raising. An entire community: businesses, students, scientists, engineers, parents, teachers, government leaders, all coming together to install 6 million feet of computer cables and plugs as the first step in connecting every California school to the information superhighway. This is the kind of teamwork we need across this country to make our schools and our students the best in the world.

We not only need the hardware and connections, we need teachers who are trained to teach this new technology. I want to challenge the teacher's unions to join us in ensuring that teachers get the necessary skills. And I want to challenge the software industry to give us educational software that is just as engaging as games like Mortal Kombat.

States and telephone companies should also do everything possible to make school access to the information superhighway as affordable as possible.

The 21st century is ours for the taking -- if we are bold enough and strong enough and confident enough to go forward together. We must make the best of the new technology to educate our children, improve our businesses, and make our future brighter and more prosperous.

Personal Responsibility

Finally, let me say that all the education summits and all the speeches in the world won't matter if all of us don't join together in a national mission to improve our schools and educate our young people. We must restore the basic ethic that all children can learn and every parent has a responsibility to help them. As I have said, the era of big government is over; the era of taking personal responsibility to meet our challenges has begun.

So to parents all across this country I say, don't wait for the V-chip -- turn the TV off right now. Help you kids with their homework. Read to them 30 minutes a day and during the summer. Tell your child's teacher and principal that you want regular reports on how your child is measuring up to tough standards -- and let them know you want your child to stay after school, go to summer school, or do whatever it takes to meet those standards. **The most powerful force in nature is parents who care about their kids.**

All of us have a responsibility to help those parents be good parents. So, I challenge all the business leaders here and across the country to give parents time off to visit their children's schools. Every workplace should treat a parent's appointment with a teacher as if it were an important appointment with a doctor.

For much of the past century, the public school was one of the most important common bonds in our society -- the place where people of different classes, backgrounds, and races had a chance to learn vital lessons about their world and themselves. Saving public schools is not just about giving our children a better education so they can get better jobs. It's about helping them, and us, be stronger citizens.

We can do this -- if we do it together.

Thank you.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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

Third Annual
State of American Education Address
St. Louis, Missouri
Wednesday, February 28, 1996

EDUCATION: THE GATEWAY TO AMERICA'S FUTURE

Thank you Caroline for your very warm introduction. I take great pleasure in coming here to Saint Louis — the historic gateway to the American West — to report to you on the state of American education.

History tells us that the people of Missouri have always been strong for education. Catholic nuns opened the first school in Missouri in Saint Charles in 1818. The first public high school west of the Mississippi opened here in Saint Louis in 1853. I am delighted to be here again in the "Show Me" state, the heartland of America.

My special guest today — Doctor Mary Jarvis, a native of this area and a graduate of Southern Illinois University — exemplifies your strong commitment to education. "Doctor J," as her students call her, is recognized as the National Principal of the Year for her work helping at-risk young people stay in school. Now a principal in Denver, Colorado, Doctor Jarvis exemplifies what is best about American education.

I want to thank Dr. Ernie Perkins, principal of this wonderful school and Dr. Jerry Elliott, your very fine superintendent, and all the members of this community for your graciousness in allowing us to visit with you. I say that because we have guests from nine states in the audience and thousands of other Americans listening in at twenty-six down link sites across the nation.

I take great pride in recognizing the Missouri and Illinois winners of the prestigious Blue Ribbon Award for excellence in education who are with us today. And I am glad to see several recipients of Missouri's "Teacher of the Year" award here in the audience. These are the heroes of American education.

This is, I might add, the third time that Arline Kalishman, the principal of A.B. Green Middle School here in Maplewood, has been honored as a leader of a Blue Ribbon school. These

The Secretary may depart from prepared remarks.

educators are the best we have, and I would like to ask all of them to stand and be recognized -- as well as the four students who are with us today who received perfect scores on the ACT.

THE ERA OF DUMBING DOWN IS OVER

I have come here to the heartland of America to talk about American education where it is happening; here at a typical American high school, where the future of America is being created each and every day -- to tell you that the era of "dumbing down" is over.

American education must reach for a new level of excellence, for the most basic of reasons: our very prosperity as a nation -- and the economic security of each and every American family -- depends on it.

Today, in many ways, we face the same challenges that confronted the pioneers who left Saint Louis and headed West across the frontier. For we are crossing our own frontier defined by new knowledge, a new economic landscape, new ways of communicating.

We need to remember that the pioneers who crossed the Mississippi set out as a community, bound together with a common goal. They surely had their differences, but they came together for the common good. And that is a lesson we must heed as well in 1996.

For there is a growing debate in America about how we educate our children. On one side are those who believe we can prepare for the future by cutting education today, who see little value in public education, who seek -- quite literally -- to abolish it as an institution.

This view is, to my mind, too narrow, too divisive, too fond of bashing teachers, too quick to tear down rather than build up.

I disagree with that vision. The politics of blame and exploiting people's legitimate anxieties have never served America well, and it is so wrong when it comes to the education of our children.

On the other side of this debate are those who are willing to roll up their sleeves and invest in our children, who see the rebuilding and the expansion of public education as the very cornerstone of our nation's economic and democratic future, who believe that getting a diploma ought to mean something because you have worked hard to achieve it.

Yes, public education has its problems. We have to contend with violence, with too little accountability, and some schools are just beyond repair. But for every problem, I have found many more successful school communities that have come together and found common purpose in rolling up their sleeves to help their children learn. And that's the right way to go.

Sometimes, people can get so caught up listening to themselves debate that they live, die and get buried, and then the next crowd gets up and starts debating all over again and nothing gets done.

My fellow Americans, if ever there was a time in the history of this great nation when we needed to come together for the good of all of our children, it is now. We Americans have never been shy about rising to a challenge. Let us recognize what we have achieved in our lifetime. Millions of Americans have lived the American Dream and become the first in their families to get a college education. Women and minorities have gained strong footholds in higher education and the professions. Disabled Americans are no longer left in the darkness of ignorance, and we must make sure that never happens again. This is why I urge quick passage by the Congress of the very important IDEA legislation this year.

But we have much more to do. Our classrooms are filling up. Next year, we will enroll more young people in our schools than at any time in our nation's history — 51.7 million — breaking the record set in 1971 when the baby boomers came of age. So we have got to push hard. We are making progress in making our young people smarter but the pace is too slow to satisfy me. I say that for the most personal of reasons.

I am a grandfather. I have seven wonderful grandchildren. Anna, the youngest, was born last June. I have probably waved her photograph around to more people than she will ever imagine. So I want to make amends to my other grandchildren and show you their pictures too.

When I read a story to my grandchildren or call one of them up to congratulate them on their report card, I know why I get up in the morning and go to work just like millions of other parents and grandparents.

Our children and grandchildren represent who we are and what America will become.

President Clinton challenged us in his recent State of the Union address to move America forward. One of the centerpieces of his challenge was improving and investing in education. And our challenges are many.

We need to get America reading again and give parents the power to be more involved in their children's education. Our children need to be protected from drugs and violence, and every young person has to gain the technological literacy he or she needs for the coming times.

We need to challenge ourselves to strive for the excellence of high standards and teach our young people real-life skills to get good jobs. And we must make sure that the doors to a college education are open wide to every deserving student who has worked hard to make the grade.

BECOMING A NATION OF READERS

Our very first challenge is to get America reading again. That big model of a computer behind me symbolizes that the American people "smell the future." They recognize the need to get computers into the classroom as quickly as possible.

But you can't cruise or use the Internet if you do not know how to read. And that to my mind is our most urgent task — teaching our children good reading habits — getting America serious about reading.

Our national math and science scores are up because we have invested more than ten years of hard work in that effort. We are turning the corner. This is a great success story for American education, and it tells me that we know how to get results.

Our national reading scores, however, are flat and they have been flat for far too long. Now, America does reasonably well on international comparisons when it comes to literacy. But too many of our young people are groping through school without having mastered this most essential and basic skill.

The 1994 NAEP report tells us that 41 percent of all 4th graders, 31 percent of all 8th graders, and 25 percent of all 12th graders scored below the basic reading level. This is just not good enough.

A young person who cannot read is placed at an extraordinary disadvantage. And in far too many cases, these are the very young people who start down the road to truancy, giving up and eventually dropping out.

Let us recognize what we are all about here. Reading is much more than just a skill. It allows us to learn the wisdom of the ages, to see beauty in a line of poetry, even as we test the new ideas of our times. To read Jefferson is to be engaged with the very spirit of our democracy. To read the poetry of Maya Angelou is to capture the surging spirit of a rising and hopeful America.

And, in our new complex economic environment, 89 percent of the jobs that are now being created require much higher levels of literacy and math. To my way of thinking, improving America's literacy rate is just as important to this nation's future economic growth as balancing the budget.

This is why I am announcing today the beginning of a long-term effort to improve America's literacy. We are creating a national reading and writing partnership of more than thirty-five diverse groups dedicated to the single goal of improving reading and writing in America.

Working with the American Library Association, the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, The National Retired Teachers Association, Hadassah, AMC theaters, Pizza Hut, the Girl Scouts of America, and the many members of our Family Partnership — we want to encourage Americans to open a book and read.

This is a new partnership is going to put the spotlight on literacy. We are going to take our case to the American people and tell them that reading is where it all begins. We are going to lay out a strategy that gives parents "check points of progress" and encourages educators and state leaders to stay focused on helping our young people gain this most essential skill.

Now some people will surely put the blame for the lack of literacy on our schools. And some people will surely start up the debate about whether phonics are better than the whole language approach that some schools now use. I believe they are both appropriate and useful. It's not an either/or choice. But that debate, my friends, is not my purpose here today. Let's roll up our sleeves and rise to the challenge. We can all make a positive contribution.

I urge every family to follow the first rule of education and read to their children. Start early and keep at it. I encourage parents to find an extra thirty minutes in the day to help their children. If all parents in America made it their patriotic duty to find an extra thirty minutes to help their children learn more -- each and every day -- it would revolutionize American education.

All of our research tells us that this is so important. Read a book, read the sports page, read the comics or read R.L. Stine's "Goosebumps" and get excited together -- it doesn't matter. Just read.

Now, what else should parents do? Every child should have a library card. If your child doesn't have one -- and you should check today -- make sure he or she gets one this weekend.

I also encourage parents to set summer reading goals. Our research tells us that some children lose up to three to four months of newly acquired reading skills during the summer if those skills are not kept up between the school years.

I urge state leaders to put a new emphasis on reading. Every child should be well-established as a reader and be able to read independently by the end of the third grade. We should accept nothing less. Rudy Crew, the new Chancellor of Education in New York City, has it right with his new emphasis on reading -- and so does George Bush, Jr., the Governor of Texas.

I encourage local educators to use new assessments to make sure our young people read well, to give teachers and parents early and helpful feedback.

No young person should ever be put in the situation of accepting a high school diploma they cannot read or be unable to write a resume for the job she needs.

I ask community, civic and religious groups to work with our schools to open their classrooms at night to teach reading and writing, to give many immigrants -- young and old -- the gift of the English language. We will do our part to help you.

Millions of new immigrants want to be part of the American Dream. The issue isn't making English our national language; that's already a reality. The issue is finding enough teachers to teach all these immigrants who want to learn how to read and write English. Over the years, most immigrants pay back this country many times over for the opportunity to be good Americans.

THE CHALLENGE TO SUPPORT THE AMERICAN FAMILY

Getting America reading again is our first challenge. Our second challenge is to give parents the power to help their children learn. Strong families make strong schools. When parents get involved in their children's education, good things start to happen.

The Clay Elementary School and the Shepard Accelerated Academy here in the Saint Louis area are models of what can be done. In each case, getting parents involved, building ties to the community, and creating active links to the business community enabled these schools to earn the distinction of being named Missouri "Gold Star" schools this year.

We must link our schools to the community in new and different ways and give parents the support they need. Business is increasingly making that connection, helping schools retool for new times, and giving working parents time to help at their children's schools. The good work of Inter-Act Saint Louis, led by former Senator John Danforth, in getting churches to adopt public schools is another example of solid community support.

I urge parents to have a fierce commitment to the education of their children. Volunteer in school and stay connected to your children. Too often we live such busy lives that we disconnect from our children, and we don't even know it is happening. The time crunch can just about wear you down. But don't give up.

Slow down your lives. Talk to your children. Teach them the difference between right and wrong. Make your children proud to be Americans. Define your moral standards, and if that means turning off the television sometimes or using a "V" chip, then be strong and determined.

And here it is important to remind all Americans that our nation's public schools are not "religion-free" zones. Children do not have to leave their religious faith at the school house door. The First Amendment provides a broad mantle of religious freedom. At the same time it ensures every parent that school officials do not overstep their bounds and coerce students to violate their freedom of conscience.

I can report to you today that President Clinton's Guidelines on Religion have been well received. There has been a marked decline in the confusion and legal confrontation about the right of students to express their religious faith.

THE CHALLENGE TO MAKE OUR SCHOOLS SAFE

Our third great challenge is to keep our schools safe, orderly and disciplined. That is a basic rule. No teacher should ever fear to walk into a classroom. And no child should ever stay home from school because he or she is afraid.

Alternative schools need to be seen as options for the most troublesome students. We cannot let

a few bad apples ruin the school day for the majority of our young people. We need to get these young people out of the regular classroom but not give up on them. They need good, structured learning environments.

School districts need to keep a sharp eye on truancy as a first sign that young people are losing their way. Graduating from high school still remains a significant benchmark for keeping young people out of trouble and off welfare.

The President has gotten a great deal of mail lately from young people across the country regarding his comments in the State of the Union speech on uniforms. Last week, the President was in Long Beach, California and talked about it some more. His point about uniforms is well taken. If parents and teachers think uniforms can help their children learn, then uniforms ought to be seen as one positive way to instill discipline and prevent violence.

I now want to speak very directly to the parents of middle school children. For four years in a row, drug use has gone up among 8th graders. This is a nationwide trend. It disturbs me. Our research tells us that many young people simply do not believe that drugs are harmful, life-threatening or addictive. Parents need to help their children develop some strong inner fiber -- good character.

Nothing will be accomplished unless the young people of America live their lives by a new code of conduct, an honor code that isn't written on paper but written in their hearts, because growing up really comes down choices.

The choice not to cheat on a test or drive drunk; the courage to say no to peer pressure when it comes to drugs or smoking marijuana; the willingness of young men and women not to throw their lives away in a moment of passion, to wind up with a baby, and maybe even on the welfare line.

THE CHALLENGE TO ACHIEVE HIGH STANDARDS

Our fourth challenge is to recognize that we are smarter than we think.

We will never help our young people -- especially those living in poverty -- to measure up if we lower their expectations, water down their curriculum, and write them off by categorizing and stigmatizing them.

I believe in the young people of America. They have the same capacity to achieve as the generation that won World War II, as the generation that sent man to the Moon, as the generation that set out to save the environment and as the generation that created the pentium chip.

We set high standards for the food we eat, for the medicine in our bathroom cabinets, and for the music we listen to -- when the Saint Louis Symphony performs, we hear classical music at its very

best. So why not reach for the best by giving all of our children a first class education?

To those who say America's effort to raise standards and increase accountability has lost its momentum -- I assure you, the standards movement is alive and well. We have had our peaks and valleys, but we are moving forward. I can report to you today that work is underway all across America to develop high standards in core academic subjects.

In Delaware, parents now know that in 12th grade science their children have to master an understanding of DNA. In Colorado, parents of 4th graders have a clear understanding of what is expected of their children when it comes to reading. And in northern Illinois twenty school districts are racing to be the first in the world in science and math.

We are beginning to expect more of our children and we are starting to see the results. In Maryland, a steady trend in improving test scores tells us that high standards are making a difference. In Kentucky, 4th, 8th and 12th graders are demonstrating "dramatic improvement" on statewide tests.

Now, setting standards is not easy. The new national standards for math, science, civics, geography and the arts have been well received. They are useful "road maps" for local and state educators who are defining their own high standards. But the history standards were unacceptable to me, and the effort to set English standards has run into difficulties as well.

But when you run into difficulties, you don't quit. You go back at it and try again. This is exactly what Missouri did with the new "Show Me" standards. And that is exactly what is being done now as a new panel of historians redrafts the national history standards.

I want to be very clear in saying that there is no one way to establish standards. Every state is going to have to decide what works best for its students. Look at the various model standards that are out there and use what works best for you. But aim high.

President Clinton and I urge every community and state, each in its own way, to reach for new levels of excellence. We will continue to support the good work now being done in so many local communities through the Goals 2000 initiative.

Now, Goals 2000 attracts a lot of heat, and there are some people who have some very strange notions about what it is. So I want to tell you how it works. Every principal in this country has a desk drawer full of good ideas. Most teachers do too. Too often those good ideas never see the light of day because our schools are hard pressed just trying to make ends meet.

And that is where Goals 2000 makes the difference. Because Goals 2000 gives schools the extra money they never get to improve themselves. That is what it is. The energy to get better. Nothing more. I won't surrender this good idea to a few people who see ghosts under their bed every night -- who never roll up their sleeves and make a positive contribution for the sake of our children.

I urge those committed to high standards to keep this effort as mainstream and bipartisan as possible. And I look forward to the new energy that the nation's governors and business leaders will bring to the issue at next month's education summit.

But aiming high is only half the battle. Teachers need to be able to teach to high standards and we need a greater sense of accountability in public education. Missouri is setting a fine example in making sure that teachers have the preparation they need to teach to the new standards. Missouri's establishment of nine regional centers linked to Missouri colleges and universities is an example of forward thinking.

Let's remember that teaching is not a job but a demanding and exacting profession. I'm tired of those who make a living out of bashing teachers. We will only win the battle for excellence if we have excellent teachers.

If we give our teachers the support they deserve, then we must also ask our public schools to be much more accountable. Graduating from high school has to mean more than getting to go to the senior prom. Many creative efforts need to be looked at to make this happen: testing at 4th, 8th and 12th grade, statewide exit exams, school "report cards," parent-teacher compacts, new demanding standards for certification and recertification of teachers and principals.

We need to find ways to keep the best teachers in the classroom, to weed out teachers who just can't cut it, and to have the good sense to counsel teachers to leave the profession when they have lost the excitement and zeal to teach.

I encourage teachers and their professional organizations to help make this happen. Public trust grows stronger when there is public accountability and public trust is good for all who have dedicated their lives to quality education.

THE CHALLENGE TO EFFECTIVELY INNOVATE

As we seek to aim high and increase public accountability, we need to press on in our effort to open up public education to new ways of doing business. That big computer behind me really is a symbol that we are in a new time, that the future is happening right now.

Technology is very much at the heart of our national effort to bring America's schools up to date. We are making good progress. One year ago, only 35 percent of all of America's public schools were hooked up to the Internet. Today, that figure stands at 50 percent. And we now have a new telecommunications law that gives schools the opportunity to be the first in line to get on line and at a lower cost.

We cannot miss this opportunity. We need to "fast forward" our efforts and make sure teachers are trained well. This is our national mission. It is as important as sending men to the Moon. If we persevere we will achieve President Clinton's goal of making sure that every library, school

and classroom in this nation is wired and on-line by the year 2000.

Getting computers into America's classrooms has to be seen as just one step in our growing effort to move American education into the future. Public school choice, schools-within-schools, and the expansion of the charter school movement are three other winning examples of American creativity.

Public school choice needs to be seen as an option. Some of our most successful schools are small schools that create a community of learning. Young people shouldn't get lost in school and forgotten.

This is why President Clinton is a strong supporter of charter schools with public accountability. The President has asked the Congress in his new budget to create new "venture capital" to encourage the development of charter schools. I urge the Congress to respond with enthusiasm. I have visited charter schools, and I am particularly impressed by what charter schools are doing for disabled and under-achieving children.

Now, there are some who will tell you that private school vouchers are good for education as well. I believe they are dead wrong. Unlike charter school, private school vouchers offer us no public accountability. They are a retreat from the democratic purposes of public education, a way to divert public tax dollars, and they will wind up costing taxpayers a great deal of money.

I am keenly sensitive to the fact that many parochial school supporters see vouchers as one way to support the good work that they do. I recognize their day-to-day financial struggle. This is why I will encourage the United States Supreme Court to reconsider its ruling in Aguilar v. Felton, which continues to place an undue burden -- both financial and educational -- on many Catholic, Lutheran, Jewish and other religiously affiliated schools.

But, I am concerned that some private school voucher proponents have something else in mind when they talk about vouchers. I fear that they seek nothing less than the demise of public education. It dismays me that some think-tank intellectuals are leading this retreat from support of public education, and the democratic spirit that has always defined American public education at its best.

The American people are very clear about what they want. They want safe schools, the basics as a sure foundation, more demanding courses that meet high standards, computers into the classroom, good citizenship and classes that teach our young people real life skills and prepare them for college level work. They do not want private school vouchers.

THE CHALLENGE TO PREPARE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR WORK

And here, I think, is our sixth great challenge -- helping our young people to make something of themselves in these new economic times. Today, too many of our young people see no

connection between what they learn in school and the skills they need to function in real life. And too many business leaders rightly complain that high school graduates come to them without the skills for today's jobs.

We need to redesign our schools for success, and place more attention on the forgotten middle -- the average kids with untapped potential who are still looking for direction. Today's young people will be tomorrow's paramedics, emergency room nurses, Army helicopter pilots, and the skilled technicians who build the NASA rockets.

Last week, Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, told the Congress that our economy will only reap the "rewards of new technologies" when our schools do a better job of preparing our students and when we "ensure" that people on the job have the opportunity to keep on learning. He's got it right.

We know, for example, that by the year 2000 -- just four years from now -- 60 percent of all new jobs will require advanced skills. Yet, today, only 20 percent of our workforce possesses the skills needed to move ahead. Good paying jobs require more of an education, and that education has to start earlier and be more demanding. There is no point in preparing our young people for jobs in a widget factory.

This is why I am a strong believer in rethinking the American high school by creating partnership between high schools, business and community colleges that give many more of our young people career paths that fit the new economic times.

Apprenticeships, career academies, tech preps and other school-to-work opportunities represent concrete examples of how we can help young people prepare for good paying jobs. I urge young students to look at these new opportunities as real stepping-stones to go on to a local community college and future job security.

KEEPING THE DOORS TO COLLEGE WIDE

Keeping the doors to college wide open is our seventh great challenge.

Today, our nation's system of colleges and universities represents the brightest gemstone in America's educational and economic crown. It is the envy of the world. For more than fifty years, we have made access to higher education part of the American Dream.

Yet today, the burden of paying for college is being placed more and more on students and their families. Students have taken on a larger share of the cost of their education. Four out of five students work today. And too many parents are trying to make ends meet while trying to save for their children's college education in the future.

In the last twenty years, forty million Americans have used a federal student loan to pay for their

college education. That's the American middle class.

Today, two-thirds of all student financial aid dollars in this country come from my department. I am pleased to tell you that we have cut the student loan default rate in half, and we are collecting on many more defaulted loans, saving taxpayers millions of dollars.

Yet despite this good progress, we face difficulties reaffirming this national commitment to opening the doors to higher education even wider.

I remain perplexed, just about baffled, by the thinking of some in the Congress who want to cut student loans -- who don't seem to remember that they got their chance to go to college with the help of the American taxpayer. This is why we have spent the last year fighting to keep the new Congress from cutting \$10 billion from our student loan program.

I also once again urge the Congress to preserve and expand our "direct lending program" which has the support of America's higher education community. This is no time to cave into the special interests, who don't like the competition and who are up in arms because their profit margin is dwindling. Students will always win with healthy competition, and that is the right way to help America's colleges and universities.

As we look to the future we need to create a new sense of shared responsibility in finding new ways to finance American higher education. This needs to be a broad effort working on many fronts.

Our elementary and secondary schools must do a much better job of preparing students for college level work. As standards go up, colleges will be able to shift resources away from remedial courses.

State leaders must look down the road. In nine out of the last ten years, state budgets have declined in their commitment to higher education. This year, I see new evidence that many Governors are already thinking ahead.

They are increasing funding for higher education and supporting creative financing mechanisms, including: the creation of pre-paid college tuition programs; education IRAs; and tax credits for full-time students. I support these creative new initiatives.

I urge our colleges and universities to use their ingenuity to hold the line on the cost of going to college. We are already pricing too many young people -- smart students, who are just poor -- out of an education. And we have too many middle class families already stretched to the limit.

For our part, I want to speak directly to every high school student in America today and make this promise. If you do your share, we will do ours. Every deserving student who works hard can get needed financial help to pay the tuition at a two- or four-year public college through a combination of loans, grants, and work study options. If you want to go to college, don't give up

the dream because you don't know where to turn for financial help.

We believe in rewarding excellence and hard work. This is why President Clinton has called for the creation of a new Presidential Honor's Scholarship of \$1,000 for the top 5 percent of all graduating students in every high school in America.

We also believe that the maximum Pell Grant program should go up during each of the next five years to ultimately reach \$3,120. And it makes good sense to me to rapidly expand our college work-study program to help millions of young people get ahead in life.

I encourage Congress to see the merit and enact into law President Clinton's tuition tax deduction, which would allow middle-class families to deduct up to \$10,000 a year for college tuition and other costs. This is a sensible proposal that will make an immediate difference for thousands of American families.

To those who say we cannot afford to help this generation of young people — I say look at our record of success and look down the road. We are on the brink of change — at the gateway of a new time. This is absolutely the wrong time to cut our investment in education at all levels — and the wrong time for Congress to be so out of touch with the American people.

THE CHALLENGE TO COME TOGETHER AS AMERICANS.

The story of America in this century — as I close now — is the story of giving each new generation of Americans the opportunity to advance themselves through education. We are a people who believe in education, who know its value. And this I know for sure: We did not become the world's greatest superpower, the most productive nation in the world, on a foundation of ignorance.

As we cross this new frontier of knowledge, we need to recognize that the success and freedom of being an American — in this day and age — is the freedom of excellence — the ability to be highly educated and highly trained — to negotiate a complex economic environment to become productive and responsible citizens.

I urge every citizen in this great country to remember that we are raising our children not as Republicans, Democrats or Independents, but as Americans — the future of our country. If we want to enlarge the civic life of this nation, let us re-invigorate our people's love of learning and put the "public" back into public education.

Improving education, caring for our children, keeping teenagers out of harm's way, and building our sense of community is a day-to-day civic task. What you put in, you get out — that is the secret of success for American education. Just that.

Public education is one of the great essential building blocks of our democracy — the public space

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where we teach our children good citizenship, and where we -- as adults -- often exercise our own citizenship by working with others for the good of our children.

E Pluribus Unum -- out of many, one -- doesn't come easy for America. But only America has done it well. Our task in these new times is not to retreat to our own separate racial, ethnic, cultural, or political interest group -- but rather to do the opposite -- to do the hard work of learning to come together for the good of all of our children.

Finding common ground is the urgent work of America in 1996.

If we are not quite the melting pot that we want to be, we are -- at the very least -- a rich American stew, full of many flavors. We all can contribute to what is good for America.

We know how to create good schools and now is the time to get the job done -- to roll up our sleeves -- and reclaim that pioneer spirit of working together to make America's schools bastions of hope, creativity and learning.

And I assure you of this -- as we come together, we will rekindle those civic virtues so essential to our democratic way of life, give our young people the skills they need for the coming times, and cross this new frontier of knowledge together. It is the right thing to do for our children and the right thing to do for America's future.

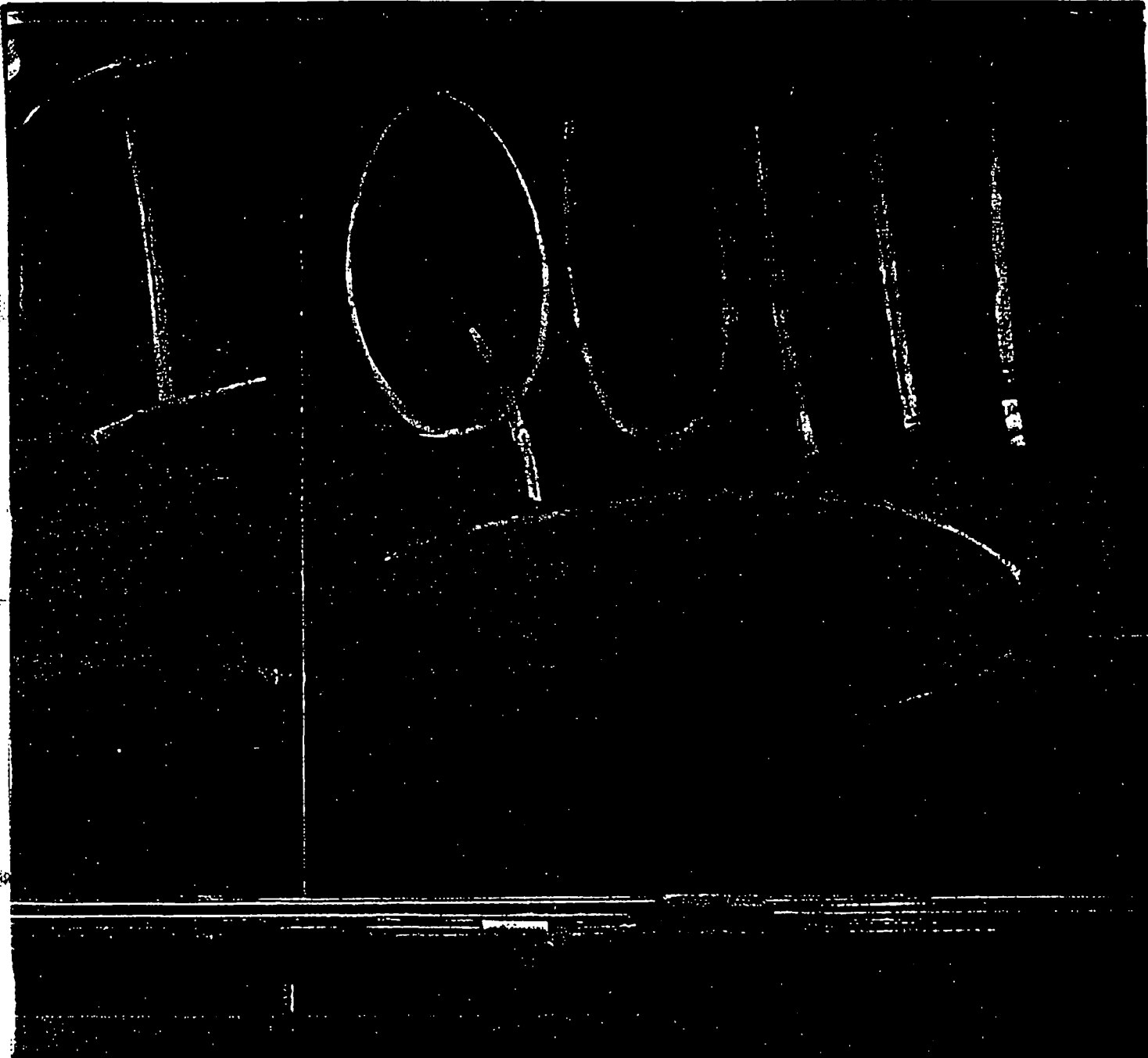
Thank you.



WHY TEACHERS

*The nation's future lies in its classrooms.
But teachers' unions are driving out good
teachers, coddling bad ones and putting
bureaucracy in the way of quality education*

Call it a little morality play about America's schools. In Act I, a dedicated Los Angeles math teacher named Jaime Escalante becomes a national hero for his work with barrio kids at Garfield High School, a saga chronicled in the 1988 film *Stand and Deliver*. In Act II, Escalante flees the Los Angeles school system for Sacramento, taking his devotion and his brilliant teaching skills



DON'T TEACH

with him. Why did he leave? Teacher union officials contend the fame went to his head. Escalante fires back that a major reason was that Los Angeles union leaders objected to his zeal. One problem: He says they chastised him for having too many students in his calculus class. "If you looked into what is going on in this school in the name of the union, I think you ... would be ap-

palled," the teacher wrote in 1990 to his union president, a year before he resigned and moved.

Escalante's experience is hardly unique. In the 34 years since the signing of the first teacher collective-bargaining contract in New York City, teacher unions have become the single most influential force in public education, their impact felt in classrooms across the coun-

try. Union policies that work against quality teaching are driving many top teachers out of public schools, making it tougher for good teachers who stay to do their best work and leaving incompetents entrenched in many classrooms. And at a time when corporate leaders and others are calling on schools to hold students to significantly higher standards, the intransigence of the unions has slowed the pace

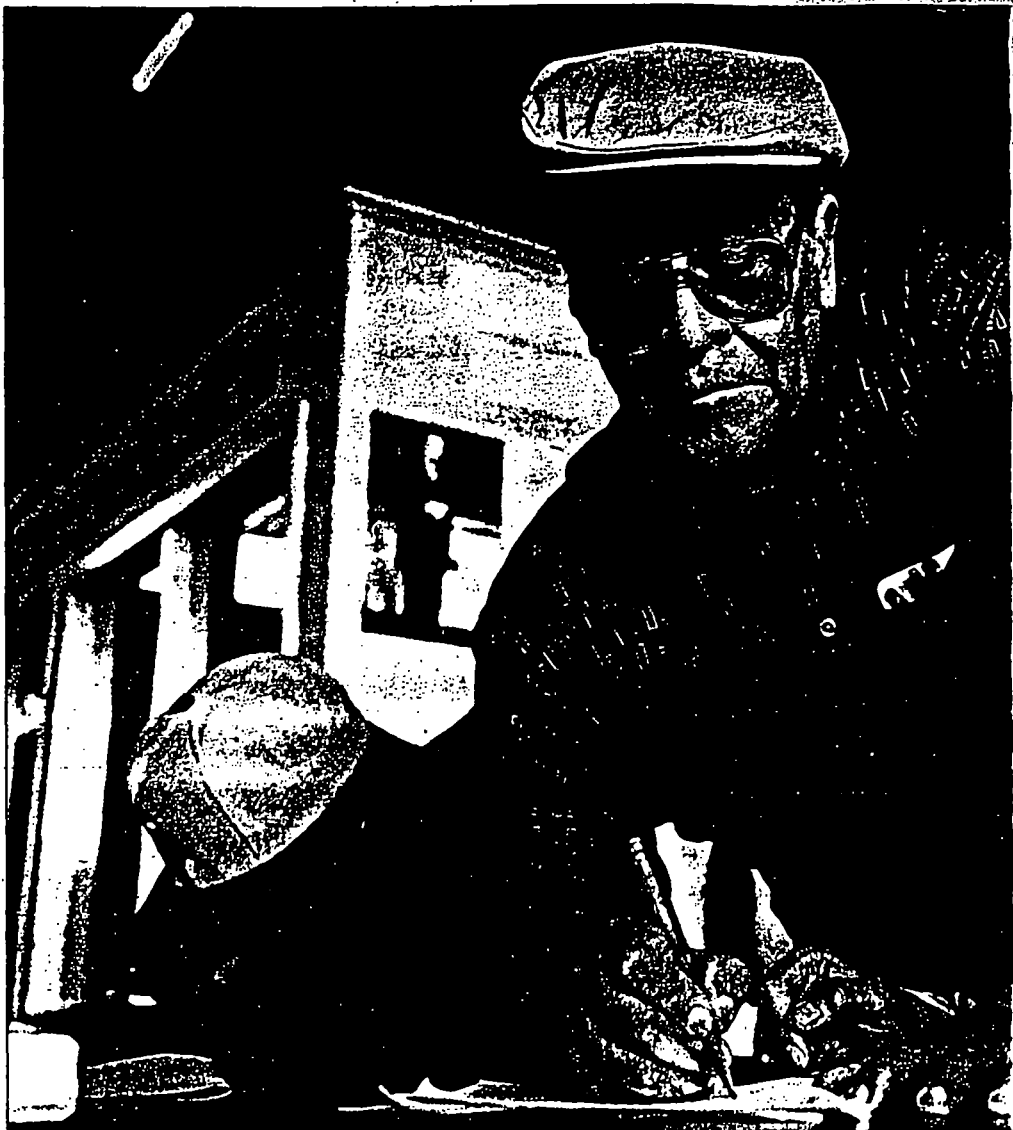
■ CULTURE & IDEAS

of school reforms, eroding public confidence in the schools and spurring an unprecedented wave of tuition-voucher plans and similarly targeted initiatives. The crisis is so great that Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), plans to propose a radically new model of teacher unionism to his membership (box, Page 70).

Unions entered the teaching profession for a reason: The vast majority of teachers were poorly paid and subject to patronage hiring and other inequities. Organizing made sense. In the past 30 years, laws granting teachers the right to bargain collectively have entered the books in 37 states, and nearly 90 percent of the nation's 2.5 million teachers now belong to either the National Education Association, the nation's largest union, or its smaller, more reform-minded twin, the AFT. (Leaders say that they expect the two unions to begin merging within the next four or five years.)

Many teachers happily pay union dues because they believe the unions have fought for improved pay and working conditions and gave them a professional voice. Unions also offer members a host of attractive benefits, ranging from liability insurance to low-interest credit cards. "The union gives you a sense of professionalism; there's support from people with experience," says Betty Lewis, a veteran reading teacher at the Hopewell Crest School and member of the Hopewell Educators Association in Bridgeton, N.J.

But the nation's schools have paid a large price for the marriage of classroom and bargaining table. By embracing old-style industrial-labor tactics, the unionism of traditional auto plants and steel mills, the AFT and the NEA have given teaching the feel of classic blue-collar work, where winning workers big checks for the shortest possible hours has been the aim and the quality of the product is considered to be management's worry. Under this ethic, good teaching is often punished, poor teaching rewarded and bureaucracy placed squarely in the way of common sense, a tangled system played out in schools from New York to California. *U.S. News* looked into some of the most troubling problems:



"I thought the union was going to focus on how to improve our skills. But they're more interested in politics than kids."

JAIME ESCALANTE, who became famous for his teaching but says he left L.A. largely because of the union

EXCELLENCE IS NO GUARANTEE

In 1990, Cathy Nelson, a Ph.D. history teacher at Fridley High School just outside Minneapolis, was named Minnesota's Teacher of the Year. But Fridley's students weren't enjoying the fruits of Nelson's outstanding teaching: She had been laid off months earlier, under a union-bargained "last-hired, first-fired" policy. A 15-year veteran and third-generation teacher, Nelson was the least senior of Fridley's five social-studies teachers. Ironically, she had been laid off under the same policy three other times. Her love of kids kept her com-

ing back. But in 1990, she finally abandoned the classroom, fed up with being treated like a "yo-yo."

Good teaching is what education is about. But in most school systems, seniority counts more than competence. Seniority-based hiring and firing rules are universal in public education, and the unions defend them. NEA President Keith Geiger says critics of that system are really trying "to get rid of experienced, expensive teachers." But seniority systems, in often rendering a teacher's classroom skills irrelevant in staffing decisions, are less than fair to students, critics say. "It cheats kids of the most effective faculty. It's a system that puts the needs of adults first," says Joe Nathan, director of the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute and a teacher for nearly a decade.

Seniority rules leave many principals with little control over who teaches in



ity system may work well in a factory where you're just connecting widgets, but it makes no sense in public schools."

PROBLEM TEACHERS STAY IN CLASS

Students began complaining about Juliet Ellery's English classes in 1981. The veteran teacher at El Cajon Valley High School outside San Diego refused to answer questions, they said. Her assignments made no sense. Her speech was unintelligible. Ellery was dismissed in 1986 but fought her termination. After years of hearings and court proceedings—she tried unsuccessfully to get the Supreme Court to hear her case—her teacher's license was suspended for one year in 1994. The school district's cost in legal fees: \$300,000. Ellery claims she was victimized by students who couldn't meet her standards.

If quality teaching goes unrewarded in the nation's schools, bad teaching is not only tolerated but often safeguarded to an extent that leaves principals gnashing their teeth and parents in despair. Union contracts grant a myriad of due-process protections against dismissal after teachers have spent two or three years in the classroom, making it tremendously difficult to fire even the most incompetent instructors. And even when a school system

does succeed in firing a teacher, the cost is high: In New York State, for example, the average cost to fire a teacher is \$200,000. In one celebrated New York case, a special-education teacher collected his salary behind bars for several years after he was sent to prison in 1990 for selling cocaine to undercover police, while school officials battled unsuccessfully to get him fired.

Unions argue that tenure safeguards against capricious firings. "The union only has one goal in this type of a situation," says John Logsdon, the union representative in Ellery's case, "and that is to see that the teacher gets a fair and complete hearing. It is not our goal to perpetuate poor teaching." But Mary Jo McGrath, a California school board lawyer, says it's so tough to fight the tenure system that administrators usually don't bother. Instead, they often cut deals with unions, giving bad teachers satisfactory ratings in return for union help in getting

"Tenure doesn't protect incompetent teachers; it protects competent teachers from unfair practices and dismissals."

KEITH GEIGER, NEA president, who says his union is moving away from "hard-nosed collective bargaining"

their schools. "If principals can't hire and fire, they can't shape a team with a shared sense of mission, something that all good schools have," says Carolyn Kelley, a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

More frustrating, when jobs are at stake, unions often urge that veteran teachers be assigned to subjects in which they have no training. The NEA vows to fight "any attempts to diminish the quality of learning or services through . . . the involuntary assignment [of teachers] out of [their] field [of licensure]." But voluntary out-of-field assignments are another matter, and there are lots of them. The U.S. Department of Education reports that a third of high school math teachers, nearly a quarter of high school English teachers and nearly a fifth of high school science teachers are teaching without a college major or minor in their subjects. Says Michael Levin, a Willow Grove, Pa., labor lawyer who represents school systems: "The senior-



KATHERINE LAMBERT

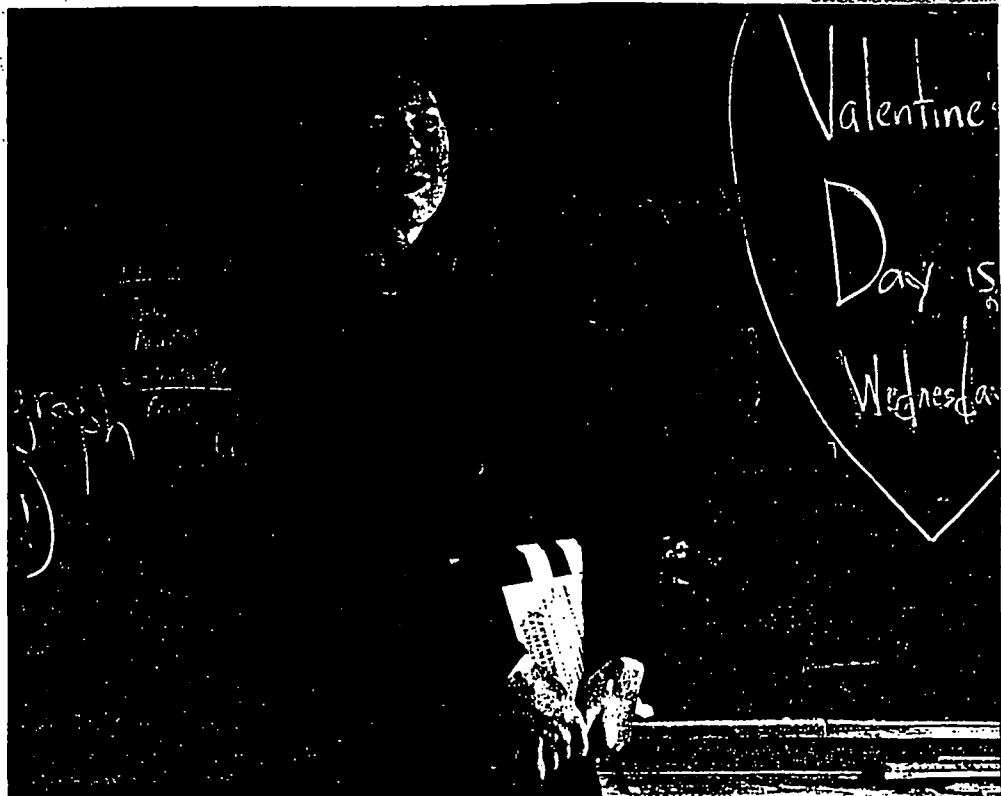
■ CULTURE & IDEAS

them transferred to other schools—a cynical practice known as “the dance of the lemons” or “passing the trash.” “The whole system is corrupt,” says Joseph Viteritti, a professor of public administration at New York University. “It says to hard-working teachers that there are no standards, that it doesn’t matter.”

RED TAPE REPELS BRIGHT MINDS

Tracy Seckler graduated magna cum laude from Harvard in 1992. Two years later, she decided to become an urban teacher and enrolled in the master’s program at Teachers College, Columbia University. While working on her degree, Seckler wanted to substitute teach and set out to obtain a license. She called the New York City licensing office four times to find out what papers she needed to bring in and was given four different answers. When she arrived in person, she told the clerk who reviewed her application that she wanted to teach English. But the clerk said that was impossible: On Seckler’s Harvard transcript, her course codes began with “hist,” the abbreviation for an interdisciplinary honors program called History and Literature. Even though Seckler wrote her thesis on American literature, she was told she could substitute teach only in history classes because she lacked sufficient credits to teach English. Today, Seckler is teaching in suburban Scarsdale.

Most teachers enter the classroom through state and local licensing systems, which generally demand only that applicants take the right college courses. Teachers don’t have to show in



“Nobody in her right mind would go through the [New York City] licensing process. It is very haphazard and it’s unprofessional.”

TRACY SECKLER, whose Harvard thesis was on American literature but wasn’t allowed to teach English in Manhattan

any serious way that they know the subject they are teaching or that they can teach it—a far cry from standards in professions like medicine. It’s a system many unions support but one that repels bright minds and produces many teachers who are licensed but not truly qualified. “By and large, we are getting people who wouldn’t be admitted to

college in other countries,” concedes the AFT’s Shanker.

Astonishing numbers of education graduates fail basic literacy tests introduced in many states in recent years to shore up standards. California administered 65,000 such exams in 1994-95 and gave failing grades to about 20 percent of those tested. But unions haven’t

made tough standards a priority. To the contrary, the NEA fought basic skills testing in teacher licensing for years, shifting its stance only after a majority of states introduced the tests.

BOUND AMBITION

Last summer, the Mount Clemens, Mich., school system opened the Dr.

NEA AT A GLANCE

The National Education Association is the nation’s largest union.

- **President.** Keith Geiger
- **Founded.** 1857 in Philadelphia
- **Membership.** 2.1 million
- **Locals.** 13,200
- **1995 budget.** \$185.7 million
- **Campaign contributions.** \$8.9 million from 1989 to mid-1995. From 1993 to 1994, \$3.5 million has been given to Demo-

crats; \$37,300 to Republicans

- **Top 1995 recipients.** These lawmakers got the most: Rep. Lynn Rivers, D-Mich. (\$5,000) Rep. Dale Kildee, D-Mich. (\$5,000) Rep. David Bonior, D-Mich. (\$5,000) Rep. Tim Johnson, D-S.D. (\$4,000) Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo. (\$3,500)
- **Dues.** \$1 in 1857; \$104 now

AFT AT A GLANCE

The American Federation of Teachers was founded in Illinois in 1916.

- **President.** Albert Shanker
- **Membership.** 885,000, largest membership in New York
- **Locals.** 2,500
- **1995 budget.** \$78 million
- **Campaign contributions.** \$5 million from 1989 to mid-1995
- **Top 1995 recipients.** These lawmakers got the most:

Rep. Gary Ackerman, D-N.Y.

- (\$5,000)
- Rep. David Bonior, D-Mich. (\$5,000)
- Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo. (\$5,000)
- Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn. (\$5,000)
- Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich. (\$5,000)
- **First strike.** 1946 by St. Paul, Minn., local
- **Famous members.** Albert Einstein, Elie Wiesel, Hubert Humphrey

■ CULTURE & IDEAS

Martin Luther King Jr. Academy, a new school with a new curriculum. The Mount Clemens Education Association, the local union, insisted that the school's teachers be paid for several weeks of training in the new curriculum. But a group of younger teachers wanted extra training in math. The school couldn't afford it, so the teachers volunteered to take the training without pay. Veteran teachers rejected the idea, pointing out that unpaid work was forbidden by the union contract. The training never took place.

The drive of a Jaime Escalante is rare in any field, but many public-school teachers want to do the best possible job for their students. Union work rules frequently get in their way. "They tell you what you can't do," says NYU's Viteritti.

Teachers who want to "go the extra mile" often find themselves unappreciated by their colleagues. Patricia Simonds, a 26-year veteran at Truman Elementary in Vancouver, Wash., last year was among the first teachers in the nation to earn an advanced license from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards—a program started in the late 1980s to reward outstanding teachers by creating a system akin to board certification in medicine. President Clinton invited Simonds and other winners to the White House. And the national leaders of both the NEA and the AFT back the NBPTS. But, in contrast to the ceremony at the nation's capital, there wasn't much fanfare at Truman Elementary to celebrate Simonds's national award.

Ultimately, it is students who pay the biggest price. Teachers in two affluent suburban Maryland high schools protested budget cuts several years ago by "working to the rule"—refusing to do any tasks not required of them in their contract. They refused to write college letters of recommendation for seniors in the class of 1992 unless students "first presented addressed and stamped letters to a council member or state legislator urging the passing of taxes necessary to fund salary increases, school programs, etc.," according to a letter to union members. The NEA's Geiger insists that work rules were essential to

counter big differences in teachers' workloads and other abuses. But he acknowledges that many contracts today are "too rigid."

MEDIOCRITY GETS THE GOLD

Gil Troutman was raised in western Pennsylvania and went to a local liberal arts college, where he graduated with honors in history. At 23, he joined the social studies

Teaching generally doesn't. Unions have barred teachers from being paid on the basis of their performance. They have negotiated so-called single salary schedules that reward teachers strictly on the basis of years of experience and the number of college courses completed. Pushed by unions to equalize pay scales that traditionally favored men over women, whites over blacks and high



Not everyone with 10 years' experience "has the same level of expertise. Some people just do the job better than others do."

GIL TROUTMAN, who won awards for teaching, which never translated into a higher salary for him

department at General McLane High School in nearby Edinboro. Troutman loved his work. He taught history and economics, coached wrestling and, in time, won awards for his teaching. But in the early 1990s, at 37 and in the prime of his career, he quit teaching to open an insurance business. The main reason: After 14 years, his paycheck wasn't any bigger than that of other teachers in the school at his level of experience, despite his award-winning teaching. Says Troutman: "I wanted to be in a profession that recognizes the level of work you put forth."

school teachers over elementary teachers, the single salary schedule has become a huge barrier to teaching excellence in public education, robbing many teachers of the motivation to excel and driving many of the best out of the profession. "Teachers who do better in college and are rated higher by their principals leave [the profession] at higher rates," says Ann Weaver Hart, dean of the graduate school at the University of Utah and an expert on teacher rewards. "The single salary schedule is a major factor."

The single salary schedule also has led to a huge waste of taxpayers' money. In most places, pay raises are linked directly to the number of college credits teachers earn, usually without any requirement that those credits be earned in courses related to what teachers do in their classrooms. The system—constructed with teachers, not students, in

■ CULTURE & IDEAS

mind—has led to teachers taking the easiest courses they can find, and a disproportionate number of school-administration courses, since teachers can earn higher salaries by leaving the classroom to do administrative work.

Indeed, most union leaders are loath to have teachers paid strictly on the basis of their performance. "Salary is not what attracts people to teaching and keeps them there," argues Barbara Kelley, a Bangor, Maine, teacher official who is vice chair of the NBPTS. But

"Teachers unions are losing the public battle. The survival of public education is at stake."

ED DOHERTY, who is president of the Boston Teachers' Union and believes in reform

Kelley's own story seems to disprove her point. A veteran gym teacher, she raised her salary by several thousand dollars a couple of years ago by earning a master's degree in business. She says she is thinking about leaving teaching and that the degree might help her in another career. The average U.S. teacher salary is \$36,874.

BUCKING THE CALL FOR REFORM

Any number of blue-ribbon panels since the early 1980s have called for reforms in teaching. The latest, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, chaired by Gov. Jim

Hunt of North Carolina, is discussing tougher teacher licensing standards, performance pay, stronger dismissal systems and other reforms that might be included in a report to be released next September.

But teacher unions have used their resources to fight reform—and their resources are vast. Such is their influence in state capitals that in many states, the unions are by far the largest contributors to statewide elections. The NEA also spends \$39 million a year to keep 1,500 organizers in the field helping the union's 13,250 affiliates lobby school boards, file grievances and do many other things to promote unionism. The union's palatial Washington, D.C., headquarters, renovated in 1991 at a cost of at least \$52 million, is a testament to its power in national politics, where the NEA has wedded itself to the Democratic Party. The union handed out \$8.9 million to congressional candidates between 1989 and 1995, only a fraction of it to Republicans. And the Clinton White House is banking on the NEA playing a big role in this year's presidential campaign. In a 1995 report to the NEA, for example, Clinton pollster Stanley Greenberg attempts to refine the union's message on behalf of the president's re-election. His advice: Hammer home the theme that education is a key to reversing "civic decay."

Politics is not the only arena in which the unions fight off threats to the old system. The AFT and the NEA have waged recent court battles against laws in several states, including a Michigan statute limiting collective bargaining and an Ohio law giving parents tuition vouchers for private schools. And the



STRIKE IN SAN DIEGO. Some union leaders no

unions spend huge sums on public relations: The NEA has budgeted nearly \$14 million to defend schools and unions in fiscal 1996.

But, in response to growing public discontent and recent union defeats at the

UNION CONTRARIAN

America's 'most militant teacher' calls for reform

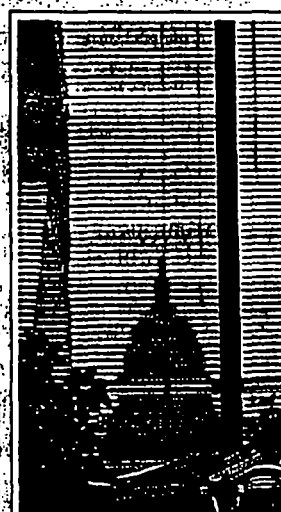
Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, was once the most militant teacher in America: Three decades ago, he led the drive to introduce hard-edged unionism into public school teaching. Today, he's still a radical. But he has a very different mission: He's trying to lead his union away from many of the same demands and tactics that

he championed in the past.

Teacher unions' survival is at stake, he says. Unless they show they're working to improve public schools by improving classroom teaching, the unions will wither. "It's like being a strong man on a sinking ship," he says. "Being strong doesn't do you much good." So Shanker, 67, is shaping a new vision of teacher unionism, one that safe-

guards union members but also invests unions with far more responsibility for the quality of the teaching profession. "In the future, teacher unions should be about teacher standards," Shanker says.

To that end, he is drafting a variety of "teacher quality" reforms he hopes his membership will endorse at the AFT's convention this summer. He wants high entrance standards, performance pay, a streamlining of due-process protections and other measures that break sharply with industrial union practices now embraced by teacher groups. He wants unions to play a far larger role



AFT'S SHANKER seeks reform



are questioning the use of labor tactics that arose from industrial worker traditions.

hands of Republican-led legislatures, unions are gradually softening their opposition to teacher reforms. Adding to the incentives for change are recent membership studies, which reveal that the unions are out of step with a major-

ity of their younger members, who reject the unions' commitment to industrial unionism and partisan politics. Now some union leaders seem anxious to jump on the reform platform: NEA President Geiger, for example, says his

union is "moving away from hard-nosed collective bargaining." And Geiger says he has joined Shanker in discussing new teacher pay systems with experts and is pushing the NEA to take a larger role in policing its membership.

But many union watchers remain skeptical. The education landscape, they say, is littered with token NEA reform projects designed to give the appearance of reform-mindedness. And local unions mostly lag far behind national union leaders in calling for reform. Still, a handful of meaningful union-backed teacher reforms exist around the nation: the suspension of staffing by seniority in a group of New York City schools; the opening of new Boston schools free of school-board regulations and union work rules; performance-based pay in Cincinnati, and policing of the teaching ranks by peers in Columbus, Ohio.

Teacher unions aren't going to disappear from public education; they are part of its permanent landscape. But as the public's confidence in public education steadily ebbs, and a rising chorus clamors for change, pressure is mounting for teacher unions to merge their goals with the goals of good teaching. "We're losing the public battle," says Ed Doherty, the reform-minded president of the Boston Teachers' Union. "The survival of public education is at stake." To Doherty, the unions' political problem is clear—and so is the solution. The question is whether other union leaders will get the message before it's too late. ■

BY THOMAS TOCH WITH ROBIN M. BENNEFIELD, DANA HAWKINS AND PENNY LOEB



CHARLIE ARCHAMBAULT - USNEWS

based on tougher standards.

in training and retraining of teachers. In his dramatic break with the past, he says he has lost confidence in a first principle of trade unionism—going on strike. "Strikes are political statements. And today, people aren't as sympathetic toward teachers as they were in the past."

Reluctant buyers. Such views put the bookish union leader, who grew up speaking only Yiddish on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, at odds with much of the teacher establishment. National education groups are uneasy with Shanker's candor about the state of the public schools and

his calls for reform. He knows his ideas won't be simple to sell to his membership: He pushed a similar reform agenda a decade ago but abandoned most of it in the early 1990s. "Convincing people to change has been a damn difficult thing to do," he says. "I would go into a state, talk up reform and as soon as I left the union attorney would come in and say, 'We've got a great tenure law, let's keep it.'" Seeking reform means new roles and new attitudes for veteran teachers, Shanker notes. "The union guy in Oshkosh isn't comfortable in the role of teacher retrainer," he

says. "He knows how to handle grievances."

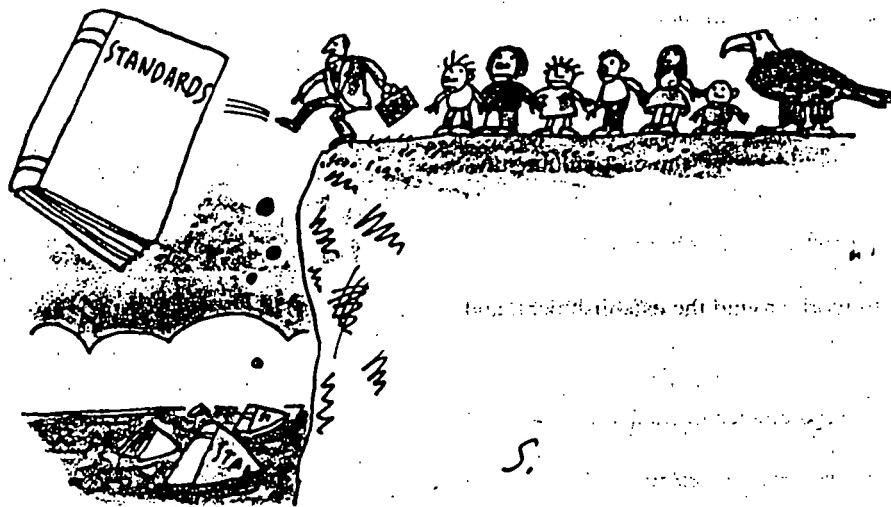
But Shanker says he's taking up the reform banner once again because the stakes have risen dramatically in recent years. "Unless we restore the public's faith in what we do, public education is going to collapse," he warns.

If there's hope in getting unions to focus on teacher quality issues, Shanker says, it's the fact that a growing number of union leaders share his anxiety about the future of public schools. "A lot of our leaders believe that we're close to the end of public education. They never did before." —T.T.

WHAT SHOULD CHILDREN LEARN?

by PAUL GAGNON

*National standards have been thwarted,
but state-mandated academic standards and
local action can yet save the schools*



CAN the wishes of two Presidents, Republican and Democratic, of most governors, of several Congresses, and of up to 80 percent of the American public and teachers simply be ignored? So it seems. Over the past five years all of them have called for national academic standards, to make schools stronger and more equal. But their will has been frustrated by the century-old habits of American educators unable to conceive of excellence and equity co-existing in the schools most children have to attend. This makes a depressing story, but some of it needs telling if those children are to see a happy ending. For to succeed where national efforts failed, state and local school leaders, teachers, parents, and citizens need to understand what they are up against, what has to be done differently, and how much is at stake.

They can begin by recognizing, and tolerating no longer, the vast inertia of an educational establishment entrenched in many university faculties of education; in well-heeled interest associations, with their bureaucracies, journals, and conventions; in hundreds of research centers and consulting firms; in federal, state, and local bureaucracies; in textbook-publishing houses and the aggressive new industries of educational technology and assessment. On the whole this establishment is well-meaning, and it is not monolithic, all of one mind. But its mainstream, trained and engrossed in the means rather than the academic content of education, instinctively resists any reform that starts with content and then lets it shape everything else—most certainly the means.

Starting school reform by first deciding what every child should learn strikes most people as only common sense. But to many American educators, it spells revolutionary change. The standards strategy for school reform would give subject-matter teachers and scholars, and the educated public, unprecedented power to spur genuine change—change far deeper than questions of school choice, methods, or management. Means and management are not the problem. The overused business analogy breaks down: business first decides the content of its product; means follow. But educators, unwilling to focus on subject matter, have never decided what content everyone should know; the curriculum stays frozen, incoherent and unequal. For more than a decade American citizens have wanted high, common standards—the only new idea for their schools in a century. But to get them, they will have to work around the establishment, and overturn the status quo.

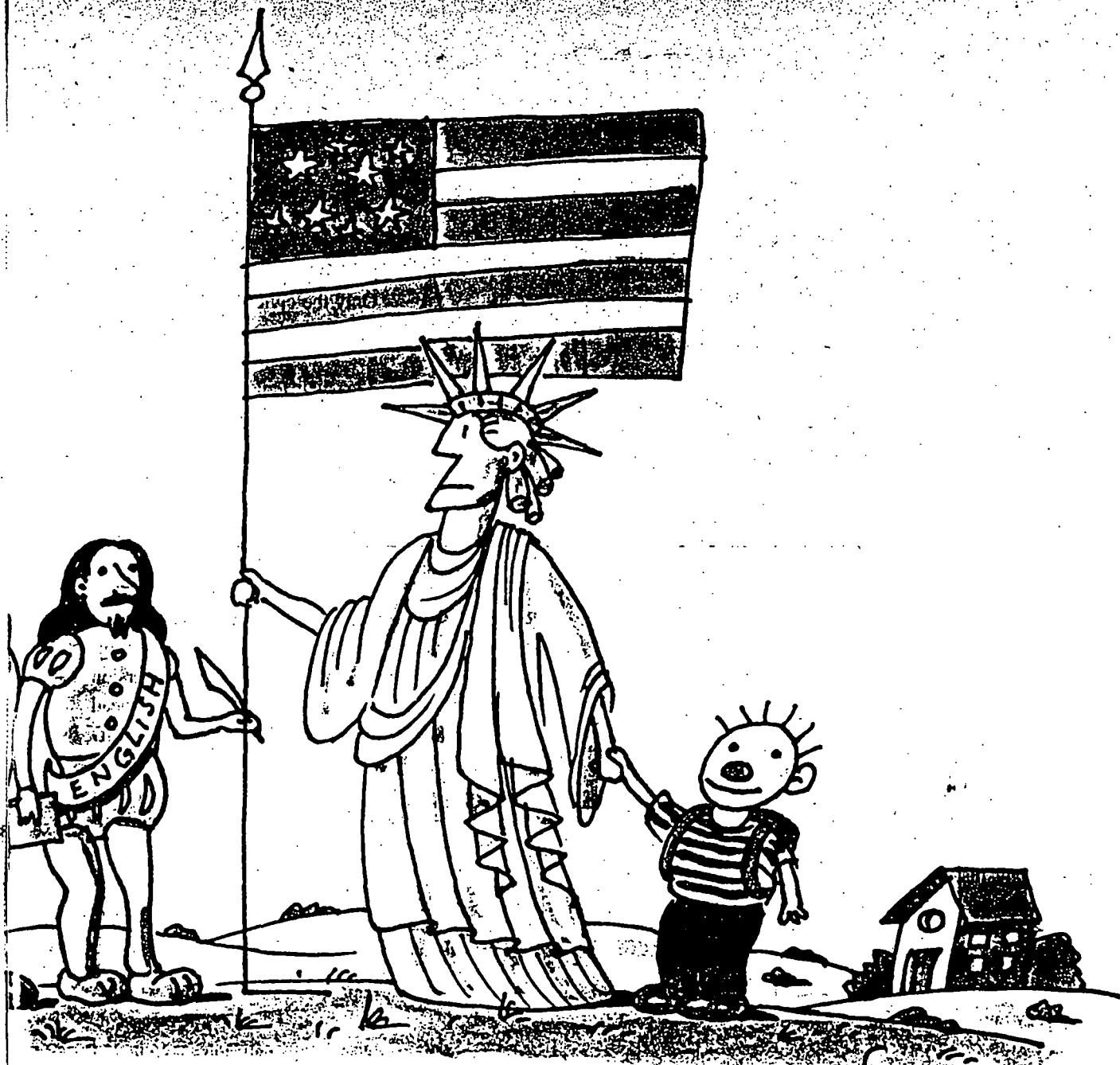
The first step toward change was taken in 1983, when the National Commission on Excellence in Education delivered a ringing wake-up call: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war." The commission's report, *A Nation at Risk*, told us that other countries' schools were doing better in both quality and equality of learning—and ours were losing ground on each count. In the commission's words, "a rising tide of mediocrity" belied our democratic promise that "all, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost."

A Nation at Risk gave rise to the standards strategy for school improvement, talk of the avoidance of which has preoccupied American educators ever since. It said that all high school students, regardless of background or vocational prospects, needed a common core curriculum of four years of English, three years each of mathematics, science, and social studies, and a semester of computer science. The college-bound should add two years of foreign language. In the early 1980s only 13.4 percent of our high school graduates had taken the first four of those "new basics." Adding the computer semester dropped the percentage all the way to 2.7,



and adding foreign language made it 1.9. "Mediocrity" was a mild word for what was going on. But the public paid attention: many states and districts raised their core academic requirements, over the objections of experts who declared that dropout rates would soar, for minorities most of all.

By 1990, the National Center for Education Statistics found, 39.8 percent of high school graduates had taken the recommended years of English, mathematics, science, and social studies; 22.7 percent added the computer semester; 17.3 percent added both computers and the foreign language. Instead of rising, the dropout rate for African-Americans declined, and for Hispanics remained roughly stable. The percentage of African-American students taking the required years of academic subjects rose from 10.1 to 41.1; for His-



panics it rose from 6.3 to 32.7. "Top-down" recommendations, with state and local implementation, had made a difference, and they continue, albeit at a slower rate, to do so.

The glass, however, is still at best half full. And by comparison with the democratization of public schools in other countries, it is well under half empty. Our 25 percent dropout rate means that the roughly 40 percent of high school graduates in 1990 who got the recommended classes made up only 30 percent of all young people of that age. In 1991, in two school systems at opposite ends of the earth, about two thirds of the corresponding Japanese and French age groups completed markedly more-demanding academic programs, which included foreign languages. In both countries about half the students were in programs combining technical and liberal

education. Even disregarding foreign languages, relatively few of our young people graduate from academic programs that are as rigorous as those abroad. For fully equivalent programs, a generous estimate of American completion would be 15 percent—about a quarter of the French and Japanese completion rate.

We used to say—and too many educators still say—that we cannot compare our schools with those of other countries, because they educate only an elite and we try to educate everybody. Untrue for thirty years, this is now the opposite of the truth. They educate the many, and we the few. To our shame, a disadvantaged child has a better chance for an equal and rigorous education, and whatever advancement it may bring, in Paris or Copenhagen than in one of our big cities.

Comparing curricula makes us look bad enough, but what is behind the course titles on student transcripts? Are American courses as substantial as those abroad? To make them so, President George Bush and the nation's governors launched a movement to set national standards for course content at meetings in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1989. Goal Three of their statement insisted that course content be academically "challenging," comparable to that in the best schools here and overseas, and—for equity—that all students be offered such content and be expected to master it. Polls showed overwhelming public support, even for a national curriculum.

Shortly after, Congress set up a National Council on Education Standards and Testing, to "advise on the desirability and feasibility of national standards and tests." In its report of January, 1992, the council recommended both. National content standards, it said, ought to "define what students should know and be able to do" in English, geography, history, mathematics, and science, "with other subjects to follow." A core of common content was needed to "promote educational equity, to preserve democracy and enhance the civic culture, and to improve economic competitiveness." It should set high expectations, not minimal competencies; it should provide focus and direction, not a national curriculum.

The ball was handed off to the U.S. Department of Education, which in turn funded privately based consortia of scholars and teachers to decide what was most worth learning in each major subject. The stage was set to open equal opportunities for learning, to temper the curricular chaos of 15,000 school districts, so that children would no longer be entirely at the mercy of where or to whom they were born. Some of us in the Department of Education were sure it could be done. We were wrong. The department itself never decided how the standards strategy ought to work, or how to explain it to others. Last year four of the national projects it had commissioned—in the arts, civics, geography, and history—issued their documents. (Science and foreign-language projects are still under way. A math project had been separately completed



Had we looked overseas after midcentury, we could have learned from both our allies and our enemies in the Second World War. But we did not and still do not. Those most reluctant to look abroad are the promoters of giddy educational fixes that no foreign country would take seriously, from subjecting schools to the "free market" all the way to killing off academic disciplines in favor of "issue-based inquiry."

in 1991.) After spending more than \$900,000, the English project had been defunded for nonperformance, its professional associations unable to do for our language and literature what other nations have done for theirs. (One subcommittee solemnly voted that the phrase "standard English" be replaced by "privileged dialect.") Only the civics document earned countrywide respect. The others met with disbelief and complaint over their length and extravagant demands. The American-history standards set off an ideological conflict that is still boiling, an issue for presidential candidates at campaign stops. (For an examination of the disappointing standards for world history, see page 74.)

A year after the standards projects reported, the national version of standards-based reform is dead of multiple wounds, some self-inflicted, others from our culture wars, still others from congressional antipathy to any federal initiative, and most from American educators who have long resisted establishing a common core of academic learning. Recovery now depends on the states' choosing their own standards. But where a well-funded nationwide effort collapsed, how can states step in and

do it right? Are we as a people ready to apply the standards of our very best schools, public and private, to all the others, and reform a system that is generally mediocre and shamefully unequal? A century of avoidance says no.

THE TEN AND THE NINE

THE idea that democratic education requires a rigorously academic core for every student is not new. The report of the illustrious Committee of Ten, published in 1894, forcefully articulated it, calling for an established academic curriculum for all high school students, *whether or not they were going to college*. Italics are needed, for the committee was falsely accused in its time of caring only for the college-bound, and thus of being elitist and anti-democratic. This line is still taken by educators who have not read the report.

The story of the Ten's defeat and the triumph of progressive education's dumbed-down version of John Dewey's ideas, which reads eerily like the failure of the national-standards movement today, is best told in Richard Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1964. Chaired by Charles William Eliot, the president of Harvard, the Committee of Ten was made up of six university scholars (several had taught in secondary schools), three high school principals, including the head of the Girls' High School in Boston, and William T. Harris, the U.S. Commissioner of Education. The common core they advocated required four years of foreign language and English language and literature, three to four years of math and science, and two to four years of history. Young Americans taking on the profession of citizen, they said, needed a demanding curriculum, not the "feeble and scrappy" courses offered in too many high schools. This was doubly important for "school children who have no expectation of going to college," so that they might have at maturity "a salutary influence" upon the affairs of the country.

The report could have been written today. It anticipated the progressive pedagogical agenda and our latest "innovations" as well. It decried the "dry and lifeless system of instruction by text-book." Facts alone were repellent; schooling was for "the invaluable mental power which we call the judgment." It deplored mere coverage. To reach a common core of essentials, less was more: "select the paramount." The committee argued for active inquiry in original sources, studies in depth, individual and group projects, seminars, debates and re-enactments, field trips, museum work, mock legislatures and conventions. All possible teaching aids should be used: engravings, photographs, maps, globes, and the "magic lantern." To make time, school hours needed to be longer and more flexible.

For the new curriculum the Ten urged that history, civil government, and geography be taught as one. They wanted history and English "intimately connected," with constant cross-referencing to other countries and eras, to literature and art. They wanted more time for foreign languages, starting in the elementary grades. The continuing education of teachers needed more rigor—courses during the school year, taught by university scholars, for teachers who needed "the spirit or the apparatus to carry their classes outside . . . [the] narrow limits" of textbooks. Educators today reinvent these century-old ideas and declare them "exciting," as though nobody before—least of all academicians—could have thought such things.

The Ten's marriage of common substance and varied methods—exactly the object of today's standards strategy—was broken by the advent of a new corps of nonacademic educators who argued that common requirements would force a multitude of students to drop out. In 1911 a Committee of Nine on the Articulation of High School and College turned the Ten on their heads. The Nine, primarily public school administrators, insisted that school "holding power" depended

on meeting interests that "each boy and girl has at the time." To focus on academics was to enslave the high school to the college, and lead students away from "pursuits for which they are adapted" toward those "for which they are not adapted and in which they are not needed." Schools should focus on industrial arts, agriculture, and "household science."

The influence of what Hofstadter called an "anti-intellectualist movement" also stood out in *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*, issued in 1918 by the National Education Association's Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, and nationally distributed by the U.S. Office of Education. Again made up of administrators, the commission included no academic subjects in its list of seven things high schools ought to teach: health, command of fundamental processes (the three Rs), "worthy" home membership, "worthy" use of leisure, vocation, citizenship, and ethical character. This report, too, could have been written today, by the promoters of content-free brands of "outcomes-based education," which they celebrate as new and "transformational."

MASS TRIAGE

FROM the 1920s on, vast numbers of children were locked into curricular tracks and "ability groups" on the basis of surface differences—race, ethnicity, language, social class, sex, "deportment," and intelligence as categorized by inane notions of testing—that had nothing to do with their potential. At the low point of this mass triage, leaders of the "Life Adjustment" movement of the 1940s consigned up to 80 percent of all American children and adolescents to the nonacademic heap. Hofstadter called it the most anti-democratic moment in the history of schooling. In the next decade James Bryant Conant's influential book *The American High School Today* (1959) still sought no common academic core and considered no more than 20 percent of students as "academically talented." The rest, Conant said, should "follow vocational goals and . . . develop general interests." And in *The Education of American Teachers* (1963), Conant added that at the university level "a prescription of general education is impossible unless one knows, at least approximately, the vocational aspirations of the group in question."

Thus spoke mainstream American educators, habitually failing to recall the three distinct purposes of schooling—for work, for public affairs, for private culture—and ever unable to imagine what free people could be as citizens or private personalities outside their daily work. From the report of the Nine to the present, educators (including those at many universities) have put socializing the masses and job training ahead of intellect. At different times socializing takes on various looks from group to group, left to right. But its common root is distrust of ordinary people's minds and spirit. Unable to think and seek the good, ordinary people must be socially

engineered to amuse themselves and to behave. We boast of escaping the old world's class system; but cherish our own brand of social privilege. Academic standards, educators have said for a century, are not for everyone—as though most people do not deserve or need a liberal education, as though we want them not as equals but only to work and to buy. Beta-minuses out of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. To feel better, we tell one another the story that schools can be "different but equal," a swindle still outliving its twin, "separate but equal."

In contrast, the cataclysms of depression and war brought educators in Europe to other views by the 1950s: it was time to democratize their schools, by leveling upward. As European secondary schools were opened to all, the political parties of the left resolved that the children of workers and the poor should gain whatever personal and political power they could from the same academic curriculum formerly reserved to the few.

A generation earlier America had leveled downward, accepting a dual, unequal school system sold to trusting citizens with warm words of solicitude by expert-specialists. In fact those specialists were perpetuating elitism by denouncing liberal education as elitist. Europeans were not so trusting as we, either of experts or of one another. Out of revolution and class conflict they had raised wariness to a high art, looking behind words for consequences. In Europe the schools had been battlegrounds for ideas about human nature, religion, history, national honor, and democracy itself. European democrats who had suffered Nazi occupation were not about to accept the notion that schools could be different but equal.

Had we looked overseas after midcentury, we could have learned from both our allies and our enemies in the Second World War. But we did not and still do not. Those most reluctant to look abroad are the promoters of giddy educational fixes that no foreign country would take seriously, from subjecting schools to the "free market" all the way to killing off academic disciplines in favor of "issue-based inquiry." Albert Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, puts it squarely, as usual: Americans tolerate a "marked inequality of opportunity in comparison with Ger-



Starting school reform by first deciding what every child should learn strikes most people as only common sense. But to many American educators, it spells revolutionary change. This strategy would give subject-matter teachers, and the educated public, unprecedented power to spur genuine change—change far deeper than questions of school choice, methods, or management.

many, France, or Japan." Why do students work harder in those countries, with the same TV and pop culture to distract them? Because their educators have decided what all students should know by the end of high school, Shanker says, and they have "worked back from these goals to figure out what children should learn by the time they are ages fourteen and nine." Standards are universal and known by everyone, so "fewer students are lost—and fewer teachers are lost."

CONTENT-BASED REFORM

GRANTED, the U.S. Department of Education's own ambivalence did not help the standards strategy's reception. What could easily have been explained as a necessarily slow four-step process—in which most important decisions would be left to states, local districts, schools, and teachers—remained in confusion. And when expensive standards projects refused to discipline themselves and lugged forth great tomes that looked like

national curricula, the department gave up trying. It let go the idea of a national core of essential learning and decided to say that setting standards was now up to the states.

Having fifty sets of standards need not mean disaster. But the Committee of Ten was right: something close to national agreement on a vital common core is indispensable to educational equity, to dislodge and replace the empty, undemanding programs that leave so many children untaught and disadvantaged. Without some such agreement, the much-heralded devolution of reform leadership to the states could make things worse.

The four steps essential to content-based school reform are no mystery. But conventional educators will object to them, for they focus on subject matter and must be carried out by subject-matter teachers and scholars, not by curriculum specialists unlearned in academic disciplines. In step one, teachers and scholars work together under public review to write the content standards—brief, scrupulously selected lists of what is most worth knowing in each academic subject. These have but one function: to lay before students, parents, teachers, and the university teachers of teachers the

essential core of learning that all students in a modern democracy have the right not to be allowed to avoid. "Core" means what it says: teaching it should take no more than two thirds of the time given to each subject, the rest being left to local school and teacher choice.

This step is the most critical but most often misunderstood. What is a subject-matter essential, or "standard," and what is not? It is specific, not abstract, but it does not descend to detail. In history a typical standard asks students to understand the causes of the First World War, with an eye to the technological, economic, social, and political forces at work, together with the roles of individuals, of accident, and of ordinary confusion. It does not ask students to "master the concept of conflict in world history." Nor does it ask them to memorize the names of the twenty central characters in the tragedy of the summer of 1914.

As they select each standard, scholars and teachers must consider whether they can explain its importance when students ask "So what?" The First World War is an easy example. What it did to Americans was to shape their lives and deaths for the rest of the twentieth century—from the Depression and the Second World War to the end of the Cold War, from our hubris of 1945 to our present fantasy that we have spent ourselves too poor even to keep our parks clean or our libraries open. If a standard cannot be explained to the young, or to an educated public, it is either too general or too detailed. In a hurry, some states have issued "common cores of learning" that are lists of healthy attitudes and abstract "learning outcomes." Others have copied detail directly out of the overstuffed national standards documents. Neither is a help to teachers or curriculum makers.

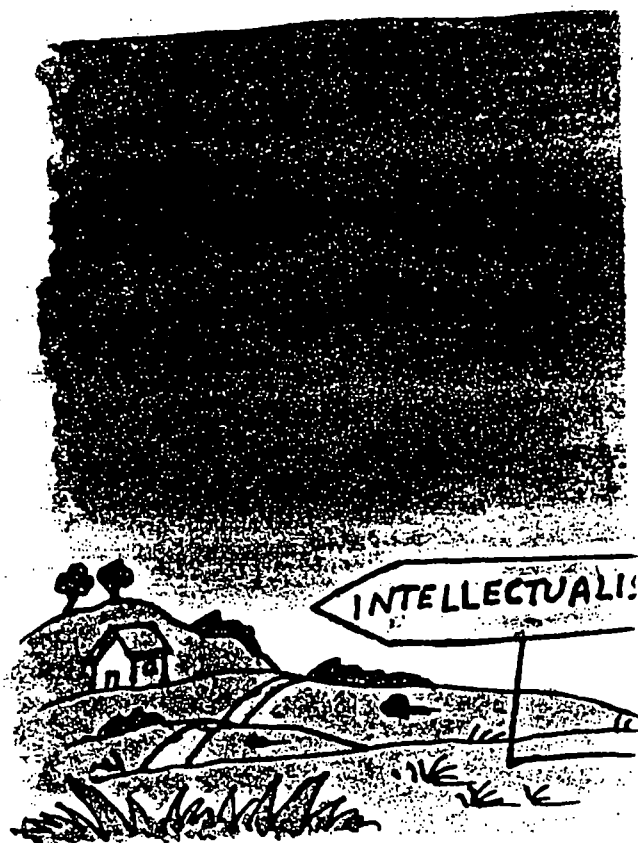
Step two was never "national" business: writing a state curriculum framework, saying in which grades the essentials should be taught. Its function is to end the plague of gaps and repetitions that only American educators seem resigned to accept as normal. Articulating subject matter across the elementary and secondary years also requires a collaboration of equals—teachers, scholars, and learning specialists—each of whom has things to say that the others need to hear. The word "framework," too, means what it says; it leaves the third step—course design and pedagogy—to the school and the teacher. They must have the authority to make the choices most important to them and to their students: the topics and questions by which to teach the essentials, the day-to-day content of instruction, the materials and methods best suited to their students and to their own strengths.

Step four, writing performance standards and tests of achievement, can sensibly follow only when the others have been taken. But some states are hurrying to award expensive contracts to outside testing firms before anyone has thought about, much less decided, what is worth testing. To leave this to experts and let the rush to "accountability"—which

now has a potent assessment lobby behind it—drive standards and course content will kill all chances for school improvement. Not everything precious can be measured, and not everything measurable is worth teaching; pap is pap, a drop or a gallon. So once more it is teachers and scholars who must decide what to assess.

Content-based reform will not always be easy even for teachers and scholars. All who teach, from the grades to graduate school, will have to be differently educated than they now are and teach differently than they now teach. For example, the history learned at any level depends on the prior education of both student and teacher. And the decision about what history to teach must anticipate what is to be learned at higher levels. But this is not how American schools and universities work. Teachers and academicians habitually shape each course as an island entire to itself, as though what they teach, or do not teach, matters to nobody but themselves—as if others had no right to notice, and none to intervene. That must change.

Schoolteachers and university scholars will have to accept each other as equals, because aligning subject matter demands seamless, collaborative work from pre-school through Ph.D. They rarely do so now. Nor do elementary and high school teachers confer, or teachers in the same building. Apart from ego, insecurity, and worries over turf, collaboration takes time, which schools and universities rarely provide, and personal commitment, which they rarely reward. Moreover, to choose essentials and to design frameworks



and assessments, educators will have to debate priorities. What is truly most worth knowing? What must be left out? Academicians avoid such questions at all cost; witness their chaotic college curricula. University faculties will have to alter their major programs, giving up pet courses for others that better prepare the next generation of teachers and help those already teaching. They will have to battle colleagues into coherent general-education requirements for underclassmen. To do all this, academicians will need to be broadly educated, and be differently rewarded by administrative and trustee policies.

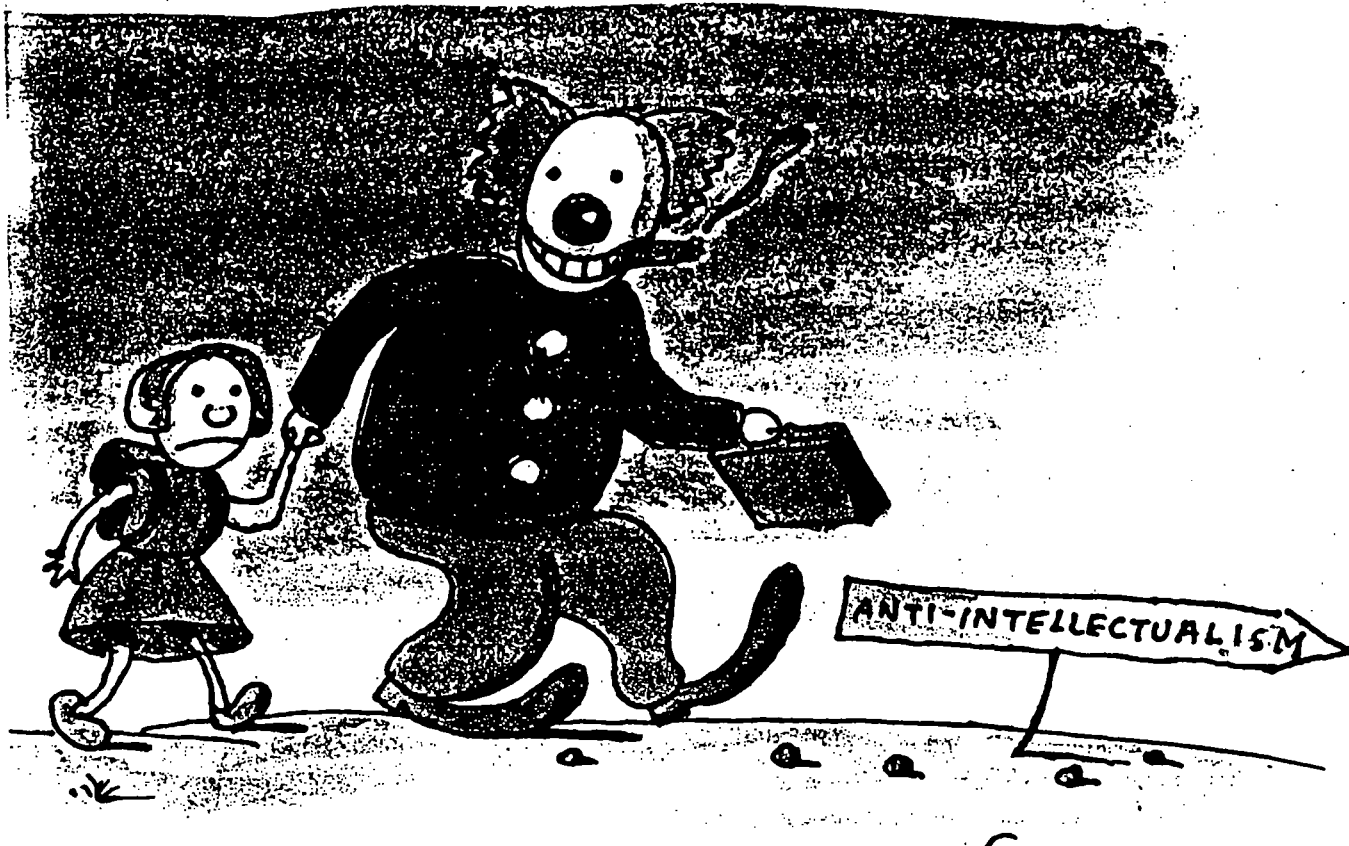
States whose educators accept this degree of change will accomplish standards-based reform. Where change is rejected, they will fail. The hard fact is that anchoring school reform in academic learning—and putting teachers and scholars in charge—is foreign in all senses. It would redirect the mainstream of American education as the twentieth-century parade of much-hyped fashions never has. Life Adjustment, “greening,” the open classroom, “back to basics,” career education, “futures learning,” global consciousness, “doing-a-value,” critical and creative thinking, and “outcomes-based” education (are there other kinds?)—not one of these has ruffled the establishment or gotten beneath the surface to substantial subject matter, and so not one has improved the schools of most American children. Indeed, by leaving weary teachers awash in the debris from successive tides of obsession and indifference, they have made things worse.

OBSTACLES AND PROSPECTS

IF the obstacles reformers confront, the toughest may be our mad utilitarianism. Consider the three aims of schooling—preparing the worker, the citizen, and the cultivated individual. We put the worker ahead of the other two, as if they had no effect on the nation’s economy or the quality of work done. Turning to citizenship, we bypass the substance of history, politics, letters, and ideas and peddle ready-made attitudes. Thus American educators have never had to think consistently about the moral, aesthetic, or intellectual content of public schooling for the masses—the gifts that academic subjects open for everyone.

Since academics have been for the few, it follows that our teacher corps is academically undereducated, ill prepared to offer challenging content to all its charges. Teachers are not to blame. Since so little is expected from most students, the university teachers of teachers—whether in content or pedagogy—see no reason to ask much of *them*. The time it will take to re-prepare teachers is itself an obstacle. There are no shortcuts to content-based reform, which makes it vulnerable to hawkers of new fashions from an education industry whose planned obsolescence leaves *haute couture* in the dust.

States will discover that the changes required by academic school reform will call down showers of objection. “Standards alone will not solve our problems”—as if anyone



thought they could. "Standards will oppress minorities and the poor"—as if the absence of standards does not leave educators free to offer unequal schooling and tax cutters free to slash school spending. "Standards will stifle innovation"—as though clear and equal standards were not the best friends of innovators. Parents have seen far too many passing fads that skew or empty the curriculum. Settled aims will make it easier to experiment with school structure, school size, and all the ways that schools have to be different from one another to meet different circumstances.

States will find friends in teachers and citizens who, not overspecialized, have no ideology to press, and who understand that the three purposes of education—for work, for citizenship, and for private life—are by their nature distinct, many-sided, requiring different, sometimes opposite, modes of teaching aimed at different, sometimes opposite, results. Schooling for work is a "conservative" function, demanding disciplined mastery of tasks from the world of work as it is, not as we wish it to be, and objective testing of student competence. Schooling for citizenship, in contrast, is a "radical" activity, egalitarian and skeptical in style, mixing the hard study of history and ideas with free-swinging exchange on public issues. The school nurtures both teamwork and thorny individualism, at once the readiness to serve and the readiness to resist, for nobody knows ahead of time which the good citizen may have to do. To educate the private person, the school must detach itself much of the time from the clamor of popular culture. It must be conservative in requiring students to confront the range of arts, letters, and right behavior conceived in the past, toward the liberal end that their choices be informed and thereby free.

People well know that to work at these three purposes, schools must serve both society and the individual, must be close to daily life at some moments and wholly insulated at others. They know that different things are learned best in different ways, from drill to brainstorming, and that schools have to be *both* disciplined and easygoing, hierarchical and egalitarian, at different times for different subjects at different levels—mixing pleasure and pain, each often following upon the other.

In sum, they can understand why TheodoreSizer is not indulging in paradox when he says that only "a loose system that has rigor" can correct what he describes in *Horace's School* (1992) as "the inattention of American culture to serious learning." We need, he says, "generous localism" applied with high and common academic expectations. For a century we have resisted this, treating the majority of our children as though they were learning-disabled. We say that knowledge is power, but we have kept knowledge from millions of children, adolescents, and even college students. Our chance to make this long-delayed turn to democratic education is now in the hands of the states and local schools.

Botched Standards

Which is more important for young people to study—Magna Carta or the Mongol empire? The latest answer may surprise you

THE world-history document issued by the National Center for History in the Schools, at UCLA, and funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Humanities, is worth a close look as a cautionary tale for reformers who may assume that scholars see the role of standards more clearly than others do. Given its 314 pages, and the limited time schools allot to world history, it is not helpful even for picking and choosing, because it has no continuing questions to help readers focus on essentials, as better textbooks do. To avoid the battles among specialists that selection would have set off, its authors, careful to offend no vocal constituency, acted on the dubious principle that all societies and all eras back to prehistory deserve equal space in the education of young Americans. By so doing they buried essentials under mounds of undifferentiated matter, much of it academic exotica and antiquarianism.

The document's failure is surprising, because its opening pages are eloquent on why citizens must study history. No reason, it argues, is "more important to a democratic society than this: *Knowledge of history is the precondition of political intelligence.*" It adds, "Without history, a society shares no common memory of where it has been, what its core values are, or what decisions of the past account for present circumstances." Also in italics is Etienne Gilson's remark "*History is the only laboratory we have in which to test the consequences of thought.*" But between the promise and the execution we find a chasm. The volume is weakest on thought and the consequences of ideas, on core values and common memories, not only the West's but any civilization's. It is thin on political turning points and institutions, and thereby on the drama of human choice and its effects. For all its length and pretentious demands, it scants the artistic, literary, and philosophical legacies of world cultures, and it shortchanges the past 250 years, which saw so many of the decisions that "account for present circumstances."

Its treatment of world history has thirty-nine main standards, 108 subheads, and 526 sub-subheads, all of them called standards. None of the main standards or subheads is devoted to ideas, whether philosophical, religious, ethical, or moral, social, economic, or political. One must descend to the 526 sub-subheads, or to fragments of them. Neither the

Judaic nor the Christian principles that are the sources of Western values, morals, and views of justice and of ideas of the individual's dignity and responsibility—even for unreligious or anti-religious thinkers—are given more than one half of a sub-subhead, less than a thousandth of the document's substance. The ideas of Islam and of Protestant reformers fare no better. However, the topic "mastery of horse-riding on the steppes" gets twice that space, the Scythians and the Xiongnu fill two full sub-subheads, and the Olmecs get a main standard all to themselves.

On the secular side, there is nothing of medieval thought about just rules of law, war, economic life, or social responsibility. Later we find nothing of Renaissance or Reformation theory concerning society, economics, or politics. Enlightenment thought and its impact on Church and State are relegated to a single sub-subhead. French revolutionary ideas "on social equality, democracy, human rights, constitutionalism, and nationalism" get one sub-subhead out of ninety-four for the years 1750–1914. For the twentieth century a single sub-subhead asks students to explain the "leading ideas of liberalism, social reformism, conservatism, and socialism as competing ideologies in 20th century Europe." Leninist and Fascist-Nazi ideologies are each assigned half of a sub-subhead, so that only two sub-subheads must do for the political ideas and ideology of the entire twentieth-century world.

In squeezing European civilization, the document is also meager on the political history that makes sophisticated citizens. There is nothing on the failure of Athenian democracy to overcome the forces of pride and demagoguery. The vast questions about Rome's decline that so preoccupied the American Founders are compressed into part of a subhead, less than half the space given the Gupta empire in India. As to politics in the years 1000–1500, a single sub-subhead is

devoted to "analyzing how European monarchies expanded their power at the expense of feudal lords and assessing the growth and limitations of representative institutions in these monarchies." So, buried and unnamed in half of that sub-subhead are Magna Carta and the Model Parliament, along with the prime political lesson that true constitutions require a balance of power in society. In the same era entire standards take up the Mongol empire and sub-Saharan Africa.

The seventeenth-century English Revolution gets a single sub-subhead (out of eighty-four for the era 1450–1770)—no more than "evaluating the interplay of indigenous Indian, Persian, and European influences in Mughal artistic, architectural, literary, and scientific achievements." The authors find nothing special about English constitutional history that American citizens should know, in keeping with today's fashion of decrying "Whig history," as though the worldwide struggle for political freedom, and all of its sacrifice, setbacks, and advances, were only a myth to hoodwink the innocent young. All but absent, too, is the history of labor. In the section covering the twentieth century there is no mention of trade unions, their battles and importance to democracy and social justice, and why totalitarians make them their first victims. Even the vast twentieth-century struggle of liberal democracies to overcome Nazism and Soviet communism fades into pale generalities.

Some of the weaknesses in the world-history document are but the reverse side of American virtues: hopefulness and generosity; our eagerness to embrace diversity, to be self-critical, to shun "ethnocentrism." In what other country do people cringe at that word and are students required to study other cultures but not their own? The standards also reflect our impatience with politics, our reluctance to admit that only politics can turn aspirations into reality, and our impa-



tience with the gloomier views of human nature that accept the presence of evil in the world, and the tragedy and imperfection of the human condition.

The fact remains, however, that in deference to current styles in the history profession, the authors played down the Western sources of their own American consciences, and failed to do the work of selecting what would best serve the education of American students, or of society at large. Fortunately, their introduction makes clear why state and local teacher-scholar teams must do better. Nothing less is at stake than our political competence as a people.

Taking the solidity of democratic institutions for granted, educators have worried too little about the hard things they require citizens to understand. Now, in the mid-1990s, we have reasons to pay more attention. For one thing, it takes a perverse effort of will to deny that the effects of technology

and economics, demography and nature, make our problems and the world's more complicated than ever. Or to deny that nostrums peddled by the loudest voices in politics and talk TV and radio are more simplistic than ever. Or that blaming "government" for every ill and anxiety—while not yet so virulent as under the Weimar Republic—betrays a flaming ignorance of history and human nature.

WHAT HISTORY TEACHES

WITH respect to world history, what should Americans know and teach? What is the main story? It is not the parade of military, technological, and economic "interactions," or the endless comparisons among often incomparable centers of great power, that global studies dwell upon—although these must, of course, be taken into account. The big story is not the push to modernize but the struggle to civilize, to curb the bestial side of human nature. What students can grasp very well is that this is a common struggle, in which all peoples and races are equal—equal in our natures, equal in the historical guilt of forebears who pursued war, slavery, and oppression. Black Africans, Anglo-Americans, Europeans, Native Americans, North African and Middle Eastern peoples, Mongols, Chinese, and Japanese—all have pursued these things when they have had the power to, afflicting one another and weaker neighbors.

For our time, the first lesson to be learned from world history, the most compelling story, is the age-old struggle of people within each culture to limit aggression and greed, to nourish the better side of human nature, to apply morality and law, to keep the peace and render justice. Students can see the glory and agony of this struggle, and how often it has been lost. Because human evil exists, good intent has never been enough. It has taken brains, courage, self-sacrifice, patience, love, and—always with tragic consequences—war itself to contain the beast. Against the twin temptations of wishfulness and cynicism, history says that evil and tragedy are real, that civilization has a high price but that it, too, is real, and has been won from time to time. In history we find the ideas, the conditions, and the famous and ordinary men and women making it possible.

All peoples have taken part in the struggle to civilize. An honest look at the past reveals a common human mixture of altruism, malevolence, and indifference, and reasons for all of us to feel both pride and shame. Starting from any other point of view is historically false, and blind to human nature. Historians—and standard setters—have a special obligation to be candid. But many popular textbooks are unfailingly pious about other cultures and ultra-critical of our own, preaching a new-style ignorance in reaction against, but just as pernicious as, our older textbook pieties about ourselves and disdain for others. Both are pernicious because both sap the will to civilize. People who are taught to feel specially

NIGHT TERRORS

Whose voice is it in mine when the child cries,
terrified in sleep, and half asleep myself I'm there
beside him saying, shh, now easy, shh,

whose voice?—too intimate with all the ways
of solace to be merely mine; so prodigal
in desiring to give, yet so exact in giving

that even before I reach the little bed,
before I touch him, as I do anyway,
already he is breathing quietly again.

Is it my mother's voice in mine, the memory
no memory at all but just the vocal trace,
sheer bodily sensation on the lips and tongue,

of what I may have heard once in the pre-
remembering of infancy, heard once and then
forgot entirely till it was wakened by the cry,

brought back, as if from exile, by the child's cry—
here to the father's voice, where the son again
can ask the mother, and the mother, too, the son:

why has it taken you so long to come?

—ALAN SHAPIRO

guilty, or specially victimized, or naturally superior, will not reach out to others as equals; they will not pay the costs in toil, tears, and taxes always imposed by that struggle.

This is not a "conservative" or "liberal" issue but one of trusting children, adolescents, and adults to work with historical truth, however inconvenient or impolite it may seem. History reinforces the rough notion of equality that we learn on the playground and in the street: there are like proportions of admirable and avoidable people in every imaginable human grouping—by age, class, race, sex, religion, or cultural taste. Individuals are not equal in talent or virtue, and certainly not equally deserving of respect. To teach otherwise is to invite ridicule and resentment. Instead what must repeatedly be taught, because it is not quickly learned—but is quickly forgotten in hard times—is that in civilized society it is every person's *rights* that are equally deserving of respect: rights to free expression, equal protection under law, fair judgment, rigorous education, honest work and pay, an equal chance to pursue the good.

This hard truth we accept, and remember, only with the help of historical insight, which is indispensable in forging a democratic conscience—that inner feeling that we ought to do the right thing even if only out of prudence. For we see again and again that societies failing to accord a good measure of liberty, equality, and justice have hastened their own decay, particularly over the past two centuries, since the American and French revolutions told the world that these three were the proper aims of human life and politics, and that it was right and possible to bring them to reality—by force if necessary.

Student-citizens need to be acutely sensitive to the central political drama of world history since the 1770s—what Sigmond Neumann called the "triple revolution" aimed at national unity and independence, at political democracy and civil rights, and at economic and social justice. This, too, is not a liberal or conservative matter. Whether we approve or deplore these ends, or the means to them, does not lessen their force or our need to deal with them, at home and abroad. Modern history tells us that whenever any one of them is frustrated for long, masses of people will sink to envy, self-pity, fury, and a search for scapegoats, *führers*, and quick, violent solutions.

Good history is not always fun to learn, any more than is chemistry or mathematics, and we should not pretend that it is. The job of citizen is no easier to prepare for than that of doctor or bridge builder. Nor is good history always popular. It denies us the comforts of optimism or pessimism. It gives the lie to nostalgia, whether for left-wing or right-wing or feel-good politics. Its lessons offer no cure for today's problems, only warnings we are silly to ignore. As they select the essentials of U.S. and world history, state and local standard setters and curriculum makers can look for the particulars that teach such lessons best—memorable events, ideas, and people whose stories need telling, but always in the context of longer narrative history.

For example, an American-history standard should require

the ability not only to recall points in the Constitution and Bill of Rights but also to understand the ideas and events behind them, back to Greek and Roman thought and institutions, to Judeo-Christian views of human nature and responsibility, to Magna Carta and the English Revolution, to Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu, Burke, Paine, the Federalists and the anti-Federalists. These essentials are not grasped by playacting a few quarrels from hot Philadelphia afternoons of 1787—though playacting can make a good start if the script is based on original sources.

Moreover, the lesson of the Constitution is not nearly complete without learning the harrowing consequences of a cheap answer to labor shortages that American planters were sure they had found in the early 1600s—slaves from Africa. A tortured Constitution, belying the Declaration's promise, was only one, early payment. The Civil War followed, and even 620,000 dead did not purchase the free and equal Union for which Lincoln prayed in his Second Inaugural. New chains of bondage were forged, and another century of repression and humiliation followed, before the civil-rights movement of the 1960s restarted a process of liberation whose grinding slowness continues to divide and embitter us.

Likewise, a world-history standard on the Second World War teaches little unless that war is seen as a consequence of the outbreak of the First World War and of the murderous incompetence with which it was fought, of the Bolshevik Revolution, of world depression, of the furies and civic ineptitude that destroyed the Weimar Republic, of Hitler's rise on the shoulders of private armies, and of the liberal democracies' wishful rejection of the costs of collective security, from the Paris Conference of 1919 through the Spanish Civil War to the Nazi occupation of Prague in 1939. Nor can it teach nearly enough without examining the Holocaust, the ultimate horror, itself a consequence of all these things and more since the Middle Ages.

The fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War brought back the war's satanic nature, from Rotterdam to Dresden, Nanking and Bataan to Hiroshima. The debates over guilt revealed widespread avoidance of history's warnings. Some seemed to doubt that evil exists and has to be dealt with, even by making war. Others seemed to deny that any war, launched for whatever cause, will carry frightful human consequences, will be as hellish as weapons permit. And 1945 was not the end. The Cold War followed from the effects of both world wars. Draining lives and resources, fouling our politics, skewing economic life, it divided us against one another, from the Red scares of the 1940s and 1950s through the bloody Korean and Vietnam wars. Its legacy clouds our view of a changing world and its needs, not least our own need to distinguish between force that is necessary and force that is not. All these afflictions are consequences of human choices back to 1914 and earlier, many of them in pursuit of cheap, quick answers in defiance of history's lessons and the imperatives of civilized life. ☞

Confidential Draft for Discussion
March 15, 1996

NGA SUMMIT

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~~The following statement will be discussed at the next meeting of the NGA and will be revised to reflect comments and recommendations.~~ This draft is confidential and not for public distribution.

~~The quality of our schools is one of the issues fundamental to America's future and our quality of life. No issue is more fundamental to America's future and our quality of life than our schools.~~ The primary purpose of education is to prepare students to flourish in a democratic society and to work successfully in a global economy. Governors and business leaders recognize that our nation's future depends on all students being able to perform to their highest potential. Our joint leadership is imperative. While parents may play the primary role in making decisions about their children's education, providing high quality educational opportunities and helping parents make good decisions for their children is a Education is a state and local responsibility, ~~and~~ The nation's Governors have made the strengthening of schools a top priority. Business leaders understand that companies can be successful and the nation can be economically viable only if the United States has a world-class workforce.

Notwithstanding the progress that has been made, we agree that substantial and focused efforts must be taken to significantly accelerate student performance. In November 1995, the National Education Goals Panel marked the progress made in achieving the goals at the midpoint between the time they were established and the year 2000, when they are to be achieved. The report shows some positive developments, but it is clear that at the current pace, we will not meet these goals in any area. The report also shows that limited information is being collected to help us understand how students are performing. While we remain committed to the National Education Goals, it is clear that simply setting goals is not enough.

WHY WE HAVE COME TOGETHER

As Governors and leaders of American ~~businesses/corporations~~, we have a stake in the quality and performance of this nation's schools. We are united by our civic responsibilities, our concerns as parents, and our common interest in securing a prosperous future for our states and companies in the twenty-first century. We are compelled by the urgent need for schools to improve and for student academic performance to rise. Students must be challenged to perform at higher academic levels and be expected to demonstrate mastery of core academic subjects. All individuals must be able to think their way through the workday, analyzing problems, proposing solutions, communicating and working cooperatively, and managing resources such as time and materials. Providing all citizens with the opportunity to develop these skills will give our country a competitive edge. Today's economy demands that all high school graduates, whether they are continuing their education or are moving directly into the workforce, have higher levels of skills and knowledge.

Improving our schools is an investment in the future that cannot be postponed. The world and the economy are changing rapidly, but our nation's schools have not kept pace. We believe that schools must be more focused on ~~their clients~~ - students, parents, postsecondary education institutions, and employers. The calendar, structure, and requirements for student performance established at the beginning of this century are not adequate for the next century.

We do not prescribe change simply for the sake of change. The only reason to undertake change is to improve students' academic performance. To do that we must help states or local school districts develop a consensus on what children should know and be able to do. To be

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sure, parents must play a key role in this process. We also recognize that, because of our legitimate differences regarding the content and methods of providing education, building such consensus may be difficult, but such difficulty should not deter us from achieving our goal. This agreement will form the basis for developing high academic content and skill standards. We then must assist states or local school districts in developing assessments to measure student performance and to use such assessments as tool for providing students and parents with continuous feedback about student performance and specific areas where students may need some extra help. And finally, we must put in place the technology, professional development opportunities, and curriculum that will enable both parents and communities as a whole to hold their schools accountable.

EXPLICIT EXPECTATIONS AND SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

We believe that efforts to set clear, common, and community-based academic standards for students in a given school district or state is a necessary step in any effort to improve student performance. Academic standards clearly define what students should know and be able to do at certain points in their schooling to be considered proficient in specific academic areas. We believe that states and communities can benefit from working together to tap into the nation's best thinking on standards and assessments. We also believe that these standards and assessments should integrate both academic and occupational skills. However, standards and assessments are necessary tools to inform and direct our work, not an end unto themselves. We recognize that better use of technology, improved curriculum, better trained educators, and other changes in the organization and management of schools are necessary to facilitate improved student performance. However, without a clear articulation of the skills needed, specific agreement on the academic content students should be learning, clear goals for what needs to be accomplished, and authentic and accurate systems to tell us how well schools and students are doing, efforts to improve our schools will lack direction.

We believe that setting clear academic standards, benchmarking these standards to the highest levels, and accurately assessing student academic performance is a state, or in some cases a local responsibility, depending on the traditions of the state. We do not call for a set of mandatory, federally prescribed standards, but welcome the savings and other benefits offered by collaboration between states and school districts and the opportunities provided by a national clearinghouse of best practices and resources, since rapid changes in a global market call for a mobile and flexible workforce. But in whatever way is chosen, standards must be in place in our schools and must be in place quickly.

TECHNOLOGY TO GIVE STUDENTS THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THEY WILL NEED IN THE WORKPLACE

We are convinced that technology, if applied thoughtfully and well integrated into a curriculum, can be used to boost student performance and ensure a competitive edge for our workforce. It can be used by trained educators in classrooms and other places students learn, such as in libraries, in museums, and at home. Interactive learning

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enables parents and educators to find new ways to help students improve academically, while helping students learn to use the tools that are being used not only in today's high-technology workplaces, but increasingly in any workplace. We cannot reach higher standards without developing new approaches and strategies to help students, teachers, and parents. While not a silver bullet, Technology is one important tool to accomplish this.

Governors and business leaders need to support educators in overcoming the barriers that impede the effective use of technology. Such barriers may include the complexities of planning for the acquisition and integration of technology into classrooms and schools; the high costs of acquiring, developing, and maintaining it; the lack of school technology policies; resistance to change from individuals both within and outside of the education system; and, most important, the need for staff development and curriculum change.

WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE USE OF STANDARDS TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE

We endorse these efforts because we believe it will:

- help all students learn more by demanding higher student performance and providing new methods to help students achieve higher standards;
- provide parents, schools, and communities with an unprecedented opportunity to debate and reach agreement on what students should know and be able to do;
- focus the education system on common, well-defined goals to enable schools to work smarter and more productively;
- reinforce the best teaching and educational practices already found in classrooms and make them the norm; and
- provide real accountability by focusing squarely on results and helping the public and local and state educators evaluate which programs work best.

WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE

We endorse these efforts because we believe that new uses of technology in schools will:

- equalize access to the best instructional methods and materials for all students;
- give families greater access to teachers and schools to increase family involvement and improve student learning;
- provide students with the hands-on experience to develop the knowledge and skills they will need to perform in the workplace;
- find and reinforce the best uses of technology that are already found in schools and classrooms and make them the norm;

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- serve as a driving force for innovation and creativity in order to restructure every aspect of education, raise student performance, and increase the efficiency of school administration;
- offer teachers access to specialized support, collegial relationships, and professional development to improve their effectiveness with students; and
- provide new ways for students to work at their own pace, eliminating the ceiling for those who are already performing well academically, raising the floor, and providing additional assistance to those who need it.

WHAT WE COMMIT TO DO

Swift action must be taken to address these issues. While we commend those states and school districts that have provided leadership to improve student performance, we urge greater progress and for others to increase their effort. We believe that standards can be effective only if they represent what parents, employers, educators, and community members believe children should learn and be able to do. However, the current rate of change needs to be accelerated and no process or time line should deter us from the results. We believe that Governors and business leaders must provide powerful and consistent support to ensure that this effort moves forward swiftly and effectively.

This summit is intended to demonstrate -- to parents, students, educators, our constituents, and clients -- our strong and nonpartisan support of efforts to:

- set clear academic standards for what students need to know or be able to do in core subject areas;
- assist schools in accurately measuring student progress toward reaching these standards;
- make changes to curriculum, teaching techniques, and technology uses based on the results;
- assist schools in overcoming the barriers to using new technology; and
- hold schools and students accountable for demonstrating real improvement.

WHAT SPECIFIC ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE

We commit to the following steps to initiate and/or accelerate our efforts to improve student achievement.

- **Implementing Standards.** As Governors, we commit to the development and establishment of world-class academic standards, assessments, and accountability systems in our states, according to each state's governing structure, within the next two years. For this purpose, we agree to the reallocation of sums sufficient to support implementation of those standards within a clear timetable for a full implementation. Such funds should be available, for the essential professional development, infrastructure, and new technologies needed to meet these goals.
- **Business Practices.** As business leaders, we commit to actively support the work of the Governors to improve student performance and to develop coalitions of other business leaders in our states to expand this support. As such we will clearly communicate to students, parents, schools, and the community the types and levels of skills necessary to

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meet the workforce needs of the next century and implement hiring practices within one year that will require applicants to demonstrate academic achievement through school-based records, such as academic transcripts, portfolios, certificates of initial mastery, or others as appropriate. We also commit to considering the quality of a state's value academic standards and student achievement levels academic excellence as a high priority factor in determining factor in business location decisions. We also agree to adopt policies to support parental involvement in their children's education and in improving their local school. Finally, we commit to developing and helping implement compatible, inexpensive, and easy to use products, services, and software to support teaching.

- **Public Reporting.** As Governors and business leaders, we commit to be held accountable for progress made in our respective states toward improving student achievement in core subject areas. First, we will establish an external, independent, nongovernmental effort to measure and report each state's annual progress in setting standards, improving the quality of teaching, incorporating technology, supporting innovation, and improving student achievement. Second, we will produce and widely distribute in each of our individual states our own annual progress report to educate the public on our efforts in these areas. Outstanding reports will be recognizing annually by the chair of the National Governors' Association at its winter meeting and will be widely disseminated within the states. Third, reports will be released at a high profile televised media announcement in each state, and we will work to coordinate the release nationally to help focus public awareness on this critical issue.
- **Collaboration and Technical Assistance.** As Governors and business leaders, we recognize that states and communities will need resources and technical assistance to develop and implement standards and assessments, to ensure these standards and assessments are of high quality and truly world-class, and to ensure that other parts of the education system reflect and reinforce these standards and assessments. We commit to, where appropriate and useful, work together to pool resources and expertise to move our states forward on this agenda. We also commit to designate a new or existing entity that can facilitate our work together on these issues and can provide guidance, help, and information to interested states and school districts. Finally, we commit to giving high priority to promoting professional development of educators, including efforts to improve instructional methods that use new technologies to help students achieve high standards.
- **Immediate Next Steps:** As Governors and business leaders, we commit to return to our states and immediately begin work on the tasks at hand. While the specific actions will be different in each state, Governors and business leaders will engage in a wide variety of activities to achieve the commitments stated above. Such activities will include: organizing town meetings to build public support and engage parents and communities in improving student performance; reaching out to other Governors and other Business leaders to identify and adopt "Best Practices" and look for opportunities where states and businesses can work collaboratively; arrange for teaching professionals to visit businesses throughout the states to help them develop a better understanding of the needs of employers; organize a state-level Education Summit to develop state-specific plan for developing and implementing standards and assessments; and review current state efforts to report on educational performance and prepare for the report of next year's release.

The following statement will be discussed at the next meeting of the NGA and will be revised to reflect comments and recommendations. This draft is confidential and not for public distribution.

No issue is more fundamental to America's future and our quality of life than our schools. The primary purpose of education is to prepare students to flourish in a democratic society and to work successfully in a global economy. Governors and business leaders recognize that our nation's future depends on all students being able to perform to their highest potential. Our joint leadership is imperative. Education is a state and local responsibility, and the nation's Governors have made the strengthening of schools a top priority. Business leaders understand that companies can be successful and the nation can be economically viable only if the United States has a world-class workforce.

Notwithstanding the progress that has been made, we agree that substantial and focused efforts must be taken to significantly accelerate student performance. In November 1995, the National Education Goals Panel marked the progress made in achieving the goals at the midpoint between the time they were established and the year 2000 when they are to be achieved. The report shows some positive developments, but it is clear that at the current pace, we will not meet these goals in any area. The report also shows that limited information is being collected to help us understand how students are performing. While we remain committed to the National Education Goals, it is clear that simply setting goals is not enough.

WHY WE HAVE COME TOGETHER

As Governors and leaders of American corporations, we have a stake in the quality and performance of this nation's schools. We are united by our civic responsibilities, our concerns as parents, and our common interest in securing a prosperous future for our states and companies in the twenty-first century. We are compelled by the urgent need for schools to improve and for student academic performance to rise. Students must be challenged to perform at higher academic levels and be expected to demonstrate mastery of core academic subjects. All individuals must be able to think their way through the workday, analyzing problems, proposing solutions, communicating and working cooperatively, and managing resources such as time and materials. Providing all citizens with the opportunity to develop these skills will give our country a competitive edge. Today's economy demands that all high school graduates, whether they are continuing their education or are moving directly into the workforce, have higher levels of skills and knowledge.

Improving our schools is an investment in the future that cannot be postponed. The world and the economy are changing rapidly, but our nation's schools have not kept pace. We believe that schools must be more focused on their clients -- students, parents, postsecondary education institutions, and employers. The calendar, structure and requirements for student performance established at the beginning of this century are not adequate for the next century.

We do not prescribe change simply for the sake of change. The only reason to undertake change is to improve students' academic performance. To do that, we must help states or local school districts develop a consensus on what children should know and be able to do. This agreement will form the basis for developing high academic content and skill standards. We then must assist states or local school districts in developing assessments to measure student performance. And, finally put in place the technology, professional development opportunities, and curriculum that will enable communities to hold their schools accountable.

EXPLICIT EXPECTATIONS AND SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

We believe that efforts to set clear, common and community-based academic standards for students in a given school district or state is a necessary step in any effort to improve student performance. Academic standards clearly define what students should know and be able to do at certain points in their schooling to be considered proficient in specific academic areas. We believe that states and communities can benefit from working together to tap into the nation's best thinking on standards and assessments. We also believe that these standards and assessments should integrate both academic and occupational skills. However, standards and assessments are necessary tools to inform and direct our work; not an end unto themselves. We recognize that better use of technology, improved curriculum, better trained educators, and other changes in the organization and management of schools are necessary to facilitate improved student performance. However, without a clear articulation of the skills needed, specific agreement on the academic content students should be learning, clear goals for what needs to be accomplished, and authentic and accurate systems to tell us how well schools and students are doing, efforts to improve our schools will lack direction.

We believe that setting clear academic standards, benchmarking these standards to the highest levels, and accurately assessing student academic performance is a state, or in some cases a local responsibility, depending on the traditions of the state. We do not call for a set of mandatory, federally prescribed standards, but welcome the savings and other benefits offered by collaboration between states and school districts and the opportunities provided by a national clearinghouse of best practices and resources, since rapid changes in a global markets call for a mobile and flexible workforce. But in whatever way is chosen, standards must be in place in our schools and must be in place quickly.

TECHNOLOGY TO GIVE STUDENTS THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THEY WILL NEED IN THE WORKPLACE

We are convinced that technology, if applied thoughtfully and well integrated into a curriculum, can be used to boost student performance and ensure a competitive edge for our workforce. It can be used by trained educators in classrooms and other places students learn such as in libraries, in museums, and at home. Interactive learning enables parents and educators to find new ways to help students improve academically while helping students learn to use the tools that are being used not only in today's high-technology workplaces, but increasingly in any workplace. We cannot reach

higher standards without developing new approaches and strategies to help students, teachers and parents. Technology is a tool to accomplish this.

Governors and business leaders need to support educators in overcoming the barriers that impede the effective use of technology. Such barriers may include the complexities of planning for the acquisition and integration of technology into classrooms and schools; the high costs of acquiring, developing and maintaining it, the lack of school technology policies; resistance to change from individuals both within and outside of the education system; and, most important, the need for staff development and curriculum change.

WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE USE OF STANDARDS TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE

We endorse these efforts because we believe it will:

- help all students learn more by demanding higher student performance and providing new methods to help students achieve higher standards;
- provide parents, schools and communities with an unprecedented opportunity to debate and reach agreement on what students should know and be able to do;
- focus the education system on common, well-defined goals to enable schools to work smarter and more productively;
- reinforce the best teaching and educational practices already found in classrooms and make them the norm; and
- provide real accountability by focusing squarely on results and helping the public and local and state educators evaluate which programs work best.

WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE

We endorse these efforts because we believe that new uses of technology in schools will:

- equalize access to the best instructional methods and materials for all students;
- give families greater access to teachers and schools to increase family involvement and improve student learning;
- provide students with hands-on experience to develop the knowledge and skills they will need to perform in the workplace;
- find and reinforce the best uses of technology that are already found in schools and classrooms and make them the norm;
- serve as a driving force for innovation and creativity in order to restructure every aspect of education, raise student performance, and increase the efficiency of school administration;
- offer teachers access to specialized support, collegial relationships, and professional development to improve their effectiveness with students; and

- provide new ways for students to work at their own pace, eliminating the ceiling for those who are already performing well academically, raising the floor and provide additional assistance to those who need it.

WHAT WE COMMIT TO DO

Swift action must be taken to address these issues. While we commend those states and school districts that have provided leadership to improve student performance, we urge greater progress and for others to increase their effort. We believe that standards can be effective only if they represent what parents, employers, educators, and community members believe children should learn and be able to do. However, the current rate of change needs to be accelerated and no process or time line should deter us from the results. We believe that Governors and business leaders must provide powerful and consistent support to ensure that this effort moves forward swiftly and effectively.

This summit is intended to demonstrate -- to parents, students, educators, our constituents, and clients -- our strong and non-partisan support of efforts to:

- set clear academic standards for what students need to know or be able to do in core subject areas;
- assist schools in accurately measuring student progress toward reaching these standards;
- make changes to curriculum, teaching techniques, and technology uses based on the results;
- assist schools in overcoming the barriers to using new technology;
- hold schools and students accountable for demonstrating real improvement.

WHAT SPECIFIC ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE

We commit to the following steps to initiate and/or accelerate our efforts to improve student achievement:

- **Implementing Standards:** As Governors, we commit to the development and establishment of world-class academic standards, assessments and accountability systems in our states, according to each states governing structure, within the next two years. For this purpose, we agree to the reallocation of sums sufficient to support implementation of those standards within a clear timetable for a full implementation. Such funds should be available for the essential professional development, infrastructure and new technologies needed to meet these goals.
- **Business Practices:** As business leaders, we commit to actively support the work of the Governors to improve student performance and to developing coalitions of other business leaders in our states to expand this support. As such we will clearly communicate to students, parents, schools and the community the types and levels of skills necessary to meet the workforce needs of the next century and implement hiring practices within one year that

will require applicants to demonstrate academic achievement through school-based records, such as academic transcripts, portfolios, certificates of initial mastery or others as appropriate. We also commit to value standards and academic excellence as a determining factor in business location decisions. Finally, we commit to developing and helping implement compatible, inexpensive, and easy to use products, services and software to support teaching.

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This draft discussion document was prepared by the Planning Committee that is planning the 1996 National Education Summit:

Governor Tommy G. Thompson, Wisconsin
Governor Roy Romer, Colorado
Governor Terry E. Branstad, Iowa
Governor John Engler, Michigan
Governor Bob Miller, Nevada
Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., North Carolina

Louis V. Gerstner, Jr. - Chairman and CEO, IBM Corporation
Robert E. Allen - Chairman and CEO, AT&T
John L. Clendenin - Chairman and CEO, BellSouth Corporation
George M.C. Fisher - Chairman, President and CEO, Eastman
Kodak Company
John E. Pepper - Chairman & Chief Executive, The Procter
and Gamble Company
Frank Shrontz - CEO and Chairman, The Boeing Company

prejudice. Our nation has endured well into the twentieth century not because of our rhetoric and our wealth, not because we have the longest ca or the whitest iceboxes, or the first color television, but because our ideas individual initiative, individual freedom, and freedom of enterprise have proved to be more workable and more lasting.

Somebody had to say, "Hey, we are off course. Remember what this country is all about." Whether for the individual or for the nation, self best served by transcending self.

It has been my experience that when you have a great idea, people will come out of the woodwork to help you. I don't think we will have any problem once the word gets around as to what we are doing.

I believe that access to the highest quality health care is a right for all Americans—particularly the aged. Health care is a basic civil right which must not be abridged or limited to those who can afford to pay for what they need.

MOSS, Thomas

(1740 - 1808)

Pity the sorrows of a poor old man!
Whose trembling limbs have borne him to your door.
Whose days are dwindled to the shortest span;
Oh! give relief—and Heaven will bless your store.

MOTHER TERESA

(1910 -)

There is joy in transcending self in order to serve others.

There are a lot of ills in life, including homelessness and disease, but the worst of these is to be deprived of love.

Love—the more you share with others, the more you have.

We do not need guns and bombs. We need love and compassion to overcome evil. All the works of love are works of peace.

I know only one thing. If people had more love for each other, our life would be a lot better.

The test at the end of life is not what you do. It is how much of yourself you put into what you do.

Man's greatest sin is not hatred, but indifference to one's brothers.

All of us are but His instruments, who do our little bit and pass by.

God loves the world through us.

Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless.

I tried to give the poor people for love what the rich could get for money—no. I wouldn't touch a leper for 1,000 pounds, yet I'm willing to cure him for the love of God.

Not giving up everything, that's not important. What is important is compassion and presence. The world has never needed you so much as today.

I do nothing by myself. I am merely God's pencil.

We do God's work; he provides the means.

I hope you are not giving only your surplus, you must give what costs you. Make a sacrifice. Go without something you like that your gift may have value before God.

It is easy to love the people far away; it is not easy to love those who live right next to us. There are thousands of people dying for a piece of bread. There are a thousand more dying for a little bit of love, for a little bit of acknowledgment.

You've got to love God with all of your soul and to love the hole in your heart as much as your heart.

People throughout the world may look different or have different religion, education or position, but they are all the same. They are all people to be loved. They are all hungry for love.

Love cannot remain by itself; it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action and that action is service.

How do we put the love for God in action? By being faithful to our family, to the duties that God entrusted to us. Whatever form we are, able or disabled, rich or poor, it is not how much we do but how much love we put into doing.

Every work of love done with a full heart always brings people close to God.

Prayer in action is love. Love in action is service.

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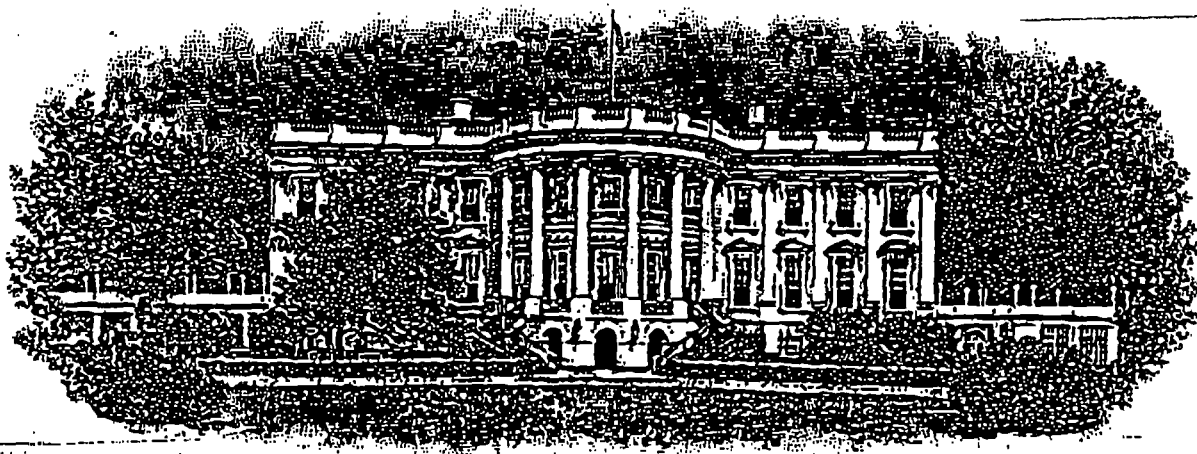
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DOMESTIC POLICY

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John D. Deardourff

Guarantees For the Children

For 18 months numerous members of Congress have been pushing legislation that would all but eliminate crucial federal safety net programs for poor children and turn them into block grants to the states. More recently, they were joined by the Republican-dominated National Governors' Association. Programs such as Medicaid, foster care, Aid to Families with Dependent Children and child nutrition would be stripped of most of the rules that now ensure at least minimal help to hungry, poor, sick, abused or neglected children, regardless of where they happen to live. In place of these guarantees, states would be given reduced federal funds and broad new flexibility—in some cases nearly total flexibility—to operate the programs as they see fit.

Enactment of these proposals in their present form would almost certainly mean grave, irreparable harm to millions of America's most defenseless children. Having just participated in an extensive 18-month study of how state capitols work and how to protect children in the state legislative process, I have personally concluded that some basic national guarantees are essential. Without them, children will be the certain losers when state governments divide up a shrinking pot of federal funds.

This is not to say that states and local governments should not have considerably more flexibility in running these programs. They should. And I am not suggesting that most governors and state legislators don't care about poor children or families in their states. Most do care. But I also know that politics is politics, and when the horse-trading starts in state capitols, poor children are often left far behind.

have underfunded child-care help for poor working families so badly that they have substantial waiting lists of children, needing such help. And no state currently comes anywhere close to providing enough money to fund Head Start programs for each child who meets the eligibility requirements.

It is a cliché by now that children don't vote or make campaign contributions. But that cliché rests on the powerful truth that children in fact do not have any direct access to the levers of political power. And their political powerlessness is exacerbated by the fiscal incentives built into many of these block grant plans, to slash benefits for children. In the National Governors' Association Medicaid plan, for example, children are singled out among various populations for a funding cap that will force many

states to toss more and more children out of the Medicaid program. More than 4 million children—most of them from poor working families—could lose their guaranteed Medicaid health care coverage.

Gary Stangler, director of the Missouri Department of Social Services, has predicted that children and pregnant women will bear the brunt of funding cuts in the absence of some basic national guarantees. "That's where we'd have to go," he says, explaining that the greater political clout of the disabled and elderly would make it politically impossible for his state to cut eligibility or benefits for those large groups.

The multi-year study of how children fare in state capitols in which I participated was undertaken by the State Legislative Leaders Foundation. That study had its origin in trying to figure out why state budget cuts in the 1991 recession had their most damaging effect on children and families. As part of the study, my colleagues and I conducted lengthy personal interviews with 177 state legislative leaders, from both parties, in all 50 states. We also interviewed 167 state-based child advocacy organizations in every part of the country.

cated people working hard for children in many state capitols, in state after state, these children's advocates are outgunned by richer and more powerful interests, whether homebuilders, truckers, nursing home operators, trial lawyers, veterans or the elderly. Children's advocates typically have far less staff, money, visibility—and effectiveness. In most states they have little or no access to the top legislative decision-makers.

A legislative leader from a large mid-western state put it to me bluntly: "Hell, funeral home directors have more clout in our state than child advocates." The speaker of the house in a large eastern state was even more explicit. "If we have \$20 million and the choice is between spending it for senior citizens or poor kids, it's no contest. The seniors get the money every time."

The reality is that in all but a handful of the largest states, state legislatures operate part-time, with very limited staff help. Lobbyists play a huge role in what goes on, and that role is growing with the advent of term limits. In the absence of federal safety net guarantees, the powerful special interests that can afford full-time lobbyists and who provide money and manpower to political campaigns will inevitably get far more than vulnerable children when public resources are allocated.

Nobody who really knows the politics of most state capitols can seriously doubt what block grants would mean: a massive hemorrhage of protections and funds from children's and families' health care, child care, nutrition, income help and protective services.

This is a tragedy that is close to inevitable unless the governors and Congress rethink these block grants and find constructive ways to give states greater flexibility without sacrificing basic guarantees for our most vulnerable families and children.

The writer is a Republican political consultant.

THE WASHINGTON POST

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