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National Tests Show Students Have Improved in Math

By PETER APPLEBOME

In a generally encouraging sign of progress in American education, the latest report from the only national assessment of educational achievement shows steady and significant progress in mathematics test results by the nation's fourth-, eighth-, and 12th-grade students.

Scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress test, or NAEP, released yesterday showed that the percentage of the nation's fourth graders performing at or above what the study says is a basic level rose to 64 percent last year, from 59 percent in 1992; the percentage of eighth graders at that level rose to 62 percent, from 58 percent and the percentage of 12 graders increased to 69 percent, from 64 percent.

The figures come a few months after a closely watched survey showed American students scoring at the international average in science and just below it in math. But they also coincide with rising mathe-

But the tests also provide evidence that the persistent gloom about the nation's schools may be overstated. And the fact that the improvements come in the field that was the first to adopt national standards leads some experts to see a reason to hope that intensified focus and standards can produce results.

Education Secretary Richard W. Riley today noted the mixed messages in the new report.

Mr. Riley hailed the signs of progress, saying, "This is good news and another sign that we are turning the corner when it comes to improving American education."

But he added that the progress was not enough.

"Our national scores may be going up," he said, "but we are still far behind world-class standards."

In fact, although more than three in five eighth graders reached what is considered a basic level of performance on the test, only about one in four eighth graders reached the more rigorous "proficient" level for their grade.

The states that performed best on the test, Mr. Riley said, were North Dakota, Maine, Minnesota, Iowa, Montana, Wisconsin and Nebraska. The ones that showed the most improvement were North Carolina, Michigan and Texas. North Carolina improved its score by 17 points on a 500-point scale since 1990.

New York State's eighth graders went from 57 percent performing at or above a basic level in 1992 to 61 percent in 1996. In 1990, 50 percent of students were at or above a basic level. Connecticut went to 70 percent in 1996, from 64 percent in 1992. New Jersey's eighth-grade score was not listed.

The NAEP tests, which evaluate mathematics, reading and other subjects, are considered the only continuing, nationally representative assessment of learning. They were established by Federal law and have been measuring student achievement for 27 years.

The NAEP scores use a sample of students to serve as a barometer of how the nation and states are performing. President Clinton has proposed that a similar national examination be made available to test all fourth graders in reading and all eighth graders in math starting in 1999. That test could measure the ability of individual students and provide for comparisons between school districts and states.

According to the NAEP results released yesterday, eighth and 12th-grade boys and girls showed similar results on the tests. But fourth-grade

boys scored higher than fourth-grade girls.

Black, Hispanic and American Indian children scored below whites, and the gap between them was essentially unchanged from 1992 to 1996.

Overall, the report on the tests said, the more education parents had, the higher the scores of their children.

Gail Burrill, president of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics said the figures show the results of efforts to improve teacher training and to develop national standards as well as teaching methods that stress reasoning, concepts and problem solving.

"The figures are really encouraging," Ms. Burrill said. "It's very exciting to have this kind of rise, to show that our kids are actually able to achieve more."

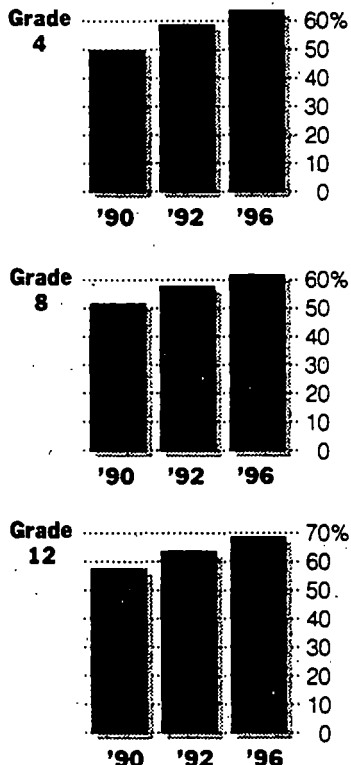
Despite the rise in math scores, recent reading scores on NAEP tests have been flat. Richard Mills, the New York Commissioner of Education, said the disparity in math and reading scores reflects the degree to which schools have focused on math.

"In the national reports and in the New York report card, we're finding that when we concentrate, we get results, when we don't, we don't," he said. "Looking at these results, no one can convince me we can't turn our reading scores around as well."

STATUS REPORT

Positive Numbers

The percentage of students testing at or above basic levels in math continues to improve, as indicated by the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress Mathematics Report Card.



Source: Department of Education

The New York Times

mathematics scores from other examinations like the S.A.T. 1: Reasoning Test and the American College Test. Taken together, the tests show some mixed results and offer no grounds for complacency. There is no chance that the United States will meet the national goal set out in 1990 of being first in the world in mathematics and science by 2000.

The New York Times

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1997

Bill Would Keep Most Visitors To U.S. From Buying Firearms

By ADAM CLYMER

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27 — Reacting to Sunday's shootings at the Empire State Building, Senators Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts and Richard J. Durbin of Illinois introduced a bill today to prohibit foreign visitors to the United States from buying or carrying firearms.

Mr. Durbin told the Senate: "Our nation is a terrorist target. We should not be putting guns in the hands of would-be terrorists."

After the shootings by Ali Abu Kamal, a Palestinian in the United States on a nonimmigrant visitor's visa who had bought a semiautomatic handgun in Florida, the bill proposed by the two Democrats might have an easier course than most gun control measures in Congress.

Two leading Republican foes of most legislation that curbs gun ownership, Senators Larry E. Craig of Idaho and Ted Stevens of Alaska, said they wanted to consider the proposal. "I'm going to take it under advisement," Mr. Craig said. "I

would not reject it out of hand."

A spokesman for the National Rifle Association said it wanted to study the proposal but was dubious about it. He said foreigners come to the United States seeking freedom, including "the freedom to protect themselves."

The Kennedy-Durbin bill would allow bodyguards of foreign leaders and embassy guards to possess firearms. It would also make an exception for foreign citizens visiting the United States to hunt or to take part in rifle or pistol competitions.

The bill's prohibitions would apply to all other foreigners except those here on immigrant visas.

The measure would also make it a crime for a gun dealer to knowingly sell a firearm to a foreigner not qualified under the law to own one.

Violations of the proposed law would be punishable by up to 10 years in prison. Gun buyers would be required to certify, under penalty of perjury, that they were not foreigners prohibited by the law from buying firearms.

The New York Times

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1997

Confidence Expressed on Redrawing District

By JONATHAN P. HICKS

One day after a three-judge Federal panel invalidated the boundaries of the largely Hispanic 12th Congressional District, Democratic elected officials predicted that they could redraw it without affecting the lines of at least half of the 14 city-based districts or endangering the re-election prospects of incumbents.

While several of members of Congress from New York said they found the prospect of changes to their districts unsettling, they and redistricting experts said that those changes were unlikely to dilute an incumbent's chances of winning re-election next year.

On Wednesday, a Federal court ruled that the district, which includes largely Hispanic neighborhoods in Queens, Brooklyn and lower Manhattan, was unconstitutional because race and ethnicity were the predominant factors in drawing its boundaries. The district is represented by Nydia M. Velazquez, a Democrat.

Joseph L. Bruno, the majority leader of the Republican-controlled State Senate, said he had already asked the Legislature's task force on redistricting to look at the matter. "It is our intention to comply with the court's decision and redraw the Congressional boundaries by the July 30 deadline," Mr. Bruno said in a statement. The Legislature has until then to approve a plan, which would then be submitted to Gov. George E. Pataki. If the Governor and the Legislature miss the deadline, the court could appoint its own

experts to redraw the districts.

Discussions about altering Congressional boundaries — always an acrimonious business in the Legislature — could serve as a dry run for other redistricting battles certain to come following the census in the year 2000. Because of projected shifts in population nationwide, New York State is expected to lose one or two of its 31 current seats. In the last reapportionment after the 1990 census, the state lost three seats.

Several Democrats in the State Legislature made it clear that they were very interested in maintaining a largely Hispanic Congressional district, but in a way that would not subject other incumbents to big changes in their districts, in effect, protecting their re-election prospects. The leader of the Democratic-controlled Assembly, Sheldon Silver of Manhattan, said he had not yet determined whether to appeal the court's decision.

He expressed confidence that the boundaries of the 12th District could be redrawn with a minimum of partisan bickering with the Senate since the affected areas are represented by Democratic incumbents. He also predicted little impact on the rest of the 14 districts within New York City. "I would see the least intrusive approach as being the most effective," he said. "It should only affect maybe three or four districts."

Redistricting experts agreed. "When the Legislature is through with this, there will likely be nominal changes in order to make the district

more contiguous," said Alan Gartner, a professor at the City University of New York's Graduate Center who was an expert appointed by New York State's courts to draw a map of 31 Congressional districts. "But there will also be a strong effort to protect the incumbents."

Several incumbents said that living through the process of altering lines would be unpleasant. "Do I find this unsettling?" asked Representative Carolyn B. Maloney, a Democrat, whose district is considered likely to be redrawn. "Well, no one likes to go through redistricting. I don't like change. I love my district. I intend to run and win in whatever lines they draw."

Meanwhile, Ms. Velazquez repeated her intention to appeal the court's decision. She said she planned to press for a mostly Hispanic district and to run in a 12th District, no matter how it is configured.

Ms. Velazquez, the first Puerto Rican woman elected to the House of Representatives, made her remarks during a news conference yesterday. "This case is not about Nydia Velazquez, it is about our communities," she said. "It is about fair representation and our ability to address the complex issues of race." She added that the lawsuit "is but a legal curtain that hides the racist agenda of certain extremists." Her remarks appeared to be an attack on the Campaign for a Color-Blind America, a Texas-based nonprofit group that has filed suits against predominantly minority districts in other states.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

March 3, 1997

To: Michael Waldman

Fr: Kevin Sullivan

Re: Lansing, Michigan/ Raleigh, N.C. events

Attached is Secretary Riley's annual State of Education speech that has some themes and language that you may find useful for these two events and others.

The Secretary supported the President's "call to action" in his speech but went on to list six specific action steps that need to be taken to make it happen. His emphasis on what to do about "failing schools" (p. 7/8) and "how to improve teacher preparation" (p.9-10-11) got significant press attention.

The Secretary also announced in his speech that he will hold a national forum on teacher recruitment and preparation this Spring. This has generated a lot of interest and it will help us if the President mentions the forum in his Raleigh remarks -- see page 11 of the speech. I'll send more details over later this week.

c.c. Dan Pink

RICHARD W. RILEY
U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

**FOURTH ANNUAL STATE OF AMERICAN
EDUCATION ADDRESS**

PUTTING STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE INTO ACTION
The Carter Center, Atlanta Georgia
February 18, 1997

President and Mrs. Carter, Senator Cleland, Governor and Mrs. Miller, ladies and gentlemen: I am pleased to be here in Atlanta to give my fourth annual state of American education speech. I begin by extending my thanks to President Carter for his kindness in introducing me, and for his foresight in creating the U.S. Department of Education.

Many years ago, when President Carter created the Department there was some heated criticism. It was not needed, critics charged, and through the years they never gave up. And, yet today, can anyone really say that advancing education should not be our nation's number one priority?

I tell you, Mr. President, when I go into a Cabinet meeting, I take all the children and college students of America with me. There I see to it that they are represented, that their education is always an issue to be dealt with. Mr. President, on behalf of all these young people, I want to thank you for creating a seat in the President's Cabinet dedicated to advancing American education.

Four years ago, I began this tradition by giving my first speech at Georgetown University, President Clinton's alma mater. Each year since then, I have tried to capture some feature of American education that deserves our attention.

All of these speeches, and the one I intend to give today, are rooted in my belief that we need to stop dumbing down our children, and reach up and set higher expectations. We need to unleash all the brain power stored in the heads of America's young people, and make excellence happen. Our children are smarter than we think. We must give them more responsibility as young children and then expect more of them as they grow and develop.

If ever there was a time to push American education to a higher level, it is now. The sparks are all around us, and many of them have been created by President Clinton, and by so many of you here today and those of you joining us from around the country at the many downlink sites. Keep up your good work, you are making things happen.

Everywhere I go I feel it -- the excitement and the determination of the American people to expect more from our schools and more from their children. This preoccupation with education is as old as America itself. Even before they wrote the Constitution, our Founding Fathers set aside land for the common school. Now, at the edge of the 21st century, the high expectations of the

American people can only be achieved if we strive for national standards of excellence, and commit ourselves to decisive reform on every front.

This is the purpose of my speech today: to suggest to you how we can put standards of excellence into action to improve American education. And to tell you that we must not drift nor lose time.

I have a very personal stake in this effort. Last year, when I gave this speech in Saint Louis I had the pleasure of announcing the birth of my seventh grandchild -- Anna Maureen Riley. Well, my children seem to be on a regular schedule. So today I announce the birth of my eighth grandchild, Maryann Gardiner Riley, just three weeks ago.

I have a lot invested in the education of Anna and Maryann and their six cousins. I intend to read wonderful children's books to both of them -- books like The Wednesday Surprise by Eve Bunting.

The Progress of the South in Setting High Expectations

As we move toward the 21st century, nothing should be more important to us as a nation than the actions we take now to help our young people prepare for the future. This is one of the principal reasons why I chose to come to Atlanta to give this speech.

Georgia is an example to the nation. From your emphasis on early childhood -- to tougher requirements for high school graduation -- to Hope Scholarships for college -- Georgia is a state on the move. I commend you, Governor Miller, for your leadership. Georgia has opened the doors of college to all of its citizens and given young people a reason to buckle down and get smart.

Listen to what a Georgia State freshman told NBC News just two weeks ago: "Without the Hope Scholarship, I wouldn't be going to college because my parents can't afford it."

And one high school freshman said: "I started thinking about the Hope Scholarship when I was in the 6th grade, and I started concentrating on my grades and how I wanted to keep them up."

These are powerful statements. They express hope and something more -- when we give young people something to respond to, they make the connection. They change their expectations and study habits in a fundamental way. This is exactly what President Clinton seeks to achieve in creating a national Hope Scholarship initiative.

Yet we are told by some Washington pundits that this is unwise -- too costly they say -- and not needed. A few even go on to suggest that too many Americans want to go to college. Well, I know this President. He isn't about to put a ceiling on the dream of any American who wants to work hard to get an education. Every American should have that chance.

Here in the South, we were once stuck in the rut of low expectations. Not any more. We have come a long way in the last 20 years. Many more children are in kindergarten and programs for four-year-olds. Almost 60 percent of high school graduates are now taking the tough academic courses that prepare them for college. This is a four-fold increase since the mid-80's.

College attendance in the South is close to reaching the national level -- another new milestone. And the Southeast, like much of the country, is responding to record breaking enrollments by hiring many more new teachers.

Much of the credit for this progress must go to educators like Mark Musick and the leadership of the Southern Regional Education Board for staying the course to raise standards.

The Changing Context of American Education

This is good progress but we cannot be satisfied. Knowledge is exploding all around us. We live in a new golden age of discovery. Astronomers probe the unfolding majesty of the universe, even as scientists race to map the genetic makeup of humanity. Yet we struggle to put the old industrial model of education behind us.

And, never before have our nation's classrooms been so crowded. From Los Angeles to Gwinnett County here in Georgia to Fort Lauderdale, Florida -- the portable classroom is a common sight in school yards. That is why our president has proposed a \$5 billion initiative to jump start school construction.

The entire context of American education is changing. We need teachers skilled in using computers as a powerful teaching tool, and many more teachers well-versed in teaching English as a second language. Our teachers need to teach to a higher level of achievement, and be prepared to teach all of America's children -- the gifted and talented, our many new immigrants, the college-bound achiever, and the disabled child who is learning so much more because he or she is now included.

We have much to do. Achievement scores are not moving up fast enough. Truancy and drop-out rates are still too high. The equity gap in school financing remains a nagging problem in too many states. The jewel of American education is our system of higher education -- yet, too many families struggle to pay tuition, and too many high school graduates are going to college but not graduating.

Education as a National Priority

Today, more than ever before, education is the engine that drives our economy. Education is now the great "fault line" that determines who is part of the American Dream. The earnings gap between the educated and the less educated is growing, and it will continue to grow unless we educate all of our young people to high standards. An average

education just isn't good enough anymore.

Automobile plants seek new hires who have some college education. America's new entrepreneurs and small business owners are just about desperate to find employees who are motivated, creative and well-educated. The military recruits only high school graduates who score in the upper half of their class in verbal and math skills. And our great institutions of higher learning want freshmen who don't need remedial help.

And here I shall be as strong as I can be. There can be no equality in this nation without a renewed commitment to excellence. Educating every child to use his or her God-given talent is the pre-condition for full equality. One cannot happen without the other.

My friends, we have the attention of the American people. Our country is prosperous and at peace. We have the unique opportunity to do what is best for our children. This should be our great patriotic cause -- our national mission -- giving all of our children a world-class education by putting standards of excellence into action.

The President's Call to Action

This is why President Clinton, in his State of the Union speech, gave us a bold vision of what American education can become. From helping our children to master the basics -- to better teaching and modernizing our schools -- to helping families pay for college through increased Pell Grants and Hope Scholarships -- the President has made excellence in education our national mission.

The President's 10-point "Call to Action" is a bold approach that is national in scope -- yet local in action because that's the American way. This is leadership at its best. I am pleased that the Congress has joined President Clinton in a bi-partisan commitment to make sure that politics stops "at the schoolhouse door." As I have said before, we don't educate our children as Democrats or Republicans. We educate them as Americans.

This is what the American people want and expect of us. I urge Congress to pass the President's education agenda and to recognize the important contributions that it can make this year to advancing American education.

This year, the Congress will have to re-authorize many major pieces of legislation: Voc-ed, Adult-ed, Voc-rehab and the IDEA bill that insures the education of 5.4 million disabled children. And I am pleased by the open dialogue I have had with the higher education community as we prepare to re-authorize the Higher Education Act.

But we have much more to do. We are rushing headlong toward the 21st century, yet too many of our young people are falling by the wayside. I want to be very clear. It's not enough to have high expectations or set challenging standards. We must put standards of excellence into action.

This is my agenda.

Our young people must master the basics once and for all. Our schools need to rethink and shake-up our current approach to drug prevention. Fixing failing schools must become our first order of business, not our last. Our children need to be part of the Information Age sooner rather than later -- to get connected to the world of technology as it unfolds around them.

We must make sweeping changes in how we prepare America's teachers. Public schools and higher education must develop a fundamentally new relationship -- a new partnership to prepare young people for college-level work. And, we need a smart tax policy for the 21st century to support life-long learning for all Americans.

First: we must master the basics once and for all. Forty percent of our children are not reading as well as they should by the end of the third grade. And this nation is below the international average when it comes to 8th grade math.

That's just not good enough in my book. All of our research tells us that reading well by the 4th grade and having good math skills -- including algebra and some geometry -- by the 8th grade are critical turning points in the education of our young people.

This is why the President has called for challenging, voluntary national tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math. We have a President who has the courage to fight for our children's education, respecting the state and local role but challenging our schools and communities to get on with it.

Reading is reading. Math is math. For these basics, let's not cloud our children's future with silly arguments about federal government intrusion. These proposed tests are an opportunity not a requirement, a national challenge not a national curriculum.

The President and I are firmly opposed to any form of national curriculum. And we have done all we can to cut red tape and cut people loose. In the last four years, we have eliminated about half of all federal regulations for elementary and secondary education, while never losing sight of our constitutional obligations.

I encourage every state and school district to accept the challenge by the President to participate in these voluntary national tests. Yes, there may be a high failure rate in the beginning. But in time, we will have a high success rate as well -- if all Americans see themselves as part of the solution.

The President's effort to support the work of one million volunteer tutors through the *America Reads Challenge* is a clear message that the solutions must come from the American people. This is why I am pleased to announce that a broad spectrum of religious denominations here in

Atlanta will spearhead a drive to support the President's reading challenge.

Led by the Georgia Baptist Literacy Mission, the Atlanta Board of Rabbis, the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church, Atlanta's faith communities are going to make sure every child in Atlanta is reading a book. And, in the weeks ahead, I will work with religious leaders from across the country to rally tens of thousands of volunteers to this national effort.

If reading well is the first basic, we also know that math is the gateway to learning many more advanced skills. In the last decade, we have made substantial progress in improving math and science education.

But we need to notch up our standards even higher. Only 20 percent of our young people are taking algebra by the end of the 8th grade. In the rest of the advanced world, the vast majority-- if not all -- students have studied algebra by the end of the eighth grade. I believe our students should do the same.

Protecting Our Children from Drugs and Violence

The next point I want to emphasize and this is critical -- achievement can only occur if we have schools that are safe and drug-free. An unsafe school is a failing school. Children cannot learn if they are surrounded by drugs and violence. Today, we are confronted by the fact that eighth-grade drug use is up for the fifth year in a row.

Here I want to speak directly to baby-boomers who are now parents. Some of you have tried it all, and now you know better-- don't send your children a mixed message when it comes to drugs, alcohol and smoking.

A child in second or third grade is perfectly capable of getting the message that drugs, alcohol and smoking are bad for them. Children are starting to make bad choices by the fifth and sixth grade, and by middle school too many of our young people are taking risks and experimenting with drugs.

And to the children of America -- don't kill off your brain cells -- don't mess up your lives -- when there is so much hope and possibility around you.

To give our young people that hope, our schools must do a better job of making our classrooms drug-free. There is an enormous variation in the effectiveness of our drug prevention programs, and this concerns me for good reason. We have 10 years of rising enrollments ahead of us. We must place a much stronger focus on creating stable, comprehensive drug prevention programs with determined leadership.

We know a lot about what works when it comes to drug prevention, programs like Project Alert

and Life Skills. We also know that these proven models are not being used as much as they should. Too often our schools -- with the best of intentions -- are flying by the seat of their pants when it comes to drug prevention. Using proven, tested, research-based drug prevention programs must become a top priority.

I ask every school board, superintendent, principal and PTA to mount a vigorous review this year of existing drug prevention programs to see if they can pass muster. General Barry McCaffrey is the President's effective leader in the fight against drugs -- he and I will work with you. For my part, I promise the same vigorous review of our federal Safe and Drug Free Schools Program.

As always, we remain faithful to the core idea that our schools are where we teach our young people basic American values. Our commitment to this core idea has taken many forms: protecting the religious liberty of students by issuing historic guidelines, supporting strong character education efforts, and placing a very strong emphasis on family involvement.

For too long, parents have been the missing link in our efforts to improve our schools. Experts talk to experts, and conference after conference is held about new models of education reform. I urge a different approach: Start with parents. The moral child and the achieving student are just about always connected to an involved parent.

Parents who set high expectations, even a parent with a limited formal education, is a powerful force for excellence. Ultimately, the character of American education is going to be defined by the character and commitment of involved parents and other caring adults.

First Order of Business: Fix Failing Schools

My next point is that we cannot and must not tolerate failing schools. To meet the new expectations of the American people, we must confront the all-too-common problem of schools that are low-achieving and even dangerous. In America today, there are schools that should not be called schools at all. These schools have done just about everything they could to kill the sense of wonder in their students. And then we wonder why truancy increases and young people drop out.

Our willingness to abide these schools goes to the heart of my concern about low expectations. Too often, we fall into the trap of thinking that the children who are stuck in failing schools are the problem. We accept the easy way out, the false assumption that they cannot learn because they are the wrong color, from the wrong side of the tracks, or because they speak the wrong language.

Yet, we all know from first-hand experience that there are good public schools, good parochial schools and private schools in every inner city in this country that are islands of excellence. Dick Elmore, a Harvard researcher in the field of education, has often made this point to me -- in every city that he has visited, he has found three of the best schools in the country and three schools

that are just about the sorriest.

I think Dick has it about right and that is what troubles me. We need to stop making excuses and get on with the business of fixing our schools. If a school is bad and can't be changed, reconstitute it or close it down. If a principal is slow to get the message, find strength in a new leader. If teachers are burned out, counsel them to improve and then, if necessary, offer them a fair process to leave the profession. If laws need to be changed, get on with it.

This is not an impossible task. The efforts of Rick Mills and Rudy Crew in New York, Paul Vallas in Chicago, Gerry House in Memphis, Bill Rojas in San Francisco are all examples of putting aside the "business as usual" attitude.

Now, fundamental change is hard. Some of you may read the cartoon Dilbert -- Dilbert is sort of a befuddled technocrat of the 1990's. My wife Tunky and I were visiting the zoo one day when we saw a teenager with a Dilbert T-shirt that read:
"Change is good -- you go first."

Well, those of us who believe in excellence for all children need to take the risk of going first. When people tell me that public schools can't excel, I tell them that they haven't worked hard enough to get the job done.

I also tell them not to be fooled by those who want to use public tax dollars for vouchers to help a few students get out of a troubled school. If a boat is sinking because of a hole, you fix the hole right away. You don't let it keep sinking and then throw out a lifeline so that a few can survive.

The strength of our diverse democracy is the direct result of our belief in a quality public education for all. This is why I will not yield to those who want to abandon public schools. We need to build up public education, not tear it down.

Do we need many more models of how we can fix troubled schools? Yes, of course we do and fortunately, help is readily available. Dedicated educators like James Comer, Henry Levin, E.D.Hirsch, Deborah Maier, Ted Sizer, Marc Tucker and Gene Bottoms are doing the hard work of creating new models of excellence. The models are each unique in their own way. But they all have one common denominator -- they all set high standards.

The New American Schools Development Corporation is another powerful example of how change can take place. It has developed seven different, well-conceived models of how to fix a failing school. Local parents and school leaders choose the right model that fits their community. That's public school choice at its best. A community may want to choose its own approach to fixing a failing school -- or choose any of these models of excellence -- or start a charter school.

But make the effort, that is the point. Superintendent Ben Canada here in Atlanta is making that effort right now. He is reconstituting low-achieving schools and starting them on the road to excellence -- the A.T. Walden Middle School is one of them.

And here I want to stress an important factor. There is federal funding available through our Title I program, Goals 2000, and our new Charter School program that can be used to fix a failing school or launch a new one. There are over 100 schools now working with Robert Slavin and the New American Schools Development Corporation that are using federal funds to achieve excellence. I urge school officials to follow the example of these schools. Don't use the lack of funding as an excuse to allow failure to continue.

Connecting to the Information Age

The next issue on my action agenda deals with a very important subject: technology in education. We simply can't leave any child behind in this Information Age. This spring the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is scheduled to pass the E-rate or education rate. Final approval by the FCC will cut access charges to the Internet in half for the vast majority of our schools. Use of the Internet for our poorest schools will be almost free. This is a very big decision for American education, and it needs to happen.

The Internet is the blackboard of the future and our young people get into it. Today, 65 percent of our schools are linked to the Internet, but only 14 percent of our classrooms are connected. This is why the E-rate is so important, and why it has the strong support of the President, Vice-President Gore and educators all across this country.

This proposal should not be held up by any unnecessary delays. Let's not put our children's future on hold. I urge the FCC, state regulators and telecommunications leaders to step up for our children and make the E-rate a reality this year.

A Teaching Force for the 21st Century

Now, I want to talk to you about teaching. I urge sustained attention to the task of preparing America's future teachers. Improving American education happens classroom by classroom. There is no other way to get it done. And as a nation, we have a great task in front of us. In the next 10 years, we need to recruit two million teachers to replace a generation of teachers who are about to retire, and to keep up with rising enrollments.

But we are not as prepared as we should be for this enormous undertaking and there are several reasons why. We do not, for example, do a very good job of recruiting people to this demanding profession, and we have really failed to do justice to the task of recruiting talented minority candidates and males.

Another reason: our colleges of education and departments of education are too often treated like-

forgotten stepchildren in our system of higher education. And when eager new teachers enter the classroom for the first time, we give them little, if any, help. As a result of this longstanding "sink or swim" approach, we are losing 30 percent of our new teachers in the first three years. In addition, 25 percent of our nation's current teachers are now teaching out of their field.

These are astonishing figures that will only grow as schools rely on hard-working substitute teachers to stem the tide of crowded classrooms. We will never have "A" students if we can only give ourselves a "C" as a nation when it comes to preparing tomorrow's teachers. We cannot lower our standards -- as we have in the past -- to meet the growing demand for new teachers.

Now is the time to get it right -- to step back and rethink how we recruit, prepare, and support America's teachers. This is why the recent report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future chaired by Governor Jim Hunt is a valuable road map to changing the status quo.

New teachers -- like new lawyers and new doctors -- should have to prove that they are qualified to meet high standards before getting a license. This would mean that prospective teachers are able to pass a rigorous, performance-based assessment of what they know and what they are able to do. And, once a new teacher is in a classroom he or she should be linked to master teachers during their first few years of teaching.

Those who prepare America's teachers must rise to the demand for better teaching, and expect to be held accountable for the success of their students in achieving certification. Stronger public accountability will help, both in identifying where strengths and weaknesses lie and where special attention needs to be focused.

I encourage college and university leaders to strengthen links between your schools of liberal arts and schools of education. See this as an important part of your mission. Greater attention needs to be paid to the content of what future teachers need to know in their subject area. Rigorous pre-med and pre-engineering science courses are the accepted norm. The same cannot be said for the courses being taken by students who look forward to careers in teaching.

Teaching is a demanding profession, and it will be even more demanding in the future. That is why the President and I strongly support the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and its goal of certifying over 100,000 master teachers in the next decade. I challenge every school in the nation to have at least one board-certified teacher on your faculty.

We can't adopt a hit-or-miss approach to improving teacher quality. We have to keep at it year in and year out. This is why I will issue a biennial report on teacher quality beginning next year. Just as we expect a great deal from our students, we have an obligation to expect a great deal of ourselves in supporting America's teachers. David Haselkorn -- the head of Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. -- may have said it best: "Teaching is the profession that makes all other

professions possible." As secretary of education, I want to say thank you to America's teachers who are dedicating their lives to America's children day after day. It's very hard work and I thank you for your effort.

A New Partnership Between Public Schools and Higher Education

This leads me to my next proposal. For too long public education in America and higher education have gone their separate ways, each dedicated to its own vision of excellence and learning. This 19th-century model is outdated.

We need a new model appropriate for the 21st century, an ongoing dialogue at every level of education to raise expectations and achieve high standards.

Many young people, for example, are defining their expectations about whether to go to college as early as eighth grade. How do we capture the attention of a twelve- or thirteen-year-old and get them on the path that prepares them for college-level work? Surely this is a shared interest.

And, we must spread the word that there are many ways to achieve excellence: Advanced Placement, School-to-Work, International Baccalaureate, and Tech-Prep. Our colleges and universities should not always be in the remedial education business.

This is why I will hold a national forum this spring, bringing together the nation's best teachers, public education leaders, and members of the higher education community. This forum will explore how we can recruit the next generation of teachers, and do a better job of preparing teachers for the challenges of the classroom.

Making Expectations a Reality: Financing a College Education

Where do I think that all of this focus on standards and new expectations will lead our nation? It will lead more of our young people to aspire to learn more, and to carry their education further. That means access to college -- my final point -- whether it is a community college, a state college or a private institution of learning.

The President and I are deeply committed to ensuring access to higher education for every student who works hard to make the grade. This commitment has taken many forms: the creation of streamlined direct lending program -- the biggest increase in Pell Grants since its inception as well as grants for more students -- and a growing work study program with a new emphasis on community service.

This commitment is also why the President is following Georgia's lead in proposing his own Hope Scholarship program. Georgia's Hope Scholarship pays tuition and fees for qualified Georgia high school graduate who attend a college or university in the state. This is a big idea.

The results? 20 percent of the freshman class at the University of Georgia attend on a Hope Scholarship. All Americans -- whether they live in Atlanta, Houston or Seattle -- should have the same chance to earn college education.

Under the President's plan, working and middle-income students of all ages can receive a tax credit of up to \$1,500 for the first two years of college. That amount covers tuition at the typical community college. This plan is going a long way to making the first two years of college more easily available. Universal -- another big idea.

In addition, middle-income Americans have the option to deduct up to \$10,000 off of their income taxes for college tuition throughout their lifetime.

Now, some have said the President's plan is not needed. I disagree. When it comes to trying to afford the costs of college, many middle-income families are in practical terms, barely making out -- and many don't even consider college an option.

Let me suggest why: For families with incomes of \$22,000 to \$67,000, the percentage of students who earn a bachelor's degree by age 24 has held steady at around 20 percent since 1980. But for families with incomes above \$67,000, the percentage of students who earn a bachelor's degree has shot up during that same period -- from less than 50 to about 80 percent.

That's a real problem. Much of America's working and middle class has been shut out. We need to close that gap, and fundamentally change the expectations of many Americans who have never even considered college a possibility.

All Americans -- poor, working and middle income -- deserve the opportunity to go to college. Our economy will continue to prosper in this Information Age only if more Americans continue to go to college and work.

Let me turn history for an instructive lesson. For most of the Industrial Age, we used the tax code to encourage business to invest in plants and equipment. For the Information Age, we should provide tax incentives that encourage people to invest in themselves by getting a college education.

The Hope Scholarship, the tuition deduction, and the penalty-free IRA withdrawals -- when considered as part of an overall strategy -- represent smart tax policies for the future.

Continuing a Nation on the Move

Let me move where I began by asking you to recognize the new possibilities, the new excitement and the rising expectations of the American people. The American people are tuned in to education and skills more than ever. And we have a President in the White House --

Clinton -- who cares deeply about education. If ever there was a time to come together for the good of our children it is now.

America is on the move, and every school, college and university can be a bastion of hope, creativity and learning. For education is much more than getting a degree or learning a new skill. There is joy to learning, and the freedom of the intellect that brings with it new discovery and new thinking.

Thomas Jefferson, America's first great educator, told us many years ago; "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be." Good citizenship, then, has its roots in education. And as my late father often told me -- there is no greater honor in America than that of being called a "good citizen."

We are, my friends, at the door to a new time. And, in this new era, we will not build with bricks and mortar. We will build with minds -- with the power of knowledge -- and with the talent of every well educated American who is eager to participate in our free enterprise system and strengthen our democracy.

The year is 1997 -- the issue is education -- the question is: will we meet the challenge? I believe we can. This is what is at stake for our children. That is what is at stake for America.

Thank you.

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3/5/97 4:30pm

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
ADDRESS TO THE MICHIGAN STATE
LEGISLATURE
STATE CAPITOL
LANSING, MICHIGAN
MARCH 6, 1997

Acknowledgements: Speaker Curtis Hertel, Governor Engler, Secretary Riley, Governor Blanchard, Rep. John Dingell, Rep. Debbie Stabenow, Rep. Sander Levin, Rep. Carolyn Kilpatrick, Rep. John Conyers, Rep. Bart Stupak, Rep. Dave Camp, Rep. Peter Hoekstra, Rep. James Barcia [BARSHA], State Board of Education President Kathleen Straus; state-wide elected officials. And thank you Reverend Wendell Anthony for your invocation.

I am especially honored to become only the second sitting President ever to have addressed this legislature.

Ninety years ago, Teddy Roosevelt, on his way to give a speech at what was then Michigan Agricultural College, now Michigan State, stopped here to address a joint session of the Michigan legislature at this same rostrum.

You have since renovated this building to restore the charm and artistry that was in place when Roosevelt visited. In 1907, America was at the dawn of the Industrial Era.

This building had only been wired for electricity two years before. And President Roosevelt went from here to the college campus in a brand new automobile, built by a Lansing company that was then just 10 years old. This year, Oldsmobile celebrates its centennial.

This too is a rare moment in American history. Peace and prosperity abound. We have just completed four years where we produced more new jobs than in any other presidential term in our history. And we are looking toward a world that is full of exciting new opportunities -- a true Age of Possibility.

Only a few times before -- after World War II and at the start of this century when we were entering the Industrial Era as a powerful and wealthy country at peace -- have we experienced anything like this. We have an incredible responsibility -- in America and in Michigan. Thanks to the hard work of all of you here and across the state, your unemployment rate has literally turned around -- from 7.4 percent in 1993 to 4.7 percent today. You have added more than 380,000 new jobs. Your welfare rolls have dropped 30 percent. And student achievement has risen as more schools are meeting the high standards you have set. Things are good and getting better.

But this is a time for us to build a new century. We cannot afford to squander it, in complacency and division. That is why I am pleased that a Republican Governor and a bipartisan state legislature have invited me here today. For we will meet our new challenges only if we reach across party lines -- acting together, Democrats and Republicans, people from every point on the political spectrum, coming together as One America.

The message I bring today is the same one I carried to the Maryland legislature last month -- the same one I will carry to other state legislatures, communities, and forums in the months to come.

I am asking for a new kind of partnership -- with the people in this chamber, and people all across America.

The era of big government is over. But the era of big national challenges is not. And while national leadership can point the way, the real responsibility is one we all share.

Today, I want to talk about what we must do in two critical areas where the responsibility rests at least as much with you as with the national government: giving our children the best education and raising standards so our children master the basics, and breaking the cycle of dependency by finishing the job of welfare reform, and moving millions to work.

Taken together, these issues are at the core of what we must do to prepare America for the new Century. We must help all Americans have the tools to make the most of their own lives in this knowledge economy -- and have the opportunity to do so.

As I said one month ago in my State-of-the-Union Address, we must never forget that one of the greatest sources of our strength throughout the Cold War was a bipartisan foreign policy. Because our future was at stake, politics stopped at the water's edge. Now we need a non-partisan commitment to education -- because education is the critical national security issue for our future, and politics must stop at the schoolhouse door.

What we must do is to prepare our children and all our people to know what they must know to navigate the world ahead. Between 1992 and 2000, 89% of the new jobs created in this economy will require post-high school levels of literacy and math skills. But only half the people entering the work force are prepared for those high-paying jobs. Our schools are still turning out millions of young people who simply are not equipped for the new world of work.

That is why our number-one priority must be to make our public education the best in the world.

Our goals must be: every 8-year-old can read; every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet; every 18-year-old can go to college; and every adult can keep learning for a lifetime.

In my State of the Union address, I laid out a ten-point plan, a Call to Action for American Education [*hold up booklet*], that describes the steps we must take -- and the State of Michigan is already doing many of the right things.

Many of those points relate to what we must do for our people before they start school, and how we help them in college and beyond. We must begin with the youngest children, by expanding early childhood learning. We must open the doors of college wider than ever, making the 13th and 14th years of college as universal as high school is today. In my balanced budget plan, I have proposed education tax cuts to help more families afford the fine colleges such as those here in Michigan. We must give our workers the ability to learn and to earn for a lifetime through my G.I. Bill for Workers -- transforming the tangle of federal training programs into a simple skill grant that goes directly into workers' hands.

But today, I want to spend special time talking with you about what we must do to prepare our students in our schools for the 21st Century.

We must rebuild our nation's crumbling schools; we cannot raise our children up in schools that are literally falling down.

We must harness the forces of technology, connecting every classroom in America to the Internet by the Year 2000. [*Thank freshman U.S. Rep. Debbie Stabenow, who has helped lead efforts*]

And our schools must teach discipline and character -- and serve as safe havens for our children. So I have proposed funding 1,000 new community schools programs across this country to help keep our school doors open after school, on the weekends and in the summer.

We must recognize that the best schools are only as good as the teachers in their classrooms. For years, educators have worked to establish nationally accepted credentials for excellence in teaching -- through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, headquartered in Detroit.

Michigan has the third highest number of board certified master teachers in the country. My new budget will enable 100,000 teachers across America to seek certification as master teachers.

We need a strong system of public education that gives parents and communities more freedom and flexibility in education. We should work together to give parents more choices of what public schools their children attend, and help teachers, parents, museums, and others create new public charter schools. I have proposed doubling the size of our public charter school program to \$100 million.

We can help charter schools set an example for expanding accountability in public education by holding them to the same state and national standards we expect of all our schools, making sure they are open to children from all backgrounds, supporting those that work, and shutting down those that are not up to standard.

All of this is important. But the most basic thing we can do -- the most important thing we must do -- is to make sure that all our children master the basics that will be the foundation of success in the 21st Century.

When 40% of our fourth graders do not read as well as they should -- when students in Germany or Singapore learn 15 to 20 math subjects in depth each year, while our students often race through 30 to 35 without really learning them at all -- we are not doing what we should to prepare our children for a knowledge economy.

Let's understand why these basics are so important. The point is not merely to teach our children facts and figures, but to teach them the ability to think and reason and analyze -- to give them the tools and skills that will serve them in jobs and careers we cannot even contemplate today.

We are not doing right by any of our students when we set low expectations. We must put an end to social promotions, and make sure education means something.

We must have a high standard of excellence that all states can agree upon. That is why, I have challenged our country to meet national standards of excellence in the basics --not federal government standards, but national standards, representing what all our students must know to succeed in the 21st Century. I am calling on every state to test every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math by 1999, to make sure these basic standards are met.

We already have widely-accepted, rigorous national standards in both reading and math -- and widely-used tests based on those standards. Michigan and more than 40 other states have participated in a test called the National Assessment of Educational Progress -- which measures the state's overall performance against a high national standard of excellence. Just last week, we released the annual assessment of math performance, and it shows that across the country our 4th, 8th, and 12th graders are doing better. Michigan's score was among the most improved in the nation.

Tens of thousands of students across the country have also taken the Third International Math and Science Study --a test that reflects the world-class standards our children must meet for the new era. The headquarters for that test is just down the road at Michigan State. I want to thank Dr. William Schmidt at Michigan State for his leadership of this important study, and I am pleased that he is here with us today.

Unfortunately, the current tests don't provide scores for individuals; they only measure how an entire area is doing.

What we need are tests that will measure the performance of each and every student, and each and every school. That way, parents and teachers will know how every child is doing compared to students in other schools, other states, and other countries.

That is why I am presenting a plan to help states meet and measure the highest standards. Over the next two years, our Department of Education will support the development of new tests for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math to show how every student measures up to the existing, widely-accepted standards.

The tests will be developed by independent test experts in consultation with leading math and reading teachers. The federal government will not require them, but these tests will be available to every state that chooses to administer them.

I am pleased that today Governor Engler has endorsed our plan to test all 4th graders to make sure they are meeting the challenge in reading and all 8th graders to ensure they are measuring up in math. We have plenty of standardized tests; now it is time to test for standards.

Together, we are saying, this is not about partisanship. There is no Democratic or Republican way to teach. There is no Maryland or Michigan way to learn. Reading is reading and math is math. If we are serious about holding our children to the highest standards, every state in America must put politics aside, work in a bipartisan fashion, take up our challenge, and test our children in the same rigorous way.

Raising standards will not be easy. Some of our children will not be able to meet them at first.

But good tests will show us who needs help, what changes in teaching we must make, and which schools need to improve. We are not talking about winners and losers; we are not talking about tearing anyone down, but about lifting them up. But you cannot lift them up if you don't know what the score is.

Our responsibility must be to do what we can so our children can meet these standards.

When it comes to reading, I want to remind everyone that this past August, during my train trip in Wyandotte, with the help of two elementary school students, Justin Whitney and Elizabeth Schweyn [SCHWINN], I announced our America Reads Challenge. We set a goal of mobilizing a million volunteer tutors to help every 8 year old read independently. We will use 11,000 of our AmeriCorps members to mobilize this army -- and we should enlist at least 100,000 college work study students to join in this effort. I am pleased that 16 Michigan college presidents have pledged to provide some of those students. You here have already launched a similar statewide tutoring effort.

Let's make sure that every child can say what Justin and Elizabeth said after they read *The Little Engine that Could*: "I read it myself." They showed us that when our students are held to high standards they can excel. I am pleased that Justin and Elizabeth are able to join us here today.

And I want to do more to help our young people be ready to be tested in math. Today I am directing the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation to identify and coordinate resources throughout the Federal government and through the non-profit and private sectors that can be used to help students meet the math standards.

I am also directing them to find ways to help our young people do better and learn more science. The entire national government can be a vital resource as educators in every community work to teach young people these skills. Let me give you one example.

Today, the federal government has some of the world's most esteemed laboratories and research institutions -- we should make sure that every high school math and science teacher has easy access to this world of learning through the Internet. As our entire nation works to lift students and raise standards, everyone has a responsibility -- and we will do our part.

Throughout my career in public life --as a Governor, and as President --I have worked harder on education than on any other issue. That is because renewing education, raising our standards, and lifting up our schools is the embodiment of everything we must do to prepare for the 21st Century --to promote opportunity, demand responsibility, and build community.

When it comes to providing the tools to succeed, our other great challenge is helping to move the permanent underclass into our growing middle class.

And here, too, the only way to do it is by reaching across party lines and working together, Democrats and Republicans, national government and state government, business and labor and religious institutions.

Working together, we ended the old welfare system. Over the past four years, we worked with 43 states to launch welfare reform experiments, which helped move a record 2.5 million people off our nation's welfare rolls. Here in Michigan, a strong economy and your efforts have helped move more than 208,000 people off the welfare rolls, a 30 percent drop. This is an accomplishment you can be proud of.

But this is not the end of welfare reform, it is a new beginning. Now that we have demanded that those on welfare take responsibility, we must all take responsibility to see that the jobs are there, so people on welfare can become permanent members of the workforce. Our goal must be to move people from welfare to work so that two million more Americans are off the welfare rolls by the year 2000.

I have challenged the nation's businesses to join in this effort, and I have offered a plan to help them: Tax credits and other incentives for businesses to hire people off welfare;

. . . . incentives for job placement firms and states to create more jobs for welfare recipients; training, transportation, and child care to help people go to work. I urge Michigan's businesses, non-profits, and religious organizations -- large and small -- to heed this important call. Each and every one of us must fulfill our responsibility -- indeed, our moral obligation --to make sure that those who now must work, can work.

The most direct and effective steps must be taken by the states. The legislation we passed gives states the authority, for the very first time, to take the money that had been used on welfare checks, and subsidize private sector paychecks.

Missouri began doing this under one of our waivers --and it is working. Now I challenge every state to follow their example. Use the new flexibility you have been given. Turn those welfare checks into paychecks. That is what we need to do to help welfare recipients find jobs and keep them.

Second, I urge you to use the money saved from moving people from welfare to work to make sure that even more people can make that transition. Your model program, Project Zero, is a good example -- investing in child care and transportation with the goal of getting everyone on welfare to earn a paycheck.

Finally, I urge every state and every Governor, Republican or Democrat, to join with me to get Congress to restore basic health and disability benefits when misfortune strikes immigrants who came to this country legally, who work hard, pay taxes and obey the law. To do otherwise is simply unworthy of a great nation of immigrants.

We passed historic welfare reform -- giving states the authority and flexibility they had sought for years. We were right to do it. Now states must live up to their responsibility, and help us finish the job.

On education reform, on welfare reform, on all our major challenges --let us build new partnerships across old lines of responsibility. Preparing for the 21st Century is not a job for any one level of government alone. Many of our greatest challenges do not fall under the authority of Washington, nor should they. They do not fall under the authority of state capitals like Lansing, nor should they. The power to solve our problems rests with all levels of government, and all sectors of society -- and that is where we must forge our solutions as well.

Together, we must seize this moment of opportunity, and prepare our people for the changes and challenges of a new century. Together, we must renew our basic bargain of opportunity, responsibility, and community, and give everyone the tools to make the most of their own lives. If we rise to that challenge, we will enter the 21st Century full of new promise and possibility, for all who share a stake in the American dream.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.