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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 5, 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR: Patricia McNeil
THROUGH: William Galston
FROM: Michael Levitan
SUBJECT: Peer to Peer Extension Under Perkins

President Clinton has frequently expressed his belief that the solutions to what is wrong with American education have already been developed somewhere. The problem is with insufficient communication and extension of innovative approaches.

Background

As you know, there are a number of very successful vocational education programs around the country that are modelling many of the guiding themes emerging in the Perkins Reauthorization -- better integration of academic and vocational, linking school to work, focussing on life-long learning knowledge rather than narrow technical skills, improving program quality while still responding to the needs of special populations. One challenge in designing the bill, if we are to overcome the problem cited by the President, is to better enable successful practitioners to spearhead extension of innovative approaches. Those with real life experience possess the most powerful means to motivate and educate other practitioners. A vibrant *peer to peer network* can dramatically accelerate the rate of communication and extension needed to reform vocational education.

Proposal

Federal intervention should be designed to overcome the constraints that prevent innovative practitioners from being more active in efforts to extend successful approaches. The following is a very brief description of initiatives that would help empower a grassroots movement for extension and reform:

- 1) *On-Site Teacher Development Centers* -- Provide funds to develop teacher education programs located at some of the innovative voc ed schools around the country. Locating the *Centers* at model schools would allow them to use the innovative programs as learning laboratories for teachers, with most instruction given by experienced practitioners in a hands-on setting. Education programs could serve both an in-service function for experienced teachers and administrators as well as for those in degree programs. After graduation, participants in the programs would form the core of a reform effort to help transform the voc ed programs in their own institutions.

Federal funds would enable the development of such *Centers*. Nonetheless, the *Centers* can be designed to become increasingly self-sustaining over time by charging fees for services.

Depending on particular circumstances, federal funds could be used for renting facilities, supplementing teachers salaries to allow the model schools to free up time of existing staff to teach, providing partial scholarships for participants, and meeting various start-up expenses.

- 2) ***Extension Grants*** – Provide grants that allow some of the most successful innovators to spend more time communicating their ideas. The most successful innovators are often overburdened with the demands of their teaching and management roles, limiting their ability to share successful methodologies through activities such as speaking engagements, writing, participating in workshops, and hosting visitors. Grants would allow the schools of the innovators to offer incentives for additional extension work and/or hire additional staff to take over functions that can be delegated, thereby enabling a greater role in extension.
- 3) ***Innovator's Network*** – Provide funds to support establishment of a *peer to peer network* of practitioners working to reform the vocational education system. In the era of the information superhighway, networking is often understood to be electronic linkages that enhance flow of information. While such linkages could be a valuable part of an *Innovator's Network*, they are only one part. Networks have greatest success when information exchange is facilitated by personal relationship. The *Innovator's Network* therefore should support field visits which enable practitioners to observe innovative programs and workshops which allow peers to develop the kind of interaction that will make them likely to make best use of other sorts of communications such as a computer linkage and regular newsletters.

The *On-Site Teacher Development Centers* would provide foundation pieces of an *Innovator's Network*. Each class could receive training in how to use a computer-based system for networking and, as an assignment, could develop plans for networking upon graduation. Over time, graduates from *Centers* around the country could help link their respective schools to state of the art methodologies, curricula, materials, etc. being developed at peer institutions throughout the nation.

- 4) ***Documentation and Research Grants*** – Provide funds that enable innovative approaches to be evaluated, documented, and more widely shared. Too often creative ideas have limited impact because those who generate them have no time to document and communicate. Good ideas also languish because resources do not exist to demonstrate in a rigorous, convincing way success that has only been proven anecdotally. These grants would be available to practitioners and/or academics to accelerate the spread of effective approaches.

Next Steps

Each of these ideas, of course, requires much more extensive development. If you think they are worthwhile pursuing, my recommendation would be to convene a group of innovative practitioners to brainstorm on these ideas and others that would enhance the kind of *peer to peer* exchange that would rapidly extend innovative practices. We would then have to strategize how support for *peer to peer extension* can make its way into Perkins.

Follow-up meeting on issues we reviewed together.

Mike

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

-Mickey-

January 19, 1995

MEMORANDUM FOR: Patricia McNeil
John Weintraub

cc: Bill Galston

FROM: Mickey Levitan

SUBJECT: Perkins Follow-up

The meeting yesterday was helpful in closing the loop. By way of summary, I took away the following points:

- The overall strategy is to promote a bill that is fully supportive of and integrated with the other pieces of the lifelong learning agenda, incorporates key lessons learned from previous programs, and creates a responsible form of devolution that utilizes mutually determined measures of accountability, does not sacrifice equity, and aligns with the new approach to federalism that the President is framing in his public messages.
- In response to the request from Barry White, your team will produce in the next two weeks a 3-5 page paper which recommends an Administration approach to Perkins. I will be happy to review the paper and participate in crafting the piece on capacity building.
- A critical aspect of the political and substantive debates on Perkins will center around the issue of accountability. Assuming that the forces which want a full devolution of federal role and resources do not hold sway, the challenge is to devise a workable system for ensuring the responsible use of federal resources. Your idea about accountability that is mutually determined by the federal government and states seems on target. And we seem to agree that part of the predetermined agreement must include provisions for what happens to resource streams when there is variance between expected outcomes and actual results.

You suggested the possibility of convening a group of experts to develop a process/mechanism for accountability in Perkins under a devolution scenario. The recommendations of this group can then serve to guide subsequent discussion and debate. In the absence of such an effort we risk, at worst, devolution without accountability or, at best, a system for accountability that is hastily created because we did not have the forethought to fully develop a workable option. I would be happy to work on this effort and to assist in mobilizing participation.

- Regarding the confusion over the actual School to Work Project, versus the School to Work Umbrella concept, perhaps in public statements we can begin to talk about the STW *seed program* versus the STW *system* or *approach* to differentiate.

Please let me know if I've missed anything important. In the meantime, Trish - I hope you get well.

FIRST, THE CHILDREN... AMERICA'S EDUCATION PRIORITIES

1995 NSBA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



*Excellence and Equity
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through School Board
Leadership*

Office of Advocacy

- Boyd W. Boehlje
President
- Thomas A. Shannon
Executive Director
- Michael A. Resnick
Senior Associate
Executive Director

As Congress considers streamlining government and reducing the budget deficit, it must strengthen its commitment to our nation's children. Providing our children with a sound system of public education is essential to the future of our economy and democratic society. The 104th Congress can help strengthen our schools by lifting the burden of unfunded federal mandates, reducing regulations and, at the same time, supporting a sound federal investment in education. To serve the needs of the nation's public school children, NSBA has the following recommendations for Congress.

I. STOPPING UNFUNDED FEDERAL MANDATES

- A. NSBA supports legislation that would require the federal government to pay for the prospective costs of the federally mandated services and requirements it imposes on school districts.
- B. Schools need relief from current mandates — asbestos, Superfund, arbitrage rebate, and Davis-Bacon, among others.
- C. Unfunded federal mandates inappropriately reduce the resources schools can spend educating children.

II. SPECIAL EDUCATION

- A. Balance and common sense needs to be restored to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- B. Unreasonable attorneys fees, time-consuming expensive resolution processes, unsafe restrictions on disciplining students with disabilities and a narrowly-based special education financing system makes it increasingly difficult for local school board members to provide the quality education that all students deserve.

III. INCREASED EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996

- A. NSBA supports significantly increasing educational investments for fiscal year 1996. Funds should be appropriated for the Jeffords-Woolsey education funding resolution that would increase federal investments each year without increasing the deficit.
- B. NSBA opposes reductions in funding for successful existing education programs and opposes budget process changes what will result in significant cuts in education.
- C. Investing in the education of our children is a proven long-term strategy for expanding the economic opportunities for Americans and their families.

UNFUNDED FEDERAL MANDATES

NSBA RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS



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NSBA POSITION: NSBA supports legislation that would require the federal government to pay for the costs of the federally mandated services and requirements it imposes on school districts. Unfunded federal mandates inappropriately reduce the resources schools can spend educating children.

- 1• The pace and cumulative impact of unfunded federal mandates has been accelerating. For school districts, the federal mandates that create problems include, special education, arbitrage rebates, Davis-Bacon, Occupational Safety and Health Act, and a range of environmental issues, including asbestos, underground storage tanks, lead, and Superfund.
- 2• School districts are often forced to cut back educational programming in order to comply with costly federal mandates. Competing demands at the local level are not balanced or fully considered by the federal government.
- 3• Unfunded mandates imposed by the federal and state governments on most school districts account for the largest percentage of new school expenses during the last decade.
- 4• State and local education dollars spent on federal mandates may not reflect local education priorities. This can result in a blatant misuse of local property tax dollars -which citizens believe are being used to educate their children.
- 5• NSBA supports legislation that will:
 - A. Require full funding of all federal mandates
 - B. Reform federal asbestos laws
 - C. Limit school district liability under Superfund
 - D. Repeal arbitrage rebates
 - E. Repeal the Davis-Bacon requirements
 - F. Promote risk-assessment and cost-benefit analysis

Office of Advocacy

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- Thomas A. Shannon
Executive Director
- Michael A. Resnick
Senior Associate
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*For additional information on NSBA's position relating to Unfunded Mandates,
contact Laurie A. Westley, Chief Legislative Counsel at 703-838-6703.*

ENVIRONMENTAL MANDATES AND SCHOOLS

NSBA RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS



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NSBA POSITION: NSBA urges Congress to use a balanced approach to environmental mandates that accurately reflects both the risks and the competing fiscal demands. For current and future environmental mandates, NSBA urges Congress to fully fund both the cost of environmental testing and of hazard abatement.

- 1• School board members want schools to be healthy environments for children. The issue is one of balance. In the vast majority of school districts, school boards are being forced to make difficult funding decisions -- including cutting educational programs -- to accommodate decreased revenues and to finance unfunded mandates.
- 2• Congress has begun to structure environmental mandates to include funding for testing. However, this is not enough. Congress must provide adequate funding for the abatement that will inevitably follow.
- 3• Many environmental mandates are imposed without accurate risk assessment. The most costly example was asbestos in the schools. Nationwide schools have spent an estimated \$10 billion to address the asbestos issue and most scientists agree that there is little threat to human health.
- 4• **NSBA supports legislation that will reform existing mandates including:**
ASBESTOS:
 - A• Asbestos abatement has been and continues to be a costly program for school districts. NSBA urges Congress to scale back the asbestos requirements on schools to reflect up-to-date scientific evidence.
 - B• Asbestos is an example of poor risk assessment with disastrous economic consequences. When EPA first began this campaign the cry was "one fiber can kill." We now are learning that this is far from the truth. Current scientific understanding is that there is virtually no danger of a school student or teacher contracting cancer from asbestos in a school.

SUPERFUND:

- School districts need legislation that limits school district liability for the disposal of ordinary garbage and reduces the time and resources schools spend defending themselves in Superfund cases.

For additional information on NSBA's position relating to Unfunded Environmental Mandates, contact Laurie A. Westley, Chief Legislative Counsel at 703-838-6703.

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INCREASED EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996

NSBA RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS

NSBA POSITION: NSBA supports significantly increasing educational investments for fiscal year 1996.

- 1• Funds should be appropriated to implement the Jeffords-Woolsey education funding resolution. (The resolution, enacted into law last year, would significantly increase federal education investments each year without increasing the deficit.)
- 2• To assure improved educational opportunities for students with disabilities and to ease the fiscal strain that the federal law requires of local school districts, increased investment in federal special education programs is required.
- 3• NSBA opposes reductions in funding for successful existing education programs, including Title 1 Program for Disadvantaged Students, Impact Aid, Vocational Education and School Nutrition Programs. Additionally, NSBA will oppose efforts to cut or rescind already approved fiscal year 1995 appropriations.

Office of Advocacy

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For additional information on NSBA's position relating to Federal Investment in Education, contact William Bruno, Legislative Counsel, at 703/838-6237.

IMMIGRANT EDUCATION

NSBA RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS



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NSBA POSITION: NSBA strongly supports an increase in funding for the federal Emergency Immigrant Education Act (EIEA), as well as increased funding for other federal programs which assist in the education of immigrant children, and will oppose any efforts to reduce funding.

- 1• Federal court decisions require that local schools educate all students, regardless of citizenship status.
- 2• The federal government is responsible for enforcing immigration laws and it is because of federal government policies that large numbers of immigrant students are educated in our nation's schools.
- 3• The budgets of many local school districts have been severely strained as a result of federal immigration policies. The effect of these policies is to place an unfunded mandate on school systems.
- 4• Local schools want to educate all children equitably, and therefore the federal government must do much more to contribute to the costs of educating immigrant students.

For additional information on NSBA's position relating to Immigrant Education, contact William Bruno, Legislative Counsel, at 703/838-6237.

BLOCK GRANTING PROGRAMS

NSBA RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS



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NSBA POSITION: NSBA opposes block granting legislation that creates funding cutbacks, decreases new investments or weakens programs such as school nutrition and vocational education. Additionally, NSBA opposes block grants that result in more state flexibility without protections to ensure that states provide flexibility to the local level and minimize state politics in distributing funds.

- 1• Contained within the "Contract with America's" Welfare Reform Legislation is a proposal to convert the school lunch and school breakfast programs from an entitlement into a multi-program nutrition block grant. By making school nutrition programs subject to changing political winds and budgetary pressures, the long-term viability of the programs are threatened and would clearly lead to cuts in nutrition programs. Effective welfare reform can be accomplished without weakening these two valuable programs.
- 2• There is broad bipartisan interest in the Congress, as well as within the Clinton Administration, to consolidate and block grant many training programs. Some legislation would even eliminate the distinct character of the \$1 billion Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act programs by placing them in a larger training block grant. The Perkins Program must continue to be accessible to teenage students and must be closely integrated with our public school systems. Vocational and technical education must not be isolated from education reform and improvement efforts and should not be submerged within a larger training block grant.

*For additional information on NSBA's position relating to
Block Granting Programs,
contact William Bruno, Legislative Counsel, at 703/838-6237.*

ETR
initiativ
Mike
Schmidt
& Bill
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- Major Docs - pubs
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IRC - internet relay chat

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