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Some ways AFT is promoting high standards of conduct and achievement

- The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) is asking public school districts across America to adopt the *Bill of Rights & Responsibilities for Learning*.
- The AFT is training teachers and school staff around the country in its largest and most comprehensive parental involvement program ever. This new program helps school staff better understand how to reach out to parents and families.
- The AFT has produced a brochure of tips to help its members maintain discipline in their classrooms, on school buses and on school grounds. The brochure helps members identify potential problems before they happen.
- The AFT lobbied Congress to pass the President's Goals 2000 plan for public schools. Under the plan, your state forms a Goals 2000 committee made up of teachers, parents, administrators, and others from your state. This committee sets clear and rigorous standards for what students should learn and achieve — giving schools clear goals to shoot for.
- The AFT Learning Line offers ideas and activities that make learning fun for children. Call the Learning Line toll free: 1-800-242-5465.

Helping Your Child Succeed



What Parents & Families Can Do At Home To Help Their Children Meet High Standards

#1 IN A SERIES OF THREE



THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Sometimes when public officials and others talk about how to improve our public schools, the common sense ideas get left out — ideas that ordinary people care about most: schools that are safe and orderly, and schools that expect the best from their students.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and its members believe that good citizenship and success in adult life begin with high standards in school: standards for conduct and achievement.

Other education reforms *may* work. High standards of conduct and achievement *do* work. And nothing else can work without them.

In 1995, AFT and its members launched a nationwide campaign on behalf of high standards of conduct and achievement — “Responsibility, Respect, Results: Lessons for Life.” AFT is proposing a *Bill of Rights & Responsibilities for Learning* that is the basis for these standards. But we need your help.

First, please take a few minutes to read the *Bill of Rights & Responsibilities for Learning*.

Second, be sure to play your part. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other family members — even brothers and sisters — can make a difference. By working with your school and in your community, you can help your child meet high standards.

To assist you, AFT has produced this pamphlet of tips on how you can help your children succeed — and, at the same time, support AFT’s campaign for high standards of conduct and achievement.

AFT members recognize the tremendous demands on your time as a parent, and we appreciate your joining us as a partner in this campaign.

AFT’s Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Learning

1. All students and school staff have a right to schools that are safe, orderly and drug free.
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10. All students and school staff have a right to be supported by parents, the community, public officials and business in their efforts to uphold high standards of conduct and achievement.

Ask your child about school

Each day, ask your children to tell you at least one thing that they learned or that happened at school. If your child answers "nothing," ask something more specific like "What did you do in math class?" Usually, children have something worth saying and are more likely to share it if you make it clear you're interested.

Even hearing a humorous story from your child is positive. The key is to get your children talking about school.

Find time for praise and rewards

When your children work hard, complete tough tasks or earn good grades on a test, let them know you're proud. Consider saying so with words and rewards.

Rewards don't have to cost money — lengthen your teenager's curfew for a special event or extend other privileges.

Even when your child's efforts disappoint you, avoid negative labels. Children who are always called "dumb" or "idiot" are more likely to live up to *that* standard, instead of trying harder. AFT believes that every child is capable of doing better. Parents and school staff must show all children that we want *and* expect them to learn.

Make sure homework gets done

Be sure to ask your children if they have homework. This helps reinforce homework's importance. Here are other ideas:

- Find a quiet spot in the home for your children to work — or turn off the TV or music to make it quiet.
- Pick a location that is close enough for them to ask you or another family member questions about their assignment.
- Ask to see the finished homework.
- If your child often seems confused or unsure about homework assignments,

contact the teacher yourself by phoning or sending a note.

Place limits on television

Studies have shown that students who watch too much television are more likely to receive poor grades. Time in front of the television can be better spent studying for a test, reading a book or even working on a puzzle with family members.

Try to set limits like these:

- One hour of TV each school night is a good limit to consider. Another approach is to reduce your child's TV viewing from three hours to two — then later try reducing it to just one hour.
- Supervise your children's TV viewing and guide their decisions on which programs are appropriate to watch.
- Early in the evening, check the TV listings and identify programs that may have violent or otherwise inappropriate themes.
- If you receive cable television, *The Learning Channel* and *The Discovery Channel* have programs that are both entertaining *and* educational. Call 1-800-813-7409 for more information on these networks.

Encourage your child to read

Keep plenty of books, magazines and newspapers at home. You needn't buy a lot of books — you can borrow them from a local library. Ask your children about what they're reading. Discussing stories with your children helps teach them to express themselves and makes reading more fun.

One of the best ways to encourage reading is to let your children see *you* reading. Try to spend at least 10 minutes — 20 minutes, if possible — at night reading to preschool children. If you have difficulty reading, be a storyteller. Telling stories to your children

develops their curiosity and language skills.

Establish discipline at home

As a parent, grandparent or guardian, you are your child's first teacher. Children learn from your words and actions. Here are some other tips:

- Keep rules simple and understandable.
- Make it clear in advance what your children can expect if they break a rule.
- Praise your children when they make an extra effort to help around the house or show consideration for another person.
- Consider involving your children in setting some family rules. Young people are less likely to break a rule that they helped to decide in the first place.

Proper discipline at home teaches a child self-control and respect for others — qualities that lead to a productive and successful adulthood.

Respond quickly to discipline problems

If your child is becoming violent or out of control at home, seek help. Teachers, counselors, religious leaders, neighbors and others in your community can offer advice and support. Don't be afraid or ashamed to turn to others.

Teach your child values

Each family has its own personal, religious and/or cultural values and traditions. But there are also basic values that bind *all* of us together — being honest, showing respect for ourselves and for others, and having compassion.

Look for ways to instill these and other values in your children. Remind your child of the Golden Rule: "*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*" When

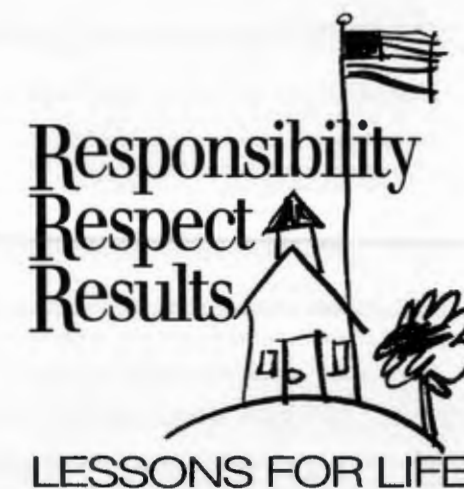
reading books or watching TV with your child, look for opportunities to discuss the importance of values.

Make summer a learning time

Learning doesn't have to stop just because school is out. There are many free or low-cost activities that you can share with your children that make learning fun. Some of the places and events near you that help learning continue through summer include:

- museums
- libraries
- cultural festivals
- street fairs
- historic sites

Remember: Many cities and states have tourist agencies or offices you can phone for more information. For other ideas, call the AFT Learning Line at 1-800-242-5465.



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How Parents Can Work With Schools and Communities to Help Their Children Meet High Standards

#2 IN A SERIES OF THREE



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10. All students and school staff have a right to be supported by parents, the community, public officials and business in their efforts to uphold high standards of conduct and achievement.

Know your child's school family

The teacher is the primary player in your child's school environment, but there are others (such as counselors and librarians) who make a valuable contribution. Attending parent-teacher conferences, open-school nights and other events are the best way to get acquainted with these important people.

Many teachers are assisted in the classroom by instructional assistants or aides who are sometimes called *paraprofessionals*. Your child's school family also includes others who help make learning possible — bus drivers, secretaries and clerical employees, food service employees, custodial and maintenance employees, and school security staff.

Expect success at school

Children work best when they know what you expect of them. Discuss these expectations with your children — expectations for good grades, attendance and study habits. Encourage them to take courses that will challenge them, but not overwhelm them.

For example, high school students usually can choose from among two or more English courses and from among two or more mathematics courses. Discuss these and other course options with your children. Make sure they are choosing courses that will interest and challenge them.

View unsatisfactory grades as an opportunity

All parents want their children to receive good marks and advance to the next grade, but don't expect a teacher to give your children a grade or honor that they haven't deserved. Make it clear to your child that grades are *not* "given" — they are earned.

If your child receives an unsatisfactory report card, use this as an opportunity to

restate your own commitment to high standards. Discuss with your child (and the teacher) what he or she will need to do differently to improve the grade and/or advance to the next grade.

Help your child keep pace

Absences, family problems and other distractions make it difficult for a student to keep up with lessons and assignments during the school day. Ask a teacher if your school district offers after-school tutoring, summer programs or other activities that can prevent your child from falling behind.

Attend school functions

Nearly all school districts have an open school night, parent-teacher conferences, or some other activity designed to allow parents to learn more about their children's teachers and learning. Please make every effort to attend these functions.

If work or a family emergency makes it impossible to attend, send a note to your child's teacher — let the teacher know you couldn't attend, but tell him or her that you welcome any notes or phone calls from the teacher informing you of your child's progress.

Make sure your child progresses

Schools should have clear standards for the knowledge and skills your children learn. To keep track of your child's progress, ask the teacher: "What are the skills and subject matter that my son/daughter will be learning over the course of this school year?"

Work with other parents

Just a little of your time can go a long way in helping your child and his or her school succeed. Consider choosing one of

these or other activities:

- attend school board meetings and let board members know that you support higher standards of student achievement and discipline.
- join your local Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or another parents' group that helps support schools.
- serve as a student chaperon on field trips, help the school raise money to pay for special activities, or volunteer to assist with other student activities.

Try to take part in at least *one* volunteer school activity.

Monitor your teen's part-time job

For many teenagers, holding a part-time job is an important rite of passage into adulthood. It teaches students about the working world and how to manage money. But a part-time job can cut into study time and add to the stress of teen years. Grades can fall, and attendance can suffer.

Here are some tips:

- Before your teenager takes a part-time job, remind him or her that school work takes top priority. Make sure your teen understands that if grades begin to decline, he or she will be expected to cut work hours.
- The Educational Excellence Partnership recommends that students work no more than 15-20 hours each week during the school year. If possible, part-time work should be limited to weekends.
- If you strongly suspect that a part-time job is cutting into studies, ask your teenager. If the answer still leaves you concerned, check with your child's teacher or counselor. Don't wait until the end of a grading period to find out.
- If your son or daughter has a curfew on

school nights, make sure your teenager's after-school job doesn't conflict.

Know your school's discipline code

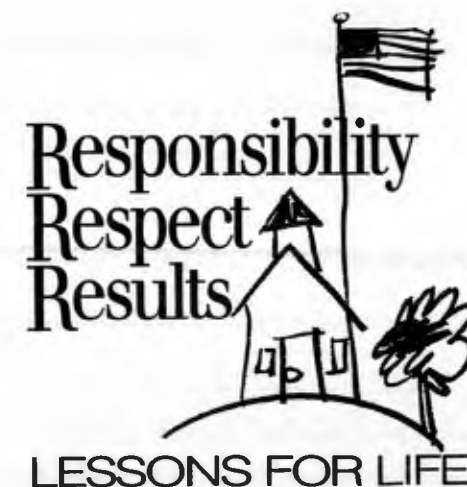
If you and your children don't receive a written copy of the code, ask for one. Read it and discuss the rules with your children.

Support zero tolerance

Students who are violent or often disruptive prevent real learning from taking place. AFT supports "zero-tolerance" policies that:

- automatically remove students who are violent or constantly disruptive and place them in an alternative learning environment to receive the assistance they need.
- take the confusion out of discipline by outlining clear penalties for misbehavior and consistently enforcing them *without* special treatment based on a student's race, gender, or ethnic group.

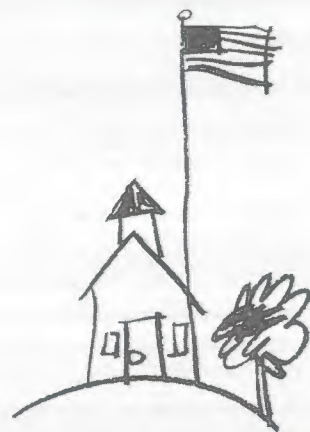
If your school system doesn't have a zero-tolerance policy, support one. Write or phone your local teachers union, superintendent and school board.



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How Parents & Families Can Communicate Better With Teachers And School Staff

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To assist you, AFT has produced this pamphlet on how to talk with teachers and other school staff. By using these tips, you can help your child succeed in school — and also support AFT’s campaign for high standards of conduct and achievement.

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Meeting with a teacher, principal or other school staff member makes many parents feel nervous. If you feel this way, you're not alone. Teachers and school staff often feel this way when speaking with parents or family members. That's because most of the times that parents and school staff talk to each other, it's about a problem or another subject that is unpleasant.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has developed these tips to make it easier for you to talk with a teacher or other school staff person — and also make your discussions more helpful.

Share your insights

Be prepared to let the teacher or other school staff know about your child's study habits, special interests and any health problems that may affect his or her learning.

You might also want to share any recent experiences (like a death in the family) that could be affecting your child's performance or behavior. This information will help school staff better understand your child.

Make a list of questions

Start thinking about questions before a meeting or conference at school. One way to get ideas is by talking to your son or daughter.

Make a list of questions and bring it to the school with you. The teacher will welcome this as a sign that you take your child's schooling very seriously. Some basic questions to ask a teacher or school staff are:

- How is my child doing in your class?
- Is he/she having any problems?

- What are the problems and how can I/our family help at home?

Consider your children's grade level in asking questions

Some questions may be more appropriate for certain grade levels. For example, if your child is in elementary school, you might ask:

- How well is my child doing in reading and math?
- How well does my child work independently? Or with others?
- How does my child seem to feel about school or his or her own abilities?

Other questions may be more appropriate if your child is older (grades 6-12):

- Does this school offer career counseling or classes to help my son/daughter decide on a career?
- How often do you assign homework? Is my child completing homework assignments as expected?
- Where can we get help in completing college applications?

Listen carefully to the reports and statements from your child's teacher, counselor or school staff. This information will give you additional ideas for questions to ask.

Let teachers and staff know your concerns

Whatever the purpose of your meeting is, feel free to tell the teacher your concerns. (For example, your child doesn't seem to get along with other students or your child seems bored with school work.)

Explain your concern to the teachers and staff at your school. Your child's teacher may have suggestions to address your concerns. The teacher may help you

set up an appointment to speak with a counselor or school psychologist who can offer advice.

Examine your children's school environment

At an "open house" or other school activity, look around you at the classrooms and displays. They are a good indication of the learning that's taking place at your children's school. Here are some things to look for:

- Pay special attention to student work that is shown on bulletin boards or throughout the rest of the building.
- Take note of the special facilities:
 - ✓ Is there a library in the school?
 - ✓ Is there a computer lab?
 - ✓ Are there specific rooms for art, music and other subjects?
- Acquaint yourself with any school policies that you may not be aware of. For example, find out what you need to do if your child is absent from school. For example: Is a written note from parents required?
- Get a sense of your child's daily routine. For example: Where is your child's home-room located? Where do the children go to eat lunch? Where do students gather for the bus at the end of the day?

Work through disagreements

If you're upset with a teacher about a grade or incident involving your child, don't rush to contact the teacher or school immediately. You may say something you don't really mean.

Try to calm down and *remember*: there are two sides to every story. Don't reach your conclusions before you've had a

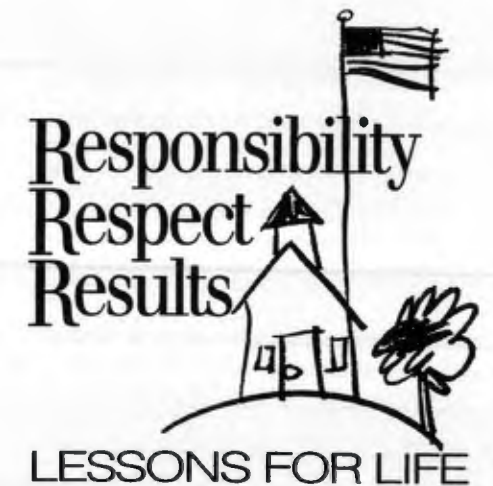
chance to hear the teacher's side.

Teachers — like all of us — are human and sometimes make mistakes. But it may be your child who is in the wrong. Above all, stay calm and try to work through any disagreement with your child's teacher or school.

Don't hesitate to contact your children's teacher

Don't feel that you must wait for a problem to contact your children's teacher. In fact, teachers appreciate it anytime you make the effort to write or phone them.

The key is to establish a positive relationship with your children's teacher as early as possible. Communicating with the teacher early in the school year will make it easier for you to talk to and understand the teacher when a real concern does arise.



Memorandum

Date: July 10, 1998

To: Karen Tramontano

From: Gigi Georges

Subject: Background for President's AFT Convention Speech

Based on our discussion on Tuesday, I've attached some background information on AFT involvement in discipline issues, and general talking points about key cities where our efforts are helping make progress (including New Orleans).

I also thought it might help to give you a rundown of salient points in Sandy's speech. She is still working out her major proposal (which will focus on teacher quality), but once the speech is complete and as we get close to delivery time (once you're down in New Orleans), I'll get you copy of the text.

Key points in the overall speech will include:

- acknowledge?* ■ **On Merger:** Recognition of the AFT leadership for its vision in seeking merger and the delegates for their support of the merger effort. Commendation to Bob Chase for his courage and leadership. Praise for the labor movement for its strong role and commitment to the fight for public education. And a reiteration of AFT's commitment to continue to embrace the needs of America's families and children, whether in a united or separate organization. (Note, our delegates will be asked to vote on the Principles of Unity later in the convention. The purpose: to allow the delegates to speak on them and express whether they felt the leadership had set the right direction for merger in them.)
- get speech* ■ **Refers to Al Shanker, who at the last convention** mustered his failing strength to warn against the mounting threats – assault on public education, crisis in health care, higher education and public service. How we miss him, but we knew we had to carry on...
- Refers to our locals' work at redesigning low-performing schools. Recently held a conference for union and management teams from eight districts across the country, shared best practices and procedures, and got programs started from coast to coast – in cooperation with management.
- Refers to AFT's report on **social promotion** of kids who aren't making the grade. The report exposed the problem and changed the unproductive debate about it. Now districts, with Chicago in the lead – are beginning to get kids early, timely and appropriate help. And President Clinton and Secretary Riley took notice of our work and provided leadership to enhance those efforts.
- Refers to the union's role in going beyond its traditional responsibilities – training teachers, leading in the effort for standards, discipline, teacher quality. Talks about her pride when at the recent US Conference of Mayors meeting, the mayors of

Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, and elsewhere praised the teachers' unions, saying they couldn't have gone so far on school improvement without the unions. Highlights the importance of partnership with management.

- Talks about how for the first time the question we're facing isn't just "whither public education" but "whether". Talk about the voucher movement, privatization efforts... Talks about the problem with leaving everything to impersonal workings of the market. That what happens to this country is not about impersonal forces – it's about the decisions we, as a people, make. As an example, refers to President's leadership on behalf of the EITC – allowing tens of thousands of Americans who were below the poverty level (even though they were working), to have security and hope. Helped lower childhood poverty rate 2%. The lesson – that there's nothing inevitable about childhood poverty in America, it's not something we have to live with because of "impersonal" market forces.
- Talks about Prop 226 – how we fought it, how we won, AFL-CIO, AFT, NEA working together, etc. But the war is far from over...
- Talks about how it's imperative, given all the threats, that we take on an even more active role in improving our schools and restoring the public's hope and confidence in them. Talks about how teachers don't get a fraction of the credit they deserve – for their persistence and courage on discipline and leadership on high standards, not just for students but for teachers and paraprofessionals; for their ongoing fight for smaller class size, whistle-blowing on social promotion; their fights to stop the ill-founded fads and fashions that blow in and out of schools and their work to pick up the pieces.
- Talks about how teachers must take the lead with superintendents and school boards, mayors, and governors. Won't wait for them to ask for help turning around schools. Get to them first with teachers' knowledge, experience and creativity. Invites superintendents, school boards, mayors, governors, Congress to sit down and work with AFT and its members to put real reforms in place.
- Talks about how, while there are serious problems, the idea that all our public schools are failing is simply wrong. That most parents know that their kids are getting a good education and see that teachers are dedicated and hardworking – and that the teachers are stepping into the breach created by stressed parents and lack of community activities for children.
- Talks about specific improvements that have been made – in test scores, SAT, ACT, Advanced Placements. Cites examples of progress in places including New Orleans, Hartford, New York, Chicago, Texas... Talks about how education reform is working. Academic standards and requirements are up, student attendance is up, dropout rates are down, and students are achieving at much higher levels. Extraordinary given America's childhood poverty rate...
- But, emphasizes that the work on improving public schools is far from done and not moving far and fast enough. Talks about how teachers have to work to make every school a school they'd gladly send their own children to.

4/23/98

Memorandum

- Talks about how, just as the AFT's nurses have exposed unsafe conditions in hospitals, teachers must blow the whistle on every incompetent administrator, misspent dollar, ill founded school experiment and every failure to back up higher standards with a curriculum or put in place a good reading program...to prevent poor public school management, where it exists, from jeopardizing the future of kids and public education.
- Makes a major proposal on teacher quality (details forthcoming).

Hope this is helpful. Sandy is also, of course, preparing an introduction of the President that will highlight his tremendous leadership in education and other issues the AFT cares about, note his DC voucher veto, and reference his major education initiatives made this year, among other things.

Call me if you have questions, need more background on the discipline issue, or anything else. Talk to you soon.

Thanks.

Attachments

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Responsibility Respect Results



LESSONS
FOR LIFE

**How you
can help**

FOR LIFE

*for standards of conduct
not sponsored by the
Association of Teachers*



How your union can help.

A series of recent polls and national studies shows that when it comes to public schools, the public wants what school employees want — safe and orderly schools where students can learn.

To help achieve this goal, the AFT has launched a nationwide campaign aimed at getting lawmakers and school officials to provide school employees with the support they need to solve the discipline problem and to raise their school's academic standards. The AFT is advocating that every school district in the country:

- Establish a student discipline code — developed with broad input from school employees and their local AFT union — that is regarded as fair by the community. The code should have a continuum of punishment that allows schools to respond quickly and appropriately to the whole range of student misbehavior.
- Consistently enforce the discipline code so that no group thinks its members — and no parents think their children — are being unfairly singled out for punishment.
- Develop a range of alternative educational placements for chronically disruptive students. These students don't belong in regular classrooms, but they don't belong on the streets either. Schools need to develop settings that are more effective in meeting the needs and behaviors of these students.
- Establish rigorous academic standards and assessments that measure whether the standards are being met. All schools should become places where high grades stand for high achievement and where promotion truly is earned.

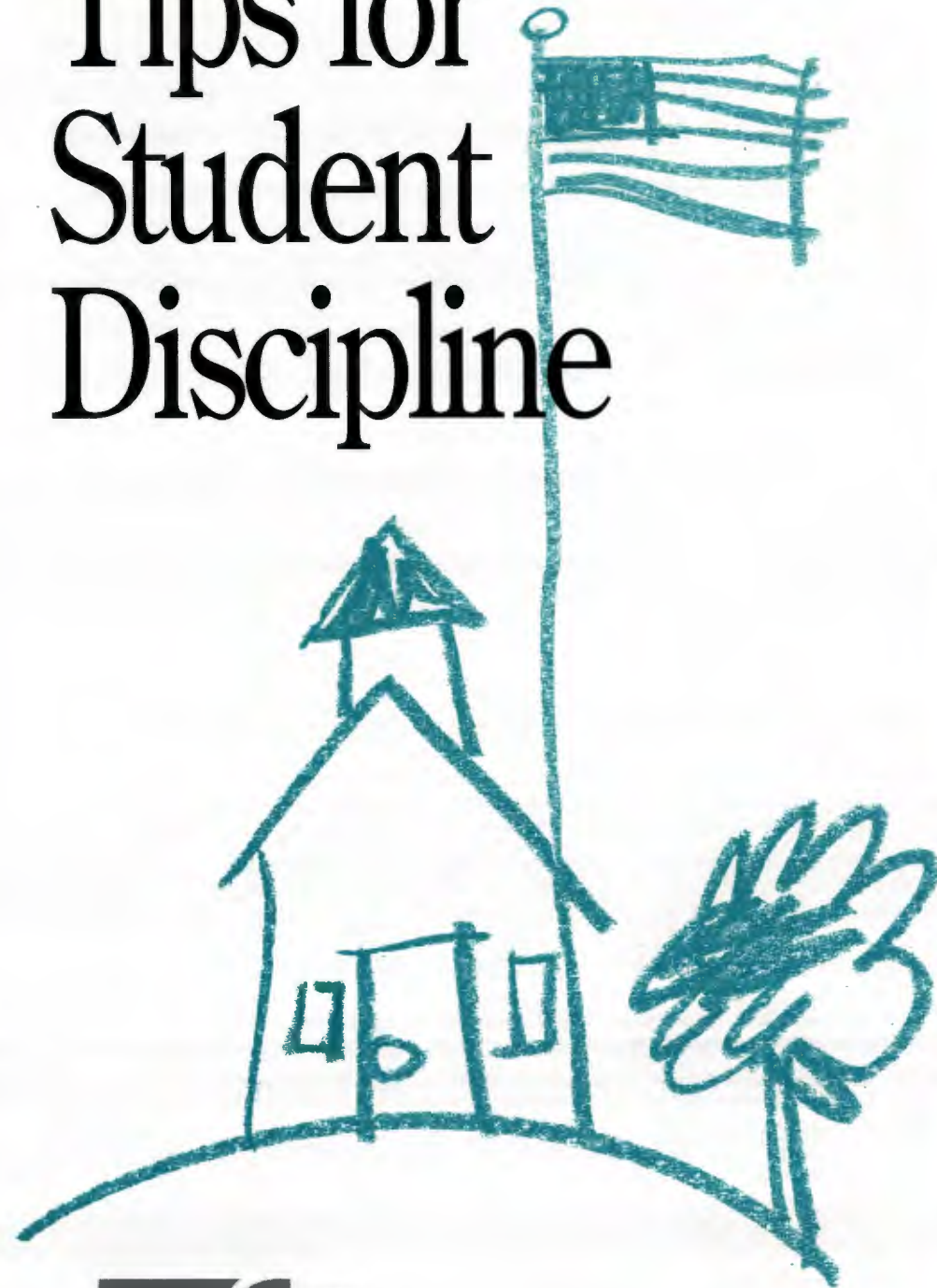
If you would like to find out more about AFT's campaign, Responsibility, Respect, Results: Lessons for Life, please call the local union office.

MORE TIPS

- Prominently display copies of the discipline codes and let students and parents know where it is kept.
- Maintain dated personal documentation of individual cases and what actions you took.
- Avoid public verbal confrontations with students. When a discussion is headed in that direction, cut it off immediately. Arrange a private talk.
- Avoid physical confrontations with students. Have a contingency plan in place to get help if a fight erupts.
- Be creative. If you are teaching young students who seem to be unable to sit still, try taking breaks from time to time and have them do exercises at their desks.

American Federation of Teachers
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001-2079
(800) 238-1133

Tips for Student Discipline



A campaign of the
American Federation
of Teachers

School violence and discipline problems have reached epidemic proportions in many school districts. In far too many schools, a lack of respect for the authority of teachers and other school employees, as well as for the rights of other students, is undermining the ability of schools to provide students with quality education.

Even in the best of schools, employees too often experience frustration and abandonment in their efforts to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment. Most teachers, school bus drivers, paraprofessionals, custodians and food service workers can relate personal stories of administrators undermining attempts to maintain order by letting student offenders get away with disruptive behavior.

Solving school violence and discipline problems isn't easy, but it can be done. Ultimately, it requires a districtwide commitment to safe, orderly schools — and school buses — including a real effort by district officials to stand behind school employees with the support they need. It also requires a commitment by administrators to forge a cooperative effort with school employees aimed at educating students, parents and members of the community about the need for tough but fair discipline policies.

But even if your school's administration doesn't make student behavior the priority it should be, there are steps you can take right now in your school or on your school bus that can help you establish, maintain or restore order.

Here are some specific tips for the classroom, many of which can be used on the school bus, the playground or any other place where school employees supervise students.

BE SURE TO: Greet students as they enter your classroom.

BECAUSE: This not only models the kind of courteous behavior you want to instill in your students, but it also gives you an opportunity for "early targeting" of potential troublemakers. You may pick up early warning signs of potential trouble, e.g., anger, illness, arguments, fights, trouble on the way to school, inappropriate attire or paraphernalia, homework not done, etc. Without early targeting or intervention, small problems can escalate to major disruption or violence.

BE SURE TO: Make "Before-Class-Starts" activities available in the classroom to engage students in positive and productive interactions. Such activities could include board games, a five-minute "free conversation" period or simple calisthenics.

BECAUSE: The "dead time" before the bell can be "deadly" if students don't have a way to channel their energies.

BE SURE TO: Have a designated place within your view for students to turn in homework assignments as they enter.

BECAUSE: The failure of students to turn in homework on time can be a major disruption to the class. When asked why they have not completed their assignments, students will often engage in denials and excuses, resulting in a waste of learning time. With a homework box, or other designated place for students to turn in work, the teacher or paraprofessional can watch the students as they enter to see who has completed their assignments and who has not.

BE SURE TO: Have a few (three to five) basic overarching rules in place to help govern student behavior in the classroom or on the school bus.

BECAUSE: Overarching rules provide parameters within which each student can function in the group and identify his or her own appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. This promotes individual ownership of the rules and encourages responsibility. (Examples of four good overarching rules — be prompt, be polite, be prepared, be productive. Examples of bad rules — do not chew gum, do not talk). Recite the rules often at the beginning of the school year and make sure to explain why these rules are necessary.

BE SURE THAT: Your students know and understand the rules. Teach and reinforce the rules as if they were curriculum, repeating them often as needed.

BECAUSE: Many school employees believe that a read-through and quick review of classroom or school bus rules are enough to ensure student understanding and buy-in. This is a dangerous misconception. Researchers have discovered that many young students really don't understand the meaning of words in the rules, such as "courteous." Also, don't assume that students have been taught proper behavior at home. Learning how to respect one's self and others is something that must be taught and reinforced.

BE SURE TO: Develop expectations for behavior that are backed up by a set of fair, workable, enforceable and hierarchical consequences. **Do not promise a consequence you cannot deliver.**

BECAUSE: Consequences are an important link to the effectiveness of your discipline code. If the consequences fall apart, or are not there to begin with, the whole thing collapses. If they are not enforced, the teacher's credibility is damaged. Negative consequences should increase in severity (hierarchical). Rule breaking and the punishment should be documented so that you can prove that those students whom you disciplined exhibited unacceptable behavior. This is very important when dealing with parents. Proper documentation can also help to ensure that administrators give you the support you need to enforce your discipline plan.

BE SURE TO: When possible, involve your students in developing the rules.

BECAUSE: By involving students in the drafting of the rules you help create an environment in which the students have a role in enforcing the rules. Peer pressure can be very effective in helping to keep an orderly class.

BE SURE THAT: Parents know and understand your rules, including the consequences. Make several different attempts to contact them. Phone calls and mailing letters to the home are the most effective means of contacting parents. Do not depend on students' hand-delivering the rules to parents.

BECAUSE: Parents who are not aware of or are not well-versed in discipline policies are prone to side with their children and might feel that the school employee's actions (especially suspension or expulsion) are arbitrary or biased.

BE SURE TO: Move a child who acts up on a school bus to the front of the bus — perhaps at the next regular stop. If the action is severe enough to cause possible injury, bus drivers suggest pulling over immediately to a safe location off the road.

BECAUSE: You should avoid, if possible, disciplining a child in front of his/her peers because this can result in a child feeling that he/she needs to show off by becoming more aggressive. Move the student away from other students and friends to a place where you can observe his/her behavior. It is usually best to wait until you arrive at the school site to continue following the standard disciplinary procedures.

BE SURE THAT: School administrators are aware of your rules and consequences and the roles that they, as school leaders, may have to play in supporting your efforts.

BECAUSE: While you cannot always count on getting the support you need from the school administration, you still should try to elicit their help. The worst thing that can happen to dismantle a classroom discipline plan is to have "no supportive action" or "counter-enforcement action" from building administrators. This sends a message to students that nothing is going to happen no matter what the infraction. By the same token, don't set rules you know won't be supported by administrators.

BE SURE TO: Plan out the arrangement of furniture, desks and supplies in your classroom for ease of traffic flow, access and visibility. Design seating charts that keep all students within eye contact. Do not put all troublemakers together and do

not place them in the back of the room! Avoid, to the best of your ability, congested aisles and stumbling blocks to easy access of supplies. (Appoint class monitors.)

BECAUSE: Classrooms are places where there is constant traffic. The ease of flow can prevent "traffic jams." Often, when students are placed in close and uncomfortable contact, flare-ups become common. Moreover, teachers should be able to see each student, and each student should be able to see the teacher. This provides opportunities for what is called "early desists" of potentially disruptive behaviors.

BE SURE TO: Learn all students' names as soon as possible—within the first three days of school.

BECAUSE: Knowing students' names helps to develop a personal relationship between you and your students. It also helps with **early targeting** and **early intervention** by accurately identifying troublemakers. When you don't know names and try other forms of identification (boy-in-blue-shirt), students can play games of avoidance, denial and trickery.

BE SURE TO: Figure out ways of scheduling routine classroom procedures smoothly and with the least possible disruption (e.g., taking attendance, tardiness, leaving the room, bulletin boards, grades, make-up work). Teach your classroom procedures as if they were curriculum.

BECAUSE: Student disruption and dissatisfaction can result from student anxiety and uncertainty about how to do things in the classroom. Procedures change from class to class, based on teacher style. Students should know how to function in each class.

BE SURE TO: Look for and try to understand differences between ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) behaviors and general misbehavior. Your school should already be supplying training and policy information about this, especially in view of current increases in mainstreaming and inclusion. If not, contact your local union representatives and ask them to work with the administration to make this kind of training available.

BECAUSE: It is difficult to identify those students who are affected by ADD and those who are not. Issues of fairness or legal problems can arise with the teacher caught in the middle.

BE SURE TO: Educate yourself on the rules and policies concerning disruptive and violent behavior by special education students.

BECAUSE: Rules governing what you can or cannot do to discipline special education students who have committed the same infractions as regular education students can be different. This can cause havoc in the classroom or on the school bus. If you are unsure of your authority or the rights of your students, ask your school's administration for clarification. For a copy of AFT's Special Education Discipline Procedures Chart and other information on laws pertaining to disciplining special needs students, please call the AFT Educational Issues Department at 800-238-1133.



- There should be a range of alternative placement options, from in-school measures, such as time-out rooms and in-school suspension, to short- and long-term alternative schools or correctional institutions for criminal offenders. Chronically disruptive children must not be placed in the same alternative setting as violent students.
- Effective communication among students, parents, and teachers must be maintained to help remedy the cause of behavior problems and to ensure a smooth transition back into the regular academic program.
- Alternative placements must have significantly lower pupil-teacher ratios than regular classrooms to ensure that troubled youngsters get the intensive help they need. Staff working in alternative placement programs must be competent instructors in academic fields and also have special training and skills in helping chronically disruptive and violent children.
- All placements should provide instruction in rigorous academics *and* supplementary counseling and supervision. Alternative school teachers must be assisted by appropriate in-school and outside psychologists and family workers.

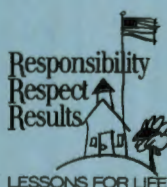
Can we afford alternative educational placements?

Because alternative settings need smaller class size and special staff, they are not cheap. Exact costs will be determined by the nature of the problems in a given district or school and the range of alternative placements a district decides to implement. Significant portions of the cost can and should be shared with non-school agencies charged with working with children and families. In the final analysis, having a range of alternative placements is cost effective because the cost of not having effective discipline systems in place is more expensive.

- *More Learning in Regular Classrooms.* When one hour of instructional time per day is lost to disruption, the cost per year is \$23,429 per class (based on the national average annual cost per pupil of \$5,623).
- *Less Repetition of Grades by Students.* For each student that an alternative program prevents from having to repeat a grade, the cost savings is \$5,623.
- *Less Incarceration.* Many students who are chronically disruptive or violent are on a fast track to incarceration when they become adults. With appropriate interventions we stand a good chance of turning them around. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In 1993, the average cost to incarcerate an inmate in local jails was \$14,667 per year. Federal prisons cost an average of \$22,773 per inmate per year.

Do good programs exist?

Yes. The AFT has found a number of effective alternative placement programs across the country. The November 1994 issue of *American Teacher* highlighted successful programs in districts across the country. Copies of these articles are available from the AFT Editorial Department. We will be providing more information about successful models in the near future.



Alternative Educational Placements for Violent and Chronically Disruptive Students

Poll after poll tells us that parents and the public expect schools to provide a high-quality education for children. We know that this is not possible without safe and orderly classrooms where students can concentrate on learning without constant disruptions or incidents of violence. Polls also confirm that establishing a safe and orderly learning environment is at the top of the public's list of educational priorities. In response, the AFT has launched a nation-wide campaign for standards of conduct and standards of achievement, *Responsibility, Respect, Results: Lessons for Life*.

The centerpiece of that campaign is a ten-point Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Learning. Principle number three of the Bill of Rights and Responsibilities says, "All students and staff have a right to learn and work in school districts that have alternative educational placements for violent or chronically disruptive students."

Will alternative educational placements alone solve the problem?

No. Alternative educational placements are not "magic bullets" that will solve all discipline problems. They are a necessary component of a system to minimize discipline problems. These specialized placements support learning for both the few who are dangerous or chronically disruptive and the many who can work productively in regular classrooms. Alternative educational placements should be one part of an overall discipline program that includes effective classroom management strategies, clear and consistently enforced discipline codes, a range of sanctions short of placement in alternative programs for infrequent and minor infractions of rules, and a fair and expedient appeals procedure for students placed in alternative programs for an extended period of time. When all the components of an effective discipline strategy are in place, only a small number of students will need to be placed in alternative settings.

Why do we need alternative educational placements?

Ensure Safety – Students who are violent pose a danger to themselves, to other children, and to staff. Violent students must be moved from regular classroom settings into alternative schools until they no longer pose threats to others.

Prevent Disruptions to Learning – Students who are chronically disruptive or violent violate the rights of the overwhelming majority of students who come to school to learn. Students cannot learn in an atmosphere of fear and instability. Teachers cannot teach when they are preoccupied with policing duties. Prompt removal of violent or chronically disruptive students can salvage precious time for teaching and learning and teaches all students an important civics lesson: engaging in prohibited behavior has consequences.

Provide Appropriate Help to Disruptive and Violent Students – Students who are consistently disruptive or violent need to be placed in an environment where they can receive special assistance with their behavior problems *and* continue to receive academic instruction. Regular schools are not able to provide that intensive, specialized help *and* continue to meet the needs of the majority of students.

What do we mean by alternative placements?

AFT believes alternative educational settings should include these characteristics:

- Alternative educational settings should *not* be warehouses or dumping grounds for students. Clear behavioral benchmarks must be established for students placed in such programs explaining what they must attain to return to the regular school or classroom setting.

(continued)

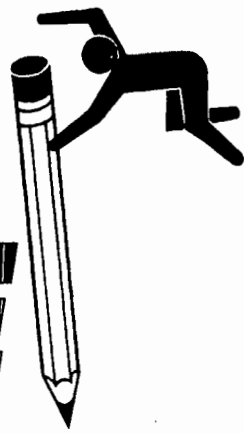
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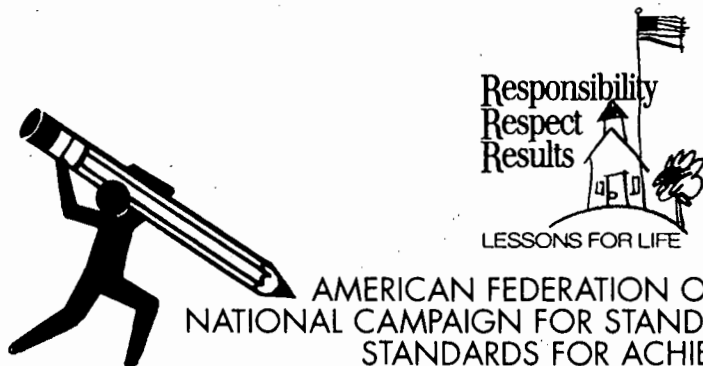
SETTING THE STAGE FOR HIGH STANDARDS



Elements of Effective School Discipline

The Six Essential Elements

1. Promote effective classroom management.
2. Enact district-wide discipline codes.
3. Enforce the discipline code.
4. Implement programs to modify low-level student misbehavior.
5. Establish alternative placements for chronically disruptive and violent students.
6. Support the work of families, religious institutions and communities in developing sound character in children.



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR STANDARDS OF CONDUCT,
STANDARDS FOR ACHIEVEMENT

Where We Stand

by Albert Shanker
President, American Federation of Teachers

Zero Tolerance

In 1993, the Texas Federation of Teachers (TFT) sent a questionnaire to its members, asking them about their experiences with disruption and violence in their schools. The results were alarming. Undoubtedly, the disorder that teachers reported was the work of a few students, but TFT knew that these kids were harming the learning of all the rest. Without tough codes of conduct that were consistently enforced, they would continue doing so. The union also knew that parents and members of the community agreed overwhelmingly on the importance of establishing order in the schools, so TFT launched a campaign calling for zero tolerance for certain kinds of violent and disruptive behavior.

The campaign led ultimately to the passage of the Texas Safe Schools Act in 1995. The legislation requires school districts to remove violent students from regular classrooms and place them in alternative educational settings. It also gives teachers the authority to remove from their class a student who consistently disrupts other students, and it prohibits administrators from automatically returning that student--which was a common practice. These students are generally reassigned to another class. Administrators can appeal a teacher's action to a committee set up for that purpose, so the law strikes a balance between safeguarding the rights of students who are consistently disruptive and the rights of all the rest.

What impact is the Safe Schools Act having? It is still early to say, but there are some good signs. TFT recently asked members to respond again to the school violence questionnaire originally sent out in 1993. This before-and-after comparison was encouraging:

- The number of teachers reporting threats of violence to students was down by 6 percent.
- The number reporting threats of violence to themselves was down by 33 percent.
- The number reporting assaults by students on other students was down by 10 percent.
- The number saying that they had been assaulted in the past year was down by 35 percent.

It is true that the numbers remain very high for many of these problems. For instance, 59 percent of teachers still report threats of physical violence to students and 47 percent, assaults by students on other students. Nevertheless, the downward trends suggest that, thanks to the Safe Schools Act, many Texas classrooms are already beginning to be better places for learning.

The bad news is that enforcement is spotty: Only 35 percent of the teachers said their district was trying to enforce the new law. Even worse is the news of a movement to weaken the law during this legislative session. Critics say the Safe Schools Act is a big example of micromanagement and a blow against local control. They hope to curtail the authority it gives teachers and allow administrators more "flexibility" in deciding when to exercise zero tolerance and when to make exceptions. In other words, they want to remove many of the provisions that are already making the law effective.

Undoubtedly, giving administrators the freedom to relax the rules would make life easier for them: It's no fun trying to tell angry parents why you can't make an exception for *their* child. But John Cole, president of TFT, points out exactly why this kind of leeway would also be counterproductive (*Richardson [Texas] News*, December 8, 1996):

To establish an orderly learning environment, you have to draw lines and tell students they may not cross those lines. Once you begin to make an exception for one student, the line becomes blurred and the rule loses meaning. If we say that a student caught with one beer at school is not a big deal, you can be sure that some student will try to bring two beers, and

then claim, "I was only one beer over the line, so what is the big deal?"

If you begin to make exceptions for honor students who are caught with marijuana, other students will point out, "You let him go; it is not fair to treat me differently."

And, unfortunately, with more "flexibility" will also come racial and ethnic discrimination.

Going back to the status quo, which is what critics propose, is a bad idea. We already know that it doesn't work. We also know the Texas Safe Schools Act is a strong piece of legislation that is likely to be effective--that's obvious from the impact it has had after only one year in which the level of enforcement was not very high. The law deserves a chance to work.

★ We talk a lot about improving the educational performance of all our students. Many states are busy setting academic standards, and some are even talking about tying assessments to these standards. But the truth of the matter is that none of these changes will achieve what we want unless schools are safe and orderly places where teachers can teach and students can learn. The citizens of Texas took a big first step in making this possible. They must not retreat.

◀ [Previous "Where We Stand" Columns](#)

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
The American Federation of Teachers

The Real Victims

It's increasingly clear that the biggest roadblock to improving the achievement of U.S. students is violence and disorder in our schools. Education reformers say we must set high standards for student achievement and create curriculums and assessments embodying these standards -- and I agree with them. But high standards and excellent curriculums and assessments are not enough. Indeed, they will be worthless if students cannot learn because they are constantly afraid of being hit by a stray bullet or because their classes are dominated by disruptive students. This is just common sense.

A couple of weeks ago, Washington Post columnist Courtland Milloy told the story of a girl who had seen some classmates stab another student and was so terrified by the possibility of reprisals that she quit school ("An Education in Self-Help," January 29, 1995). This story has a relatively happy ending: The girl went on to earn a GED and is now attending college. But for every one who is motivated to continue her education the way this girl did, there are thousands and tens of thousands who are intimidated and distracted and are lost to school and learning.

Classroom disruption is more pervasive than school violence and just as fatal to learning. If there is one student in a class who constantly yells, curses out the teacher and picks on other students who are trying to listen or participate in class, you can be sure that most of the teacher's time will not be devoted to helping the other youngsters learn math or science or English; it will be spent figuring out how to contain this student. And it does not take many such students to ruin the learning of the great majority of youngsters in a school.

School officials seem generally to be at a loss. In Washington, D.C., and elsewhere, students who have been caught bringing guns or drugs to school or who have hurt other students may simply be transferred to another school or suspended for a little while. There seems to be a high level of tolerance for this kind of behavior where there should be none. And when it comes to chronically disruptive students, we are even more tolerant. Little happens to kids who merely keep others from learning.

Parents are painfully aware of these problems. That's why both African-American and white parents put safe and orderly schools at the top of their list of things that would improve student achievement. And that is undoubtedly why vouchers and tuition tax credits are so popular -- especially among many parents of kids in inner-city schools. These parents are saying, "If your schools are so violent and disorderly that our children can't learn -- and are not even safe -- let us put them in schools that won't tolerate kids who behave that way."

Many education experts insist that our first responsibility is to the few violent and disruptive kids. They say these kids have the "right" to an education, and we need to keep them in class and in school so we can help them overcome their problems. But what about the "rights" of the 25 or 30 kids in every class who come to school ready to work? Why are we willing to threaten their safety and learning? I'm not advocating putting violent or disruptive kids out on the streets. We need alternative programs for these youngsters, but we also need to change a system that sacrifices the overwhelming majority of children for a handful -- without even doing the handful any good.

Most children come to school believing that doing right matters, but they soon learn to question that belief. Say a youngster in kindergarten does something that is way out of line -- he knocks another kid down and kicks him. The other five-year-olds are sure something terrible is going to happen to this child, and they are very glad they're not in his place. Well, what happens? Probably the teacher gets in trouble for reporting the child. So their sense of justice -- their belief that acting naughtily has consequences -- begins to be eroded. The youngster who defied the teacher becomes the de facto leader of the class, and peer pressure now encourages the other children to ignore what the teacher tells them to

do. At a very early age, kids are taught a bad lesson -- nothing will happen if they break the rules -- and whatever else they learn in English or math or science, this lesson remains consistent throughout school.

We have an irrational system, and it's no wonder that angry parents are calling for vouchers, tuition tax credits -- anything that would allow them to get their kids out of schools where a few violent and disruptive kids call the shots. What this means, though, is that 98 percent of students would be leaving public schools to get away from the 2 percent. Wouldn't it make a lot more sense just to move the 2 percent?

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
The American Federation of Teachers

Take Back the Schools

Ask any group of veteran teachers what's been the most striking change in American schools over the past 25 years, and they'll say, the enormous increase in violence and disruption. Of course there have always been youngsters who misbehaved. What's new and shocking is the breakdown of order in the schools. The kids who come with guns -- and sometimes use them. The classrooms where teachers spend their time trying to contain youngsters who yell obscenities when another student volunteers to answer a question. It's true that the violent and disruptive kids are only a small percentage of the whole -- perhaps 5 percent -- but they are putting at risk the education of the other 95 percent.

As I said in last week's column, our schools are very tolerant of outrageous behavior. Chances are good that youngsters caught carrying a weapon will be suspended. But chances are also good that they'll be back in a short time -- ready to take up where they left off. And little if anything ever happens to the kids who only destroy other students' opportunity to learn by turning the classroom into a zoo.

Why do we put up with this? Partly because many education experts maintain that these troubled kids are not responsible for their actions. They are victims of society's injustice, and if we don't we keep them in class and in school, we are jeopardizing their right to an education. The trouble with this approach is that it disregards the rights of the 95 percent who want to learn -- or might if they had a chance. We need to provide violent and disruptive kids with an education -- if they are willing to take it -- in alternative settings, where they will not destroy the education of others. But our primary concern should be the safety and well-being of the majority of students.

Polls show that parents, both white and African-American, are outraged by the current state of affairs. And in some districts, teachers, who also say they have had enough, are joining with other community members to take back the schools. This will not be an easy job, but here are some of the things that are being advocated

- * Clear and rigorous discipline codes that are strictly enforced. Existing codes are often fuzzy and open to interpretation. A good code makes a direct connection between behavior and consequences -- if you hit somebody, this is what will happen. And it must be enforced to the letter. Otherwise, some children will be punished more severely than others, and the code will be open to charges of unfairness. There must be no question that a kid was punished because somebody didn't like the color of his or her skin: The same rules must apply to all.

- * State legislation requiring school districts to establish and enforce these codes. A code is only good if it is enforced. Some school administrators are afraid that reports of violence will damage their reputation, so they ignore such reports or even penalize teachers who make them. A good state law would deal with this problem by including penalties for failing to enforce a district code as well as provisions requiring full and honest reporting of code violations.

- * Revised legal procedures. School administrators hesitate to take a student to court because the process is time-consuming and expensive. Also, in a curious way, it seems stacked in favor of the student. You have this lone child up against what looks like an unforgiving adult world, and the judge is likely to say, "Why not give the kid another chance?" But what if the kid's 25 classmates or their parents were allowed to come to court and tell their side of the story? Giving the court an opportunity to hear the side of the youngsters whose education has been hurt by a violent or disruptive child would redress the balance a little.

- * A school-based arbitration process. Arbitration is a quick and inexpensive way of settling disputes. Standards -- guidelines about what is open to arbitration -- are established, and both sides present their

case to an independent arbitrator. The decision that is made generally stands up in court. Why shouldn't schools set up an arbitration procedure, where the rights of the disruptive students are taken into account but the rights of the rest of the class to an education are paramount? This separate school judicial system could handle many of the problems that never get to court under the current system.

But if we are to make our schools safe and orderly, parents must also get involved. Parents of violent or disruptive students often show up to plead for their child. However, few parents of the 95 percent who want to learn ever step forward to demand safe and orderly schools for their kids. There is no question about the clout they would have if they rose up and told school boards what they have already told public opinion polls -- that they have had enough.

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ALBERT SHANKER, PRESIDENT

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

State of the Union Address

Saturday, August 2, 1996

Cincinnati, Ohio

Excuse me for sitting. It will preserve the energy I need to give a speech.

I come before you in what I understand is the hottest and latest hairdo.

(Laughter and applause)

Only I didn't know it until somebody told me.

(Laughter)

I want to thank all of you for the many messages of support, for your prayers, and your good wishes. They have meant a lot.

I would like to talk about our union, where we are and what we need to do. We are strong and we're still growing. In spite of the hits on unions, teachers' unions especially, we have passed the 900,000 mark this year. We've grown every year for the last 15 years. We've grown 60,000 members since the last convention. We are 907,000 strong.

When I think of it, when I joined the AFT, we had 50,000 members nationally; and here we grew 60,000 members in two years. We won 84 percent of the elections that we entered, and no union has done better; and this record includes all of our divisions: K-12, PSRPs, higher education, health care professionals, and state and local employees.

We've had this success because of our vision and our track record. We provide quality representation for our members, but also we have an emphasis on standards and the improvement of services, something which the public very much wants and which our members want, too.

I think something else our members appreciate are the tough stands we take on issues. We do not adopt a policy or a position because it happens to be popular. We would like it to be popular, and we do have some popular positions, but there are many that are unpopular. If we feel they are right, we stay with them.

We're also financially strong. As you know, we will not be moving for a dues increase this year, although we will for the second year.

But despite our successes and our strength, the last two years have been very tough years. There's just a huge set of problems that we've had to overcome. First, there's the growing voucher movement all across the country. We now have vouchers in two places, Milwaukee and Cleveland; but there are lots of state legislatures that came very close to adopting vouchers this year. There are many places where the battle can be won or lost in the next couple of years.

In Washington, D.C., it was very, very close. The entire budget for the city of Washington, D.C., was held up because the Republicans insisted on a voucher program for Washington in order for Washington to receive what in other cities would be called state aid.

Then there's privatization. Yes, EAI was kicked out of Baltimore; and they were kicked out of Hartford. And just a few weeks ago, we won in Wappingers Falls, New York, where the school board that brought in EAI was ousted; and the school board that's now in is opposed to EAI. So these were big victories.

Yet even though EAI was thrown out in all those places, EAI is under consideration at a number of schools in Washington, D.C., and in many other places. So this is not one of these threats that you defeat once and for all. You beat them in one place, and they show up someplace else. Because unfortunately, school boards are willing to hire an outfit which has proven that it's not been able to do anything positive anywhere that it's been.

There's also the very rapid movement toward charter schools. Now, some charter schools are fine. Some of them have been sponsored by us. Some that we don't sponsor are there with our blessings. But there are more and more states that are considering and enacting charter school provisions that do not permit the teachers in charter schools to be covered by collective bargaining laws, provisions which are essentially ways of creating a nonunion school system.

There are also many states that do not require charter schools to live up to state standards or to have their students take the same examinations that students take in regular public schools. So this, too, needs to be monitored very carefully.

Also during this same period of time, there's probably been the most radical transformation in the health care system that has ever occurred in modern times. Some of us don't know that because we have negotiated excellent health plans for our members; and by and large those plans are still intact. Maybe they're a little worse than they were 10 or 15 or 20 years ago, but they're still in very good shape. But those who are in the health care professions know it very well: the closings of hospitals, the buy-ups by large corporations, and the movement away from an emphasis on quality to an emphasis on a kind of managed health care where dollars are made whether or not the care provided is in the best interest of the patients.

During this same period of time, there have been massive cuts in higher education. I know that in the state of New York, within this last year, cuts of 25 to 30 percent took place in the total budget of our two major public universities. And that was following a number of years of previous cuts.

State and local public employees have felt and are about to feel the tremendous reductions in federal programs because many of those federal programs provide aid to the states to perform all sorts of state and local services. I heard on the news this morning that someone from Los Angeles said that the welfare reform bill is going to cost them a billion dollars or more. The same is true in New York State. When you take these cuts together with budget balancing, there's going to be tremendous anguish.

Over the years, we've won many battles. In the last two years, we've more than held our own. We have preserved an awful lot. There are even a few pluses, a few places where we've advanced. But these kinds of assaults aren't just going to go away. We need to do things differently, and we need to be more effective in the way we do them because we will not win the second round, the third, and the fourth -- and there will be second, third, and fourth rounds in some of these very same battles -- if we just use the same tools.

Now, what have we been doing? Largely, the people who have won these battles are sitting in this hall right now. You have gone to your state capitols. You have advertised. You have had petition campaigns. You've done all sorts of things to preserve your institutions. We in the national office have alerted you, whenever there was danger coming from Washington, D.C., to get messages to members of Congress. But by and large, these campaigns have been conducted and won by the leadership corps.

What percentage of our membership has been actively involved: One, two, three, four, five, six percent? Not 20 percent. Maybe in some local campaigns there have been more; but by and large, we've been winning our battles with a leadership corps. One of my main messages today is that we're not going to continue winning that way, that one of the things we've got to do is make better use of the strength that we have.

Yes, that strength consists of a good set of leaders. It consists of having a good institution and organization. It consists of having some money to advertise and do some public relations. But the main strength of the organization is in its members.

Having the leaders send telegrams or faxes is very important. We should continue to do that. It has an impact. But just think of what the impact would be if we could mobilize the energies of most of our members. Not only would we have greater effectiveness, but it's also part of the job of educating our members on the issues. And that is essential. Because when we take polls and when we have focus groups, we find that the leaders know the issues very well; and although the members know them pretty well, they don't know them as well. And when you involve members in doing things -- in sending letters, in sending their own faxes, in getting petitions, and speaking before other groups -- it transforms them and it transforms a campaign.

Obviously, the first thing we must do is before us: the political campaign. I'm not going to repeat the arguments for supporting Clinton and Gore and for supporting those members of Congress who support us in our programs. That has been done well already. But I do want to add that there are some Republicans who have supported programs we care about, and where that is the case we should support the Republican. It would be a terrible thing if some Republican up for re-election got defeated because he voted against vouchers.

In order to do this, we need to mobilize our members. So I want to talk with you about how to do that because it is not obvious.

I know the first time that we endorsed a candidate, I just sent out a letter saying that we have endorsed so-and-so. We did that a number of times. Basically, we announced to our members that we had endorsed so-and-so; and we expected that, because our members were AFT members and the AFT had endorsed Mr. X, they would say, "Okay. That's how I'll vote." Well, it doesn't work that way.

We have found in polls and focus groups that our members don't very much care whether we endorse one candidate or another. So if we just let them know who we've endorsed, we may get 15 or 20 percent to respond, but the others won't care.

Basically, we can get our members to support us if we talk to them about the issues that they feel we know about: issues of health care, higher education, elementary and secondary education, state and local public services, and so forth.

We can talk to a member and say we have endorsed Clinton and Gore because they fought against vouchers, because they were with us when there was a voucher referendum in California; the President actually went out there and campaigned against it. And we can say we endorsed them because the President and Vice President vetoed a number of federal budgets that had unacceptable education and health care cuts and public service cuts, and so forth.

In other words, if we say, "Vote for Clinton and Gore because they're Democrats and Democrats are pro-labor," it turns our members off. They will say the leadership is just wedded to the Democratic party and that's it or they're up there cavorting with those politicians.

We've got to be specific about the issues and not use slogans because most people don't have a framework for those slogans. If I were to say to you that candidate so-and-so is anti-labor, you would immediately translate that into five or ten or twelve different things. You would know exactly what I mean. But the average member does not translate it that way. Those slogans don't mean anything to them.

I would urge, in the strongest possible terms, that you don't just send out a letter and that you don't just send out an endorsement. Yes, get mailings out; but talk about the issues.

More important than mailings, set up phone banks. Call on the AFT's COPE Department to help you set them up. Because when you have phone banks, you get member-to-member contact; and it means that you have an opportunity to listen to what the members say, to what bothers them, what troubles them, and what could be said that might move them.

Of course, our members, like all of us, are not simple human beings. We're complex. To some, the

abortion issue will be more important than anything else. To others, taxes will be. To still others, something else will be. So we can't guarantee that reaching out will work. And it would be impossible for an organization of our size to have everybody with us.

We can be most effective face to face and with phone calls, person to person. We can be most effective if we stay away from slogans -- "He's anti-labor" or "The Democrats are good for us." We can be most effective when we're specific on issues that deal with education, with health care, with public services, with budget cuts, with higher education.

Give information. Don't debate issues that the member feels strongly about. Just put some things into members' heads that they will weigh as they get ready to vote. You won't be able to change them on very, very strong beliefs.

Remind members that education and training and health issues and higher education are really central to why Clinton vetoed so many budgets, to why the federal government was shut down. We've been asking for years, "When will a president make education priority number one?" Well, here's one who's made education and health care and lots of public services priority number one; and our members ought to know about it.

(Applause)

Our members also ought to think about this: If a president has made these issues his number one priorities and he loses, chances are that no other candidate will ever make them his top priorities. And we've got to make sure that he doesn't lose.

(Applause)

We should get as many of our members as possible involved in this campaign. Remember, when you train people to work on a phone bank, they get very good; they get to be professional. Then, they go back to their schools and they talk to other people during their lunch hour. They go back to their families and churches and clubs and campaign there. When you've trained somebody like that, he's much more effective than a person who just passively agrees with you and says that he's going to vote.

But as much as I think it's important to get everyone involved, I don't want us going into this election campaign with the notion that winning in November will mean we have solved all of our problems.

Remember that voucher initiatives are being pushed at the state and local levels. Privatization is a threat to every division of our union, and that's not only coming from the federal government; it is also coming through state and local initiatives. Not all threats are going to be resolved. Some of them will be, but a good many of them won't be except by continued action.

That means we have to mobilize our members -- and not just for the presidential campaign. They have to be mobilized for our other issues as well; and that's what the Lessons for Life campaign and the Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Learning are about.

The first thing is to realize how we came up with the Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Learning. As I have indicated to many of you, Public Agenda Foundation reports, polls, and focus groups show that the public is moving more and more to the point where they're willing to abandon public schools for private schools. They're not there yet, but it's about 50-50 right now. The news is quite bad.

The public says, "We don't care what you do about school reform or what you tell us about curriculum and standards for teachers. If you can't take care of the discipline problems in schools -- if you don't remove disruptive youngsters who destroy the education of everybody else -- the schools are not going to work for our kids or for anybody else's."

(Applause)

Members of the public want standards in core academic subjects. They don't want their kids telling

them, "No, don't help me with my homework, Mom. Don't worry. Spelling doesn't count." They don't want their youngsters saying, "We don't have to learn the tables. We can use a calculator." They don't want a system that doesn't prepare youngsters for either college or work and is not teaching things like honesty and respect.

Teachers want what parents want, and so does 85 percent of the public. Yet, people are being driven out of the public schools because the politicians who run the schools are not delivering what the public wants. It's easy to see why this is happening. Just as it's very difficult to activate our members, whether it's for political or other kinds of campaigns, it's hard to get parents or citizens to participate in local campaigns.

The people who are active tend to be those whose kids are disruptive. They organize into some sort of an advocacy group, and they run to the principal and the superintendent and the school board and charge that their kids are being pushed out of school. Almost all of the things that are unpopular happen because some advocacy group pushes for them, while the overwhelming majority remains silent. And probably the majority don't try to do anything because they feel that, every time they go to the school board, they just get the runaround.

So we're at a point where slightly more than half of the parents -- and that includes white and African-American parents -- say that if they had the money, they would send their kids to private school.

If we had a business and there were poll results showing that our customers wanted a product with A, B, C and D, we would give it to our customers. We would redesign our product to make sure it had what the customers wanted, even if it was ludicrous.

What our customers, the parents, want is not ludicrous at all. They want standards of conduct and standards for achievement, and they ought to be able to get what they want from our public education system.

(Applause)

It would be a damn shame if we ended up sending 97 percent of the kids to private schools with vouchers and all we had left in public schools were the disruptive students that the private schools wouldn't take. I would rather get rid of the 3 percent and keep the 97 percent where they belong.

(Applause)

Now, vouchers are still unpopular. You know how you can tell? Dole did not call his proposal "vouchers." And when Congress was trying to pass vouchers for Washington, D.C., they didn't call them vouchers, either. The public doesn't like vouchers. So supporters call them "scholarships" or "opportunity grants." You can always be sure that, when people use cover-up language, they're trying to put over something that is basically unpopular. The public still wants to preserve public education, but they're not going to wait forever.

We had a number of regional meetings across the country this past year, and we plan to continue them. I attended those meetings, and I was pretty tough. I said that any local that does not participate in and press for the Lessons for Life campaign is engaged in union malpractice. What I meant is that it is as much your duty to preserve public education as it is to negotiate a good contract; it is as much your duty to preserve public education as it is to defend a competent teacher who is under attack.

(Applause)

And there won't be a contract to negotiate or a place to defend teachers unless we preserve our institution, and we can only do that by mobilizing -- mobilizing all of our members; mobilizing parents, either as organizers or as individuals; going to business groups and getting their attention and their support; and going to citizens.

This is not a public relations campaign. Yes, when I am finished with my speech, you will see the names

Widespread
Support
for
RPR

of the individuals and groups that have endorsed Lessons for Life. The program has gotten tremendous support from all kinds of groups -- newspapers, governors, and state legislatures. But the purpose of the campaign in your community is to make sure that your school board adopts a discipline code and the code is enforced. And it is to make sure that academic standards are adopted. That means no automatic promotion. It means principals can't change teachers' marks. It means that schools don't graduate youngsters who can't read or write.

(Applause)

It means that we organize in our own communities -- teachers, parents, and the public -- to defeat school board members who don't support these policies and to make sure that in every single school district across the country there are high standards of conduct and high academic standards. Give the public what it wants, and give the teachers what they want because they both want the same thing: what's right for kids.

(Applause)

Over the last couple of years, we have been seeing a series of attacks on teachers' unions. I'm sure you saw the big article in U.S. News and World Report which was filled with misinformation. Last month, the front page of the Washington Post headlined, "Teachers' Unions Stand in Way of Reform." What was the reform we were standing in the way of? We're against vouchers, so according to these people, we're against reform. We sent a letter saying that not all reforms are good, and we oppose those that are bad. That's why we oppose vouchers.

However, we are going to be boxed in unless we have something positive to offer. We will be defined as the group that's always saying no on charter schools, no on vouchers, no to the attack on tenure, no to school closings, and so forth. People will say that the teachers' union is against everything they are trying to do to improve the schools.

What are we for? Well, to be for schools where there are high standards for discipline and high academic standards as they're defined in the Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Learning, that's to be for something. We want to be defined by what we are and what we campaign for, by what we try to do and what we fight for, not by what the enemies of public education say we are.

So Lessons for Life is another campaign. If you have adopted it, great. If you've written to your local paper, fine. If you've gotten your school board or some business groups to adopt the Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Learning, fine; but that is not the end. The end is what is happening in your schools. Do you actually have a discipline code that works? If not, you've got to make it work. You've got to bring public pressure to make it work. Do you have academic standards in place in the core subjects? If not, get them. Look at the materials in the Lessons for Life kit that was given to you, and you'll see many suggestions as to what other locals have done.

I would like to talk for a minute about changes that our union has to make. We have to deal with a number of tough issues. Some of them we have already dealt with, but there are misperceptions on the part of the public. One of these issues is tenure.

The anti-teacher groups have done a very good job of confusing the public by saying that tenure means a lifetime job. According to them, tenure means that you can never get rid of a teacher no matter how incompetent. For example, a segment of the television show "20/20" asserted that a teacher pulled a knife on a student in Michigan and got away scot-free. That turned out not to be true. The teacher was disciplined. The case went all the way up to the state tenure review board; and the teacher was suspended for two years without pay, which is quite a punishment, even though it was admitted by everybody that pulling the knife was a joke, not a real attack.

Nevertheless, we have a problem. There are also reports of cases that drag on for two-and-a-half years and cost \$250,000 or more to resolve. We need to do something about that. I know we can go to our state legislatures, and we can probably hold back change for a while; but there is no reason why we, as a teachers' union, should preserve the jobs of incompetent teachers, none at all.

(Applause)

On the contrary, incompetent teachers are probably very unhappy in their jobs and would be happier elsewhere. Incompetent teachers hurt their fellow teachers; and they certainly hurt students; and they hurt the entire profession.

(Applause)

We need to do something about this. Appeal procedures must remain fair, but where they are too long, they need to be shorter. Where they're too expensive, they need to become less expensive. We have a number of locals -- Cincinnati is one of them; Toledo is another, as well as Rochester and Minneapolis, and I'm sure I'm leaving out a few -- where there are peer assistance and peer review programs that deal with some of these problems. Outstanding teachers, members of the profession who are selected jointly by the union and by management, try to help teachers who are in trouble. Then, finally, they render a judgment as to whether the teacher has become successful or cannot succeed.

That really punches the opposition right in the nose. It says that not only do teachers not have lifetime jobs, not only are we against incompetents in the classroom, but we as teachers, and as a union, are also willing to take the responsibility for getting rid of incompetent teachers because management has not been able to do it well.

(Applause)

I know that this is controversial. The Executive Council considered a resolution on this set of issues, but the resolution was drawn up just before the convention. It is very, very complex, and when it was debated in the K-12 meeting, most people felt that it was not something that they would like to go with.

What we will do is refine that resolution in terms of the objections that were made to it; and we will take it to our Program and Policy Council and to the Executive Council and bring it to our next convention. Meanwhile, we will also take up the issue of tenure at our regional meetings. While we're doing this, I would urge you to talk over something that John Cole, the AFT vice president from Texas, talked about at the Executive Council meeting this morning.

It does not go over very well with the public when you say that teachers need tenure in order to protect academic freedom because most members of the public don't care much about that issue. John Cole found a much better argument. He said the reason for tenure is that you don't want to have a new set of inexperienced teachers every time a new school board is elected and they decide to reward their cronies with jobs.

(Applause)

A second issue that we need to deal with is school reconstitution. That is the process whereby a school that is considered hopeless is closed down and then reopened with all or some new staff and with all or some new students.

Reconstitution has already happened in some places, but get ready for a big increase because it's in the Chapter 1 legislation as a step to take against schools that fail to make progress. In other words, it's in the national legislation, so there's no way that we can just be silent about reconstitution and think it's going to go away. What we need to do is figure out how to handle it. What is really terrible about the way reconstitution is usually done is that only the teachers are viewed as being at fault. It's not the administration. It's not the way the school was run before. It's not the fact that large numbers of violent or disruptive students are allowed to remain in the school. It's the teachers who are blamed and often viewed as damaged goods. In most cases, teachers from a reconstituted school are permitted to look around for other jobs within the system, but often nobody else wants them.

There are places where reconstitution has been done well. New York City is one of them. They have been doing it for years, long before Chapter 1 or Title I; and the rules there actually give teachers certain

priorities in terms of where they transfer, as well as giving a percentage of them the right to transfer back into the reconstituted school. So it's done in a way that will preserve some continuity.

We have a resolution that will come before you which, if passed, will result in the appointment of an AFT task force to work out the knotty problems connected with reconstitution -- especially how to carry it out without the assumption, which is clearly wrong, that only the teachers are responsible when schools fail, instead of being just part of the equation.

In all these things, the public sees teachers' unions as being very strong. According to the newspapers, the NEA is able to do all sorts of terrible things. Sometimes we get put into the article and sometimes we're left out; but clearly we are viewed in somewhat the same way -- not on all issues but on quite a few.

The big problem is not that the public sees us as being strong. (I would certainly rather have the public see teachers as strong than as weak, which they did in the years before unions and collective bargaining.) They see us as using our strength not for good but to prevent good things from happening, and that's got to be changed.

Again, I want to underline that we change that perception by reaching out to the public, the parents, and business groups, which are members of the public. We change it by working with them on campaigns about issues on which we agree, like Lessons for Life.

We have been engaged for a number of years in merger talks with the National Education Association; and before I get into that, I would like to introduce and welcome the guests from the National Education Association who are here in the auditorium.

Would you please stand?

(Applause)

Two years ago, I reported that negotiations were on track. The idea was that we would not just look at what the AFT is and what the NEA is and make a bunch of compromises, slicing down the middle wherever there were differences -- and there are substantial differences on a number of issues. We would try to create an organization different from, and better than, either the AFT or the NEA. And we would try to do it in such a way that the public would not see the organization as the giant teacher gorilla of three-plus million standing in the way of reform but as an organization working for the interests of education and of children.

Shortly after that convention, the negotiations started drifting somewhat; and we were under time pressure because the NEA had placed a time constraint on their negotiating committee. We found ourselves just cutting a bunch of deals: "You do it this way, but we do it that way, so let's do it some other way, which is halfway in between."

After a short time, we got quite uneasy because we looked at what we were doing and said, "This is not what we set out to do. We intended to put together an organization that was better, an organization that was different. What we're doing is combining two different animals; and the result is not going to look right or feel right; and it's not going to work right."

So we agreed to break off negotiations because we realized that we would not be able to conclude them within the time constraints that the NEA had put on their team. That was in December of 1994.

We also agreed that things would not be the same again; that we were not going to have a big, national war with each other; that we would continue doing what we could to develop cooperative activities.

Early in 1995, the NEA team came back to us and said that, if we would agree to reopen negotiations, they would propose to their representative assembly that negotiations be reopened -- this time with no preconditions or time deadline and with an emphasis on cooperative activities at the local, at the state, and at the national level so that the members of the two organizations and leaders of the two

organizations could get to know each other better. By the time an agreement was proposed, if that happened, a lot of the misunderstanding and the hostility would have disappeared because of the cooperation.

We said yes. It was a good proposal, and their representative assembly overwhelmingly adopted it last year, in 1995. That means they have withdrawn the preconditions on secret ballot, minority guarantees, and AFL-CIO affiliation. It does not mean that they don't believe in these things or won't fight for them strongly; it just means that they're not preconditions. These issues could still hold things up, but now the NEA team is free to negotiate on them whereas before they were not sure that they could.

Finally, within the last few months, we negotiated a no-raid agreement; and that will be before you. The NEA has accepted it. We felt and they felt that, at least for a time, the raiding should stop. The definition of raiding is somewhat different for states where there is collective bargaining than for states where there isn't. We did not want to create a situation where the negotiators would come up with an agreement for a united organization, but a certain number of states -- let's say, in the NEA -- would be against merger because we had just raided them in a couple of places. We didn't want to jeopardize what was possible on that basis. I'm sure that the no-raid agreement will be extensively debated; but I hope it is adopted because I think it will be very difficult to continue merger talks without it.

We have also agreed to send larger delegations to each other's conferences, and we've been doing that. We've had a joint meeting on privatization and one on setting specifications on health care. We've also had joint testimony at the Democratic and Republican platform committees.

The differences between the two organizations have not altogether disappeared. For instance, we had a very unhappy experience this past year in Congress during the reauthorization of legislation on educating children with disabilities. Our position is that disabled youngsters should be subject to the same discipline as other youngsters.

(Applause)

When a youngster misbehaves, the effect of his action, whether it be bringing a gun into school or bringing drugs or punching or hitting or yelling or screaming, is the same whether that youngster is special ed or not special ed. It has exactly the same effect on the education of the rest of the students and on the school.

(Applause)

Unfortunately, the two organizations were on opposite sides on that issue; and I hope that we can work that out.

The NEA has elected a new president. I know him quite well. He's been part of the negotiating team recently. Also, I've been on many platforms with him where both organizations were invited to speak. One of the three points of his election platform was a commitment to a merger, and I'm sure that we can work very well with him.

So we will keep you informed, and we hope that, within a reasonable period of time, we can put it together.

Everything that I've been saying indicates that we're in a serious contest. That's an understatement. We're in a deadly war. I know quite a few people on the other side -- the voucher side and the nonunion charter school side -- and they think they're on the verge of a major breakthrough. They think we'll have vouchers throughout the country, and all schools will receive public monies, or children will receive the money, which they can take to any school they want. They are calling this a new definition of public schools: All the schools will be public schools because they'll all have children in them who are financed with public funds. These people could be right.

In any contest of this sort, the two sides really have a story to tell. If you look at the presidential campaign, Bob Dole has a story. His story is that government's too big: You've got a lot of people doing

things that don't need to be done. People are taxed too much. If you just cut these programs, reduce taxes, and give people money to spend, that would stimulate the economy. Then, everything will be fine.

Bill Clinton has another story. It's that the world is changing very rapidly. We're faced with worldwide competition. From now on, the competition is not in terms of how you can use your hands because you don't hire a hand any more; you hire a mind. It's your training, your education that counts. And if we have a country with better-educated and better-trained people and a system for retraining and additional lifelong education, then we're going to beat out the competition. Otherwise, it will be a country that gets the work that's done for a few cents an hour or perhaps a dollar a day. Therefore, we need to invest in schools and in colleges and in all sorts of programs to create better-trained and better-educated people. The same thing is true with the health of our citizens and with other programs as well.

So there are two stories, and they're going to be competing as to which is more credible.

Dole will also come out for a big tax cut, saying that that will stimulate the economy (and won't unbalance the budget); and we'll see what Clinton says. They're each going to have stories as to what's wrong with the country and which way to take it.

When it comes to our situation, the other side also has a story. The story is that we are nearly all government employees. And even those of us who are not government employees are getting a lot of government money from programs like Medicare and Medicaid. We're all government-dependent, federal-government-dependent in many cases, and public facilities, like public schools, are a monopoly. If you are a monopoly, you do not have to be sensitive to what customers want because you can't lose them; they have no other place to go without paying for the service. In a monopoly, there are no rewards for success and there is no punishment for failure. So the people who work in schools that are successful get the same money as people in schools that are very unsuccessful. Furthermore, according to this story, there will be no change because unions have the power to stop change. So the only way to bring about change is to break up the monopoly and to weaken the power of the unions that are propping up this monopoly. The way you do this is by having more and more schools in which the school staff can't have a union. That includes parochial schools, charter schools in some states, and many of the private schools. Break up the system and allow competition. Give the money to private companies like EAI. Give it to individual schools and private schools. Just as the government monopoly did not work in Poland or Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union or Romania or Bulgaria, the government monopoly will not work in education or in public services or other fields. That's been proven.

What we have to do, the anti-union story continues, is set up a free, competitive market system. In countries with a market system, like Japan, the United States, and Germany, the citizens prosper, whereas in the countries that had monopolies, people are in very, very bad shape.

In addition to that, the other side says, we live in a democratic society. Give people a choice. If people want a different school, they should be able to have one. Who are we to treat people like children and say this is the only school your child can go to; this is the only course of study your child can take?

That's their story.

So we need our story. We need a story to counter the anti-union story. What is it? Well, our story is that public schools in these other countries, in Germany, Japan, Australia, and Canada -- the schools that are doing so well compared to ours -- are public schools. They're not charter schools; they're not private schools; and they're not parochial schools. So if public institutions can work very well in other democratic countries, they can work well in the United States, too.

(Applause)

Now, the teachers in those countries are unionized. The teachers in Australia are unionized. The teachers in Japan are unionized. The teachers in the United Kingdom are unionized. In Germany and France, they're unionized. And if other countries can have unionized teachers and good school systems, so can the United States.

(Applause)

It is not public schools that are at fault; they work everywhere else. It is the way in which American public schools are run, and the American Federation of Teachers wants to change the way our schools are run to ways that are similar to the successful schools of the world.

What are the practices that make schools in other countries successful? Well, none of those schools would tolerate disruptive students destroying the education of all other youngsters.

(Applause)

In all of those other countries, either the states or the nation has standards, which say, this is what youngsters learn in the second grade; this is what they learn in the third grade; this is what they learn in the fifth grade.

Now, here's a place where we have to educate our members and the public. Education means building on what the students have learned; and teachers cannot build on what the students have learned already unless they know what the kids have learned.

(Applause)

And you don't know because there are no standards in place.

Finally, the students in other countries do well because there are high stakes involved. They work hard because they know that, if they don't work hard, they will not pass the national examination to get them into college or get the certificate that allows them to get a good job. And as long as we tell students that they will be automatically promoted, automatically graduated, and automatically entered into remedial programs in higher education, there will be no successful education because the kids know that they don't have to work.

(Applause)

We don't need to abandon our public school system. We need to fix it, and we need to fix it along these lines. Furthermore, we don't want to replace it with something that is nothing but a roll of the dice, a gamble with education.

There is no country that has a voucher system. There is no country that is filled with charter schools. Nobody has ever tried out these schemes, and we have no notion as to whether they will work. Most experiments do not; most fail. In the Milwaukee voucher experiment, the only one that has existed here for as long as four or five years, the youngsters don't learn any more in the voucher schools than they learned in the public schools.

(Applause)

While the parents seem to be very happy with the voucher schools, they also seem to pull their children out pretty quickly. There's a tremendous turnover.

What we need to do is give the public hope that the schools can become what they want them to be. Here, too, please do not think that you can do this yourselves. Local presidents, delegates to the AFT convention, officers of locals can't do it alone. We have to involve the greatest asset that we have. I should say, in connection with the Lessons for Life campaign, that every one of our other divisions is developing a similar type of program, one that deals with quality standards and that will appeal to both the membership and the public.

We have to take this message to our 907,000 members. Lots of times, we do things for them -- and they don't even know what we've done or they take it all for granted. They only come to us, as leaders, to complain about what we weren't able to get or about something that occasionally we lose. But sometimes we have to turn to them. I know it's difficult. It's hard to get people to phone banks; it's hard

to get them to volunteer, to go out and get parental and community support. But I bet that the majority of the people here remember the time before collective bargaining. They remember when the union didn't have full-time people and when we developed a bargaining campaign by getting a lot of volunteers to come after school. You had telephones or you visited schools and dropped off literature, and you ran the mimeograph machine yourselves. You developed a lot of skills because there wasn't anybody else to do it for you. I remember that. How many people remember that?

Well, it was a great time. And it was great because everybody could feel that they had done it; it was not just a handful of people working for everybody else. So I ask that you go back and do something that's difficult. I know most of the time we feel it's easier to do a job ourselves than to try to get other people involved. But we will not win on this unless we mobilize a good percentage of our 907,000 members.

We've got a good story to tell. We have a great historic institution to preserve, and we know how to because we've done it before. We've overcome tremendous odds against money and animosity and power; and we've done it with the volunteer activity of a large number of members.

That's my message. That's what we need over the next couple of years, and I urge you to get with that. Do that and we'll win. Thank you.

(Standing ovation)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 9, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR AL SHANKER

Lisner Auditorium

12:12 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much to all of you, but especially to Eadie and the members of Al's family, to the members of the family of the AFT, the other labor leaders who are here, and other friends and admirers and those who are indebted to Al Shanker.

I'd like to begin simply by thanking everyone who has already spoken and all the people at the AFT who put together that wonderful film at the beginning. I think if Al were here and were whispering in my ear, he would say, "This has been very nice, Mr. President, but keep it short, we're getting hungry." (Laughter.)

I have to say also that Hillary very much wanted to be here with me today. She worked with Al on a number of things over the last 15 years and a long-standing commitment in New York kept her away. But I want to speak for both of us today in honoring a person we considered a model, a mentor, and a friend, a union leader, a national leader, a world leader. But first, last, and always, as the film began today, Al Shanker was our teacher, and clearly one of the most important teachers of the 20th century.

In 1983, in April, the Nation At Risk report broke like a storm over America and resonated deeply in the consciousness of the country, that our country was at risk because we weren't doing right by our children and our schools. One month before, I had signed a law passed by my legislature establishing a commission to study our schools and to improve them. And I had appointed my wife to chair the commission. And we were eagerly reading this report and the reactions to it, and we noticed that there was Al Shanker, the first leader of a union to come out and say, this is a good thing, we need to do this, we've got to raise these standards, we've got to hold ourselves to higher standards, we've got to be accountable, we owe our children more.

That began what was for me one of the most remarkable associations of my entire working life. Hillary and I had occasion to be with Al on so many different occasions, and one of the previous speakers said, you know, if you go to enough of these education meetings the usual suspects are rounded up, and after a while we could all give each other's speech -- (laughter) -- except for Al. (Laughter.) And it really did make a huge difference. After a while you get tired, you get off the plane, you're spending the night in another strange hotel room, you're showing up at another meeting.

But if he was there I always kind of got my energy flowing, my juices were running, and I knew it was going to be an interesting time. He was always saying that the students he taught wanted to know, well, does it count. I can tell you whenever he talked, it counted. It counted.

Over all the years it counted for me. In 1989 when President Bush called the governors together for this education summit at the University of Virginia and I was the designated Democrat -- stay up half the night and try to write those education goals. I was always consulting Al who was there -- trying to draw out of him exactly how we ought to write this so that in the end we could actually wind up with not just goals, but standards that would apply to our schools and students across the country. And we thought we had done a pretty good job.

It didn't work out exactly as we wanted. So, in 1993, when I became President, we were working together again, and we drafted this Goals 2000 legislation. And we thought, well, this will get it done because the states will be developing their standards, but we'll have a national measure of testing whether we're meeting those standards, which is what we agreed to do way back in 1989 because Al Shanker wanted us to do that. He knew it was the right thing to do. But it never quite worked out because people always could find some excuse for it not to count.

So, in my State of the Union address this February, I announced the plan that is what Al Shanker wanted us to do all along, that we would develop national standards and that we would begin to make sure they counted, and we would begin with a 4th-grade reading test and an 8th-grade math test, but that we ought to go on and do more after that.

And after the speech, I called Al, as I had been calling him since he'd gotten sick periodically, and I said, you know, I hope you feel good now, because you've been telling us to do this for years and years and years, and finally your crusade will be America's crusade. Well, he only lived a couple of weeks after that, but he had to know that what he did counted.

You know, I have to tell you that one of the things that I valued most about him and one of the reasons that he had such a big impact on me is that I always felt that I could say whatever was on my mind to him without thinking about how I would say it. You know how we all relate to each other, you know, when teachers talk to administrators -- it's not that you're not honest with them, but you have to think about how you have to be honest with them. Right? (Laughter.) Or school board members talk to teachers or politicians talk to union leaders or union leaders talk to politicians. It's not that we don't say what's on our mind, but we think, well,

we have all these sort of preconceptions that we've learned over a lifetime about how people who are in some other group view the world. So it's not that you're not honest with them, but you know you've got to talk to them a certain way or you won't even be heard.

I never gave a second thought to that with Al Shanker. I never thought, here's this guy who grew up in New York City and I'm some rube from the country and I'm a politician and he's a labor leader, he's got all this stuff, I got to think about -- after about the second time I was with him I never thought about it anymore. It's like a huge burden lifted off your shoulders to realize you can say any outrageous thing that comes to your mind if you believe it, and here's a person you can trust to absorb it with a level of self-confidence and integrity that will permit an honest conversation to ensue.

And I see a lot of you nodding your heads. You know I'm telling the truth, don't you? You felt the same thing. (Laughter.)

And if we could all achieve that with each other, if somehow we could give each other the confidence to think and be who we are, the way he did to all of us, what a better world we could build. And he did it not to let us off the hook but to put us on the spot. That was the interesting thing that I thought was so important. He thought that this whole standards movement was essential for democracy to work, that it was the only way we could ever give every child, without regard to their background, a chance to live up to his or her God-given capacity. It was the only way we could ever avoid the kind of false elitism that always creeps into every society, was to give everybody a chance to reach high and achieve high and find dignity and meaning in life.

He did not believe that how you learn depended upon accident of birth. And he thought all the arguments used to deny the need for some sort of national standards for measuring ourselves were ridiculous. I'm very sensitive to that now because one of the things I heard him say over and over again was he would compare standards. When people would say, well, standards will tie the hands of teachers or they won't be fair to poor kids -- and I heard all these arguments a thousand times. He would equate it to surgery. Now, I'm sensitive to that now. (Laughter.)

And I thought to my self, how would I feel if Al Shanker -- I never realized it -- how would I feel if I had heard my surgeon just before my recent surgery making all those arguments about there really is no uniform standards here. (Laughter.) Well, there is, but I'm not going to observe it because I have my own way to do it. I'd say, please I'd like to have another doctor. (Laughter.)

We're laughing about this now, but this was a profoundly wise man who lived with us. And because he was also a good man and a self-confident man and he wanted us to be fearless and thinking, he made us feel that we could say what was on our minds, but that we had to keep being honest and reaching higher and going further.

Al Shanker once said something about Bayard Rustin that he should have said about himself. He said the great thing about Rustin was that he didn't put up his finger to see which way the wind was blowing. He had the guts to say what he felt was right, no matter how unpopular it was.

Al Shanker would say something on one day that would delight liberals and infuriate conservatives. The next day, he would make the conservatives ecstatic and the liberals would be infuriated. He really -- even though he came out of the, if you will, the left wing of our society in the sense that he was a passionate union leader, when he thought about the future, he never thought about what wing he was seeking; he thought about how he could seek the truth and synthesize the facts and move us all forward. And that too is a great gift that we will sorely miss.

And again, I say, he let no one off the hook -- no one -- not politicians, not administrators, not the public, not the students, and certainly not the teachers.

In the last years of his life, he worked hard to bring people all over the world together around democracy and freedom and dignity. And he wanted teachers to lead the way. As the son of Russian immigrants, he had a deep interest in the work of the United States Information Agency, which has been sending American teachers abroad and bringing foreign teachers to America to support the development of democracy, especially in Central and Eastern Europe and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union.

I want to announce that today, from now on, teachers who participate in these international programs in civic education will be designated Shanker Fellows. (Applause.) Some of them are here with us today, and we thank them for their presence.

In 1999, when the first 4th graders take the reading exam and the first 8th graders take the math exam, they, too, will be part of Al Shanker's legacy. And if, God willing, our budget passes, instead of 500 of those board-certified teachers, like the wonderful woman we heard just before the Vice President and I came up here, that Al Shanker worked so hard for, we'll have 100,1000 -- 100,000. (Applause.)

He really believed if we could get one in every school they would be magnets, they would change the whole culture of American education. If this national certification movement, the standards movement for teachers could just get one of those board-certified teachers in every schoolhouse in America, it would change the culture of education forever and change the whole way we thought about teaching. And we are determined to do that, and that, too, will be part of his legacy -- along with his love of life and music and art and bread; along with all the energy that he put into his family and his friends.

Al Shanker's life fully reflected the wisdom of the words of Herman Melville -- I bring

out this quote from time to time and I don't think I know anyone it applies to better. Herman Melville said, "We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men. And among those fibers, as sympathetic threads, our actions run as causes, and they come back to us as effects."

Al Shanker's cause was education. And through his lifelong devotion to it, he lifted up our children, our schools, our teachers and others who work in our schools, our nation and our world. He was truly our master teacher.

Today, education is the number one priority of the American people. Al Shanker helped to make it so. His life was full of tumult and controversy, of growth and triumph. But what I think he would want to know is, does it count? You bet it does. It counts, Al; and we thank you, we love you, and we bid you Godspeed. Thank you. (Applause.)

END

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NAME: Albert Shanker.

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HEADLINE: Albert Shanker, 68, Combative Leader Who Transformed Teachers' Union,
Dies

BYLINE: By JOSEPH BERGER

BODY:

Albert Shanker, who rose from being a substitute mathematics teacher to become a tough, canny labor leader who in the 1960's transformed New York City's United Federation of Teachers into one of the nation's most powerful unions, died on Saturday at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan. Mr. Shanker, the longtime president of the American Federation of Teachers, the parent organization of the United Federation of Teachers, was 68 and lived in Mamaroneck, N.Y., and Manhattan.

He died after a three-year battle with bladder cancer, said Janet Bass, a spokeswoman for the American Federation of Teachers.

Sandra Feldman, who succeeded Mr. Shanker as president of the U.F.T. in 1986, on Saturday called her predecessor a teacher's teacher who was "deeply committed to both public education and the labor movement as a means of creating a better life for all Americans."

"He could be passionate about his beliefs," she said, "yet at the same time he had the rare ability to rethink issues and come up with fresh approaches as times changed."

Although he became a respected thinker on national educational issues, Mr. Shanker is best remembered for his combative role as the head of the 85,000-member U.F.T., the New York City teachers' union, during the turmoil of the city's school decentralization experiments in 1968, turmoil that resulted in the closing of most schools for 55 days during the fall term and which were so racially and religiously divisive that the effects are still being felt three decades later.

The dour Mr. Shanker became so widespread a symbol of stubborn combativeness that Woody Allen included a reference to him in his 1973 comedy "Sleeper." A character played by Mr. Allen is frozen in 1973 and awakens in the year 2173 to learn that civilization was destroyed because "a man by the name of Albert Shanker got hold of a nuclear warhead."

Undoubtedly Obstinate, But a Solid Negotiator

At times Mr. Shanker was undoubtedly obstinate. But he was also an artful negotiator and organizer who built the federation from a feeble association into perhaps the state's most powerful union, one that could virtually veto appointments to the Board of Education and determine the makeup of the city's 32 local school boards.

He was also a pragmatist willing in 1975 to put \$150 million of his union's pension funds at risk to save the city from defaulting on its debts.

In the second act of his life as president of the American Federation of Teachers, with 900,000 members concentrated in large cities, he was widely regarded as a champion of rigorous educational standards. In a column that he wrote weekly for years as an advertisement in the Week in Review section of The New York Times, he called for a national competency test for teachers, pay increments tied to teacher quality and more rigorous requirements for high school graduation.

In yesterday's column, he discussed the flaws of the self-esteem movement in schools. Educational authorities like TheodoreSizer called him a "towering figure."

"I'm proudest of the fact that I've confounded people by being honest," Mr. Shanker said in a July interview with Joyce Purnick of The Times. "I believe in traditional discipline and that history should not be distorted for current purposes. But I also believe that smaller schools where teachers and kids know each other's names are more effective. I called things as I saw them, so in certain ways I could be viewed as a progressive educator and in other ways as a traditionalist."

Mr. Shanker, a former junior high school mathematics teacher, had a quicksilver intellect and was a powerful debater, blessed with a memory for anecdotes and metaphors. But he rose to fame as a fighter more than a thinker, in his iron-willed battle against efforts by local black groups to take control of their neighborhood schools.

In the late 1960's, many blacks in New York City were frustrated by the sputtering drive for integration and the school system's poor record in educating their children. They pressed for school decentralization in their communities, believing it would give parents a greater voice in the education of their children.

Some members of the city's central Board of Education opposed such community control, fearing for their authority. Mr. Shanker, the son of European Socialists who himself had marched in civil rights protests in Selma, Ala., was originally amenable to the first experiments in community governance.

In March 1967 an agreement was reached between the State Legislature and Mayor John V. Lindsay for an extra \$54 million in state aid to education if New York City would present a school decentralization plan by the end of the year.

Three experimental school districts were set up in three poor districts with large minority populations -- East Harlem, the Lower East Side and Ocean Hill-Brownsville in Brooklyn. Mr. Shanker's union gave advice to Rhody McCoy, a black teacher who was named administrator of the governing board of the the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district. Mr. Shanker even arranged for voluntary

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transfers of some teachers out of Ocean Hill and their replacement by more ideologically congenial professionals.

But in a turnabout in April 1968, Mr. McCoy summarily transferred 13 white teachers, assistant principals and one principal out of the district against their will. Mr. McCoy offered no specific pedagogic reasons, but it was believed he thought that the professionals in question were trying to sabotage the decentralization experiment.

"He called me and said, 'Something is going to happen and I'm afraid it's going to hurt our relationship,' " Mr. Shanker recalled. "It was absolutely impossible to fathom except on the basis that he was threatened or something had happened there" in the district.

A Testing Ground For Community Control

To Mr. Shanker and his union, the transfers were illegal, a violation of civil service laws and union contracts involving the right of workers to hold jobs unless charges of incompetence were proven. They also worried that the action in Ocean Hill would spread to other communities where local figures who Mr. Shanker called "vigilantes" would try to seize control of the schools.

To supporters of the Ocean Hill district, the matter was a test case of community control. Coming after the urban riots that followed the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and a wave of upheavals by students on college campuses, the conflict seemed to crystallize the nation's social fault lines.

The union prevailed in court but could not get political leaders like Mayor Lindsay to use police to restore the teachers.

"Lindsay told me dozens of times during the strike: 'Al, you're absolutely right, but do you want the city to burn down?' " Mr. Shanker recalled. "I said, 'Where's it going to stop? That's blackmail.' "

In September, Mr. Shanker called the first of three citywide strikes that crippled the nation's largest public school system. The walkouts succeeded in closing 85 percent of the city's 900 schools for a total of 55 days into November, putting more than a million children out of classrooms and forcing tens of thousands of working parents to scramble for child care arrangements.

During the days when schools were open, union teachers had to endure angry crowds outside many schools. Inside the Ocean Hill schools, members of the Black Panthers and militant local leaders like Robert (Sonny) Carson, who had been invited in by Mr. McCoy, delivered antiwhite diatribes and threatened the teachers' families. The atmosphere was also poisoned by anti-Semitism directed at the many Jewish members of the U.F.T. Anti-Semitic catcalls were shouted by protesters and appeared in newspapers put out by the Afro-American Teachers Association. A student's anti-Semitic poem was read on the radio.

Each time the Board of Education gave in to Mr. McCoy's governing board, Mr. Shanker ordered the teachers to walk out. He did this in the face of opposition voiced in many of the city's editorial pages, the Ford Foundation and the prestigious Public Education Association.

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The strikes did not end until the State Education Commissioner, James Allen Jr., suspended the Ocean Hill board and appointed a trustee to oversee the return of the union teachers.

Mr. Shanker spent 15 days in jail for calling the strikes. For years afterward, he was often demonized for tarnishing his union's reputation for idealism and leaving a legacy of tensions between blacks and Jews.

The accusations were deeply wounding to Mr. Shanker, whose integration efforts began when he was a college student at the University of Illinois and picketed segregated movie houses and restaurants in Urbana. But he always defended his decision, comparing the expulsion of teachers to Nazism.

"To me, what was going on here was the same thing," he said. "Pushing a guy out of a principalship because he's white. Taking a bunch of teachers and calling them all sorts of anti-Semitic names and threatening to kill their kids or their husbands or wives. Somebody has to stand up to this and say you're not going to profit by this."

In the aftermath of the 1968 strikes, the State Legislature passed a law that decentralized the city's schools into 32 districts and gave elected boards the power to run elementary and junior high schools. Behind the scenes, Mr. Shanker made sure the law had strong protections for teachers' jobs.

A Changing View Of Decentralization

"We wrote the decentralization law," he said.

With turnouts in school board elections as low as 6 and 7 percent, the union's endorsements proved pivotal and it became evident in a few years that the strongest force in decentralization was the United Federation.

But in 1996, Mr. Shanker was critical of decentralization in his interview with Ms. Purnick. Agreeing with many in education, he said that local school board elections continued to produce corrupt board members, very low voter turnout and confusion over unnecessarily complex ballots.

"It's all a shame and it's a moral outrage," Mr. Shanker said. "But how much does that have to do with whether the kids are going to read on grade level or not? There's some correlation, but I would say not much. Because you're still not going to educate kids, because you have no educational plan out there."

The leader of the strike that changed New York was, for most of his life, a tall, lanky and ungainly intellectual with black horn-rimmed glasses and a mournful cast, like Eeyore's in "Winnie the Pooh." He loved ideological debate and developed a pincer wit that enabled him to excel at it. An introspective man who read widely in history and biography, he also became a sophisticated baker of bread, a winemaker, an aficionado of African art and a seeker of the best stereo equipment.

Albert Shanker was born Sept. 14, 1928, into a family that was hardly uncommon on the Lower East Side, Yiddish-speaking Russian immigrants with Socialist passions.

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His father, Morris, delivered newspapers. He rose at 2 A.M. seven days a week, pushed a cart stacked with bundles of the city's half-dozen morning newspapers through a five-mile area of Queens, then returned at 10 A.M. to deliver the afternoon newspapers. The young Mr. Shanker hardly ever saw him and knew him, he once said, as "this angry, disgruntled guy who grabbed a roll and coffee and went out to work again."

His mother, Mamie, was a sewing machine operator and a member of Sidney Hillman's Amalgamated Clothing Workers. So grueling was her work that Mr. Shanker once visited her factory and could not recognize her as she sat bent in sweaty concentration at her machine.

If both parents bequeathed a sympathy for workers, it was his thrifty mother who taught him how to negotiate. "I'd have to wait half an hour while she bought three tomatoes," he once said.

The family moved to the Ravenswood section of Queens and he remembered his childhood as miserable there. Many of his neighbors listened on radio to the anti-Semitic preachings of Father Coughlin and the younger ones sometimes took their venom out on Mr. Shanker.

"At the age of 12, I was 6 foot 3 and 110 pounds," he recalled. "I was Jewish and living in an Irish Catholic neighborhood, so everybody took turns beating up the biggest kid."

As a result, he mostly stayed indoors, listening to radio or collecting stamps. But at 14 he joined the Boy Scouts. When the scoutmaster was drafted into the Army, the teen-age Mr. Shanker ran the troop on his own and persuaded boys to join with the same zeal he would later employ to enlist teachers into his union.

Mr. Shanker attended Stuyvesant High School and the University of Illinois. He started a doctoral program in philosophy at Columbia University, but running out of money and patience, he took a year off in 1952 to teach at an elementary school for a salary of \$38 a week. He never finished his doctorate.

Moving to a junior high school in Astoria, he found he liked teaching intellectually gifted classes. But after a run-in with a principal over what Mr. Shanker felt was lax discipline, he was assigned to the bottom classes in the school.

His relief came in union activities. Teacher unions then were astonishingly ineffective. There were 106 of them, in part a result of bitter divisions over Communist loyalties and over pay differentials that rewarded high school teaching more than elementary teaching.

The anti-Communist Teachers Guild was a weak group of 2,400 members. Mr. Shanker edited its newspaper, which was then delivered in unmarked envelopes, an indication of how suspicious authorities were of leftist unions.

Along with colleagues like David Selden, he organized individual schools, visiting three out of every four in the city. One person he signed up was Edith Gerber, a Queens teacher, who became his second wife in 1960 and who went on to head a mentoring program at the City University of New York.

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In 1960, a merged body of teachers' unions, the United Federation, won the right to bargain for all teachers. Mr. Shanker, then the union's secretary, became its star. He had a knack for running meetings, letting opponents vent so much steam they infuriated the majority, who would vote against them.

In 1964, while in his mid-30's, Mr. Shanker was elected president. Three years later, he shocked New Yorkers unaccustomed to strikes by white-collar professionals by leading a teachers' walkout over issues of disciplinary procedures. The action resulted in the first of two jailings.

Focusing Efforts On the National Scene

After the upheaval of the 1968 strike, he began turning his attention to the national labor scene, and in 1974, in an action that fractured their friendship, he succeeded Mr. Selden as president of the union's parent, the American Federation of Teachers, but also retained leadership of the U.F.T. for another 12 years.

"When he moved to Washington, he became an education statesman and began thinking about things that needed to change," said Diane Ravitch, a former Assistant United States Secretary of Education. "How do kids learn best? What is the best way to organize a school? How do we maintain standards?"

Ms. Ravitch said he was a voice of common sense. "This is a field consumed with trends and fads and people get carried away with the newest thing," she said, "and he never gets carried away."

With time, Mr. Shanker's confrontational attitudes seemed to mellow.

"We got to the 1980's and we had too much of an adversarial relationship," he said in a 1992 interview of relations between unions and school boards. "You don't get much done through conflict."

Mr. Shanker is survived by his wife, four children, Carl, of Gaithersburg, Md., Adam, of Mount Vernon, N.Y., Jennie, of Philadelphia, and Michael, of Tarrytown, N.Y., and a sister, Pearl Harris of Cleveland.

GRAPHIC: Photos: Albert Shanker at a rally in City Hall Park in September 1968 during the teachers' strikes. The walkouts closed most of the city's schools for 55 days, putting more than a million children out of classrooms. (William E. Sauro/The New York Times); Albert Shanker. (Associated Press, 1990)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 28, 1995

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
QUEST-AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Sheraton Washington Hotel
Washington, D.C.

1:33 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: I must say I enjoyed the class being a little rowdy this afternoon. (Laughter.) I thank you for your welcome. I thank you for your support. Most important of all, I thank you for the work you do every day.

Thank you, Al Shanker, for the introduction and for being here and for being a consistent and clear voice for opportunity and excellence in education. (Applause.) Thank you, Ed McElroy; thank you, Sandy Feldman; thanks to all of my friends in the AFT. And thank you for bringing these children up on the stage today to remind us what this is all about. (Applause.)

You know, if you go in any classroom in America you see the infinite promise of our country in a beautiful essay or a difficult math problem solved, or just an act of kindness from one child to another. And you come face to face with the terrible challenges confronting this country, in children who are old beyond their years because of what they've had to endure, to tired or hurt or closed off from each other and the world to learn.

You also know that what happens to your students in the classroom depends a lot on what happens to them before they get there and after they leave. (Applause.) And I must say in that connection, I've often thought it ironic that some of the people that bewail the loss of family values in our country are all too eager to criticize teachers for the problems in our schools, when the truth is that oftentimes the school is the only coherent, consistent direction, family-oriented, value time that all of our kids get. (Applause.)

It is true that this administration has worked hard to be a friend to education. Secretary Riley, Deputy Secretary Kunin and all the fine people at the Department of Education I think

have done an excellent job in working with you and in broadening their reach; working with Secretary Reich and the people in the Labor Department; working with the private sector all over the country, trying to build a grass-roots consensus for what is best about education in our country, trying to build this country up instead of using education as yet one more issue to divide the American people and to distract us from our real problems.

Today I want to talk to you really seriously about what happens to the kids in this country, mostly before and after school in the context of this big family values debate we're having again this year. I don't regret the fact that we're having it, and I believe the debate has been too polarized between the opposite sides that I believe have a lot to say to each other. And if you want any evidence of that, read your own Bill of Rights and Responsibilities. I just got a great copy of it. It's two sides of the debate raging today about family values.

There are those who see family problems and children's problems as primarily matters of personal and social morality. And they believe that all the government has to do is to encourage good behavior like praying in school or sexual abstinence, or to punish bad behavior like criminal conduct or the unwillingness to move from welfare to work even when a job's available.

Then there are others who see family problems primarily as a result of the unbelievable economic and social difficulties facing Americans today. And they believe the role of government is to develop policies that help all of us make the most of our own abilities and to reward people who are working hard and playing by the rules.

But on a lot of issues, these two sides really aren't as far apart as they may seem. Again, I say, read your own Bill of Rights and Responsibilities and you see both sides of that argument coming at you.

A moral problem can quickly become an economic problem. The epidemic rates of teen pregnancy in our country, for example, mean that an awful lot of kids who are born into poverty and never escape it, and an awful lot of parents who don't escape it because they don't have education and child care. On the other hand, an economic problem can rapidly become a moral problem.

Parents, on the whole, are working harder today than they were 25 years ago -- literally, more hours at work for about the same or lower wages than they were making 15 years ago. That means you don't have much time for your kids to teach them the things that they can only learn from their families. So economic problems can spill over into the family area as well and have a moral dimension. So I argue to you that what we really need is an American family values agenda, kind of like the Bill of Rights and Responsibilities you've articulated for the schools.

That basically takes the best of both of these approaches, and more importantly, lifts

this debate up -- gets it beyond partisan strategies that divide the American people for short-term gain because, too often, these issues are raised in that way. If we really want family values, we've really got to value families. (Applause.)

Think about the bewildering array of problems faced by families today. Young couples, both of them working, they have a child, they desperately want one of the parents to stay home for just a few weeks with the child -- good solid family values. Will they lose one of the jobs if that happens?

You've got people who look out their windows at playgrounds and wonder if they can let their children play on them because they'll be violating family values if their kid aren't safe. You have fathers cooking dinners for children right before they go to work all night. And then they have to sleep all day while mother goes to work. So it never quite gets worked out that both the family parents get to work with the children the way they wish. This happens all the time.

I never will forget, I used to -- every election in Arkansas when I was governor, I used to make the earliest factory gate in my state -- the Campbell Soup plant in Fayetteville, Arkansas. People started going to work at 4:30 a.m. in the morning. And I figured that I'd get some votes just for being fool enough to showing up at 4:30 a.m. (Laughter.) And, sure enough, I did. (Laughter and applause.)

I never will forget, one day -- and I'd go there -- I'd stay there from 4:30 a.m. to 5:30 a.m., and shake hands with everybody that showed up. I never will forget it; at a quarter to five one day, a pickup pulled up and the door opens, the light came on inside the pickup, and there was a fine looking young man and his fine looking young wife and three little babies sitting between them in the pickup. And she had to be at work, punched in at 5:00 a.m. every morning. Then he had to be at work at 7:00 a.m. And they had to figure out somebody that had day care by a quarter to seven in the morning so that he could drop those kids off and get there.

Now, we talk about family values -- that is the typical experiences -- is earlier in the morning. But most families in this country are working their fingers to the bone doing the best they can up against very difficult odds. And we need to talk about this in terms of the real experience of real people.

There are a whole lot of families that are spending their money trying to take care of their elderly parents and keep them out of nursing homes and so they don't think they'll be able to send their kids to college. That also stretches family values.

There are a lot of children who are losing hope. And a recent study was published on rising rates of casual drug use among young people, pointing out that the ones who tend to get into drugs early are young people who have either no strong religious values, or no real hope

for their own personal future, or no strong relationship with their own parents.

So there really are serious issues here but we need to see it in the real world. How many teachers do we know who have students of exceptional promise that they're afraid will never live up to the promise because of the economic handicaps on the family of the student. (Applause.)

So I say this to make the following point: Families do not eat and breathe and sleep political slogans -- (applause) -- they do not. Most families couldn't tell you for the life of them whether I'm up or down in the polls this week, and they couldn't care less. They just know whether they're up or down in their real life struggle this week. And that's what we ought to think about. (Applause.)

If you add all these family stories together, you see that America is kind of a good news-bad news story. This is remarkable -- in the last two and a half years -- when I came here and I campaigned to you for President, I said if you vote for me, I will do my best to revive the middle class in this country, to give poor people a chance to get into the middle class and to pave the way for a brighter future for all of our people; I will emphasize creating more opportunity; I will insist on more responsibility to the American people; and I'll try to bring the people together without regard to race or region or religion or other things that divide us.

And in the last two and half years we've put into effect an aggressive economic program, an aggressive education program, an aggressive trade program, an aggressive anticrime program. We have today seven million more jobs, a lower unemployment rate, a lower inflation rate. The crime rate is down in virtually every major urban area of the country. We are moving on our problems. But with a record business profits, a record stock market, a record number of new businesses, a record number of new millionaires, most Americans are working harder for the same amount of money they were making two and a half years ago, feeling somewhat more insecure on the job, a little bit uncertain about their retirement and their family's health care, and worried sick they won't be able to educate their kids.

How did this happen? We're moving into a global economy, an information society. A smaller percentage of the work force are protected by organizations like yours. And there is more uncertainty out there. So I believe we do need to ask ourselves if we believe that the stability of our society and the strength of our country and the future of our children depend upon our families, then what are our family values? And how are we going to reward good family conduct? How are we going to stabilize life for families who are willing to do the right thing? How are we going to attack the real problems? How are we going to avoid this kind of phony debate?

And I'll just give you a short agenda here. I'm going to give a test on this at the end of

this. (Laughter.) Here are 14 things we could do to help families. Brief.

One, help people care for their elderly parents and, for sure, don't make it harder. (Applause.) Two, reform the health insurance system so that at least people don't lose their health insurance if they change jobs or if somebody's sick in their family. (Applause.) Three, keep the Family and Medical Leave Law and make sure everybody in America knows what it is and knows how to take advantage of it. (Applause.)

Four, have tougher national standards for child support enforcement. (Applause.) Five, figure out who's been successful in preventing teen pregnancy and organize a national campaign to do the same thing in every community in the country. (Applause.) Six, build on what works to prevent drug abuse and drug use, and do it. Don't just talk about -- invest money, time and effort in consistent commitment to drug abuse prevention. (Applause.)

Seven, if you want to cut health care costs and increase life expectancy, do something to stop all these kids who are beginning to smoke at early ages. It's killing them. (Applause.) Eight, expose our children to less violence by enforcing the Brady law and keeping the ban on assault weapons and passing the ban on cop-killer bullets. (Applause.)

Nine, if you're concerned about violence and children and the role the media is contributing to it, instead of giving a speech about it, do something about it. When Congress passes a telecommunications law that's going to make a bunch of money for a bunch of people, and it will be all right if it creates a lot of jobs and helps us get more information, tell them to put in the law the simple provision to give everybody that's got a cable hook-up a V-chip so that the parents can decide what comes across to the television to the kids. (Applause.) And by the way, don't get rid of public broadcasting. At least parents have an alternative. (Applause.)

Ten, do something about family incomes for people who are doing the right thing. Raise the minimum wage to \$5.00 an hour. (Applause.) Eleven, if you want to give a tax cut, give a family-oriented tax cut to help people raise their children and educate their children. That's the kind of tax cut we ought to have in this country. (Applause.)

Twelve, remember that adults need education, too. And take all these government programs that were enacted with the best of intentions over a long period of time and consolidate them, and instead, when somebody loses their job or they're working for a minimum wage and they want to get a new training program, send them a check to take to the local community college so they can get a decent education that will lead them to a job. (Applause.)

Thirteen -- don't get nervous, I'm saving you for last. (Laughter.) Thirteen, every list of civic values ever given to kids in school that I have ever seen says, teach young people respect for themselves, respect for other people, respect for our country and respect for our

natural environment. Thirteen, do no harm; stop this crazy effort to dismantle all the environmental and public health protection in the United States Congress today. (Applause.)

Fourteen, education -- don't cut it; don't cut Head Start; don't take a million kids out of Chapter 1. (Applause.) Don't get rid of Goals 2000, which gives teachers the chance to really do something significant. (Applause.)

Do not increase the cost of a college loan -- that is the dumbest thing I ever heard of in my life. (Applause.) It is not necessary to cut education to balance the budget. It is only necessary to cut education to balance the budget if you're determined to do it in seven years instead of 10, with a tax cut nobody can justify with a deficit this high and an education deficit at the same time. Put the money into education and into our future. The wealthiest Americans support this approach; they know it's the right thing to do. (Applause.)

So I want to amplify on a couple of these, not all 14, but I want to say them again. Help people care for their elderly parents. Reform the health insurance system so fathers and mothers don't lose the health insurance for themselves and their kids if somebody in the family has been sick or they change jobs. Keep the enforcement of the Family and Medical Leave Law; don't support the Congress taking out all the funds for enforcement. More people need to know about it, not fewer. Not a single business has gone broke since we protected family and medical leave in 1993. (Applause.)

Tougher child support enforcement; prevent teen pregnancy; reduce drug abuse among young people; prevent teens from starting smoking; handgun and assault weapons, keep those bills in there on the Brady bill and the assault weapons bill, and pass the cop-killer bullet ban; raise the minimum wage; have a reform of the family tax system so we give the tax breaks to people raising their kids and educating them; put the v-chip in the cable TV if you want to do something about culture and violence; pass the GI Bill for America's workers; give people who are unemployed a check, not a list of 70 programs, they'll find the local community college; protect the environment; and do not cut education. Now that is an agenda we can live with -- I think I left out the minimum wage, but I won't forget it when we get to the budget. (Applause.)

Now, let me tell you, Sunday -- Saturday or Sunday, sometime over the weekend, will be the exact day of the 30th anniversary of Medicare. We need to reform Medicare. We can't have medical costs going up at two and three and four times the rate of inflation. But let's not forget -- before Medicare, fewer than half the elderly people in this country had any health insurance and 97 percent of them do.

And if any of you have been through what I have -- and I imagine most of you have been. If you had, as I had, your mother and your father-in-law desperately ill for long periods of time, you think, my goodness, what would we do without Medicare? And I realize how much better off I am than most Americans, and it would have bankrupted me. What would

most Americans do? What would the elderly do?

So can we slow the rate of increase? Sure we can. But to pick an arbitrary number just because we've got to balance the budget in seven years instead of 10 and have this huge tax cut that, by the way, is about the amount of money we're going to save out of Medicare. That's wrong.

Instead, we ought to reform the system. And we could save money over the long run by taking a little of that money and helping states to set up opportunities for people like you to help your parents stay out of nursing homes as well as to pay for them when they go in. That is the better way to approach that problem. And I'd like to see us do it.

I mentioned family and medical leave. I couldn't believe it when I saw there were people in the Congress who wanted to strip the government of the ability to enforce the law. Nobody has gone broke doing this. Nobody has. I want to tell you -- the most moving personal encounters I think I've had, except with children, since I've been president, have come from adults who have taken advantage of the Family and Medical Leave law.

Here is a letter my wife got this week. I want to read this to you. This is a law some people in Congress say we shouldn't enforce anymore.

Dear Mrs. Clinton, I am writing to let you know that two months ago my husband died of congestive heart failure after a prolonged period of several years of illness. Because your husband signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act, I was able to transport him to doctor appointments and hospital visits. The Act enabled me to keep my job and bring him comfort at the end of his life. I will be eternally grateful. Signed, Lynn Wade Tomko of Highland Ranch, Colorado.

There's a lot of people out there like that. And every one of you deserves it. Every one of you. (Applause.)

Now, there is a bipartisan bill on health insurance reform. There's a bipartisan bill in the Congress right now -- a bipartisan bill -- saying at least if we can't give everybody health insurance, if we can't do that, at least we ought to be able to say when parents change jobs they and their children don't lose their health care, coverage shouldn't be tied to whether somebody in their family's been sick once or twice. And people who work for small businesses ought to be able to get -- in every state in the country, they ought to be able to go into a pool that is big so they can buy insurance on the same rates that people like us who work for government or big units do. Simple, basic things. And there ought to be a longer period of time where people keep their health insurance if they lose their jobs.

On the child support enforcement, all the governors, even the most pro-state's rights governors, have understood and supported our efforts to have national standards of child

support enforcement. Why? Because over a third of all the child support orders that are delinquent are for people who have crossed state lines. So we need a national approach to this. The welfare reform bill I have sent to Congress has that. We have to have this.

Here are the things that it has, and ask yourself if you think it's reasonable. Employer reporting of new hires to catch deadbeat dads who move from job to job; uniform interstate child support laws; computerized collection of speeding up payments; streamlined efforts to identify the father in every case when the child is born; and tough new penalties, like professional license revocation for people who repeatedly refuse to pay their child support -- or driver's license. (Applause.)

Let me tell you, I don't think most Americans -- we estimate that if everybody paid the child support they owe, there would be 800,000 fewer people in this country off of welfare. You have no idea how much money you're paying as taxpayers to support children that their parents could legally be supporting and have the money to support. You don't have any idea. It's a lot of money -- money that could be going into Head Start; money that could be going into Goals 2000; money that could be going into college loans. It's not right.

I could go on and on. I'm going to have more to say about the drug abuse prevention and the teen pregnancy issues later on. I will say this -- we'd be down the road a little bit if the Senate hadn't played politics with Dr. Henry Foster's nomination. (Applause.) But I'm going to bring him back in some way and get him to help us on this because it's so important, it's a big issue.

On the drug issue, everybody talks about being tough on drugs. But you've got to do four things if you want to make a difference. You have got to work with foreign governments to cut drugs off at the source. We are busting a lot of big gangs, and we're making some real progress. And we're getting more help from foreign governments than the United States has enjoyed in many years. We've worked hard at it, and a lot of people in other countries risk their lives every day to keep your kids free of cocaine and crack. And you need to know that.

We say, why don't they do more? A lot of them put their lives on the line every day to do it. And more than ever before, we're making progress on it. We also have to break the cycle of drugs and crime by providing treatment to people who need it. It works; it does work. (Applause.) It doesn't always work, but two-thirds of the time, the treatment works. Now, would you rather spend a little money to have it work two-thirds of the time, or put 100 percent of those people behind bars at a greater cost to you? It does work.

We also have to punish people properly who break the law. But finally, we've got to do something to try to keep our kids off of drugs in the first place. And therefore, I think it is a mistake for the Congress to eliminate the money we're giving to your schools to promote safe and drug-free schools. Those are good programs and we shouldn't get rid of it. (Applause.)

I'm going to say more in the next several days about this issue of teenage smoking. But you just think about the number of people every year in America we lose because of smoking related illnesses. And you realize that having a whole lot of young kids get into that pipeline is pretty significant. And all the evidence is that if people don't start smoking until they're adults, that even if they smoke a little, they don't become really hooked. They don't do it a lot. They quit after a little while, and they go on and live normal lives. This is a big deal.

Most people who have serious problems with smoking started when they were children. It is now illegal to sell children cigarettes, but it happens all the time. And we have to do more to stop it. That's a family values issue -- cuts the cost of health care, helps us meet our budget targets, keeps people healthier longer, and make for more alert, effective students in your classrooms.

I just want to mention one or two other issues. Let me just say, about the minimum wage, you all clapped and I realize you agree with me -- (laughter) -- but a lot of Americans, every time we raise the minimum wage, there's this great hue and cry about how we're going to lose jobs; and it has never happened. And 40 percent of the people on minimum wage are women who are the sole support of their kids. (Applause.) And if we don't raise the minimum wage next year, it will reach in real dollar terms a 40-year low. That's the problem in America. We should be having a high-opportunity, smart-work, high-wage future, not a hard-work, low-wage future. There is no percentage in it for us to support those kind of low wages. (Applause.)

Let me just say a couple of words about some specific things in the education area. I wouldn't be up here if people hadn't helped me get an education. I had college loans, I had scholarships, I had six jobs -- never more than three at once. (Laughter.) All of that was opportunity and responsibility. The same kinds of things that are in your Bill of Rights and Responsibility.

We know now there is a greater difference in the ability of people to earn more successively and to live out the American Dream based on their level of education than ever in the entire history of the country. We know that. We know, too, that in the 1980s the only item in a family's budget that went up faster than the cost of health care was the cost of college education. We know that. Now, our administration has done two things that I'm real proud of.

First of all, we started the Americorps program, which gives people a chance to serve their local communities and earn money to go to college. (Applause.) I thought it was sort of a Republican-like program, you know -- it was a grass-roots program; there's no bureaucracy; we fund preexisting local projects in a highly competitive way. It's an empowerment program. You can't even get any money from the government unless you work yourself to

death for trying to help people solve their problems. Sounds to me like the kind of thing they're always talking about. (Laughter.) Sometimes I wonder if a Republican president had proposed it, I don't think it would be a target in this budget cycle. (Applause.) But why would you get rid of that? (Applause.)

More importantly, we found -- I found before I became President -- when I was Governor I met young people who were dropping out of college because they thought that the careers for which they were being trained, including many of them who wanted to be school teachers -- they thought they would not be able to earn enough to meet their college loan repayment obligations.

And so, we did something remarkable -- Secretary Riley, Deputy Secretary Kunin, the Education Department -- we discovered that if we set up a system for the federal government to make direct loans, that we could loan the money at lower cost to the students and give them four different options to repay the loans so that you could -- if you chose one option, you would always repay it at a certain percentage of your salary, whatever it was. So there would never be a time when repaying a loan would be a deterrent to taking it out in the first place, or finishing your college education, or serving the public as a teacher or a police officer or nurse, or doing something else that might not pay all the money in the world but was immensely rewarding and immensely important to the rest of society.

This direct loan program is reducing the cost to the government, reducing the deficit, increasing the number of people who can have college loans and improving their repayment terms. It's also much less hassle for the college administrators. Who doesn't like it? The middle men who were cut out. What are they doing? They're up in the Congress right now trying to get rid of it. Who wants to get rid of it? Not the kids who have got them; not the college administrators who administer them; not the people who are worried about the budget, but the special interests that have too much influence in this Congress say, we lost our money, we want it back. We don't care what happens to these kids. That is wrong, and you ought to stand up against it. (Applause.)

Now, we don't have to have a partisan, divisive fight about family values. And we don't have to argue whether we need improvements in personal conduct or political policies and economic policies. The truth is, we need a whole bunch of both. And nobody is smart enough to do everything we need to do politically and economically, and nobody will ever be good enough so that they won't be able to stand a little improvement. So this is a bogus debate.

What we must not do is let one group take one side of this debate and use it as an excuse to divide the American people and walk away from our real responsibilities to the real families that are working their hearts out to do the best they can by their children in this country. That's what we must not do. (Applause.)

So, let us stand together in fighting for the cause of education, the right kind of education, your kind of education -- opportunity and high standards of excellence and accountability -- the things you have stood for for years and years and years. That is a very important part of our nation's family values agenda.

And let us stand together to do things about the time that the kids have to spend before they come to you and after they leave you. This does not have to be a big divide. All we have to do is to find the common ground that is already out there in every neighborhood, in every community, in every city, town and rural area in this country. All we have to do is bring what people know in their hearts to be true in the heartland here to the halls of government. If we do that we can really have a family-values agenda.

Thank you. And God bless you all.

END

2:10 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 24, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

The Grand Hyatt Hotel
Washington, D.C.

2:14 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Secretary, that was a good speech --(laughter) -- and fully illustrated Clinton's third law of politics, which is, whenever possible, be introduced by someone you have appointed to high position. (Laughter.) Their objectivity is stunning. (Laughter.)

I thank Secretary Riley and all the people at the Department of Education for the work that they do. Stan Ikenberry, I'm glad to be here today, with all of you. President Knapp, thank you for your moving remarks about the HOPE Scholarship. You all laughed when Barry said he was making a great sacrifice by going to the Aspen Institute, but in Georgia, that's what they think. (Laughter and applause.)

President-elect Myers, and to my friend Barry Munitz -- you know, we're all in a lather up here in Washington these days about campaign contributions; everybody hates them, but nobody wants to go to public funding. So we seem destined to some period of hand-wringing. And since we're in a spirit of full disclosure, I have to tell you that in addition to my coming here today, I received a gratuity, which I intend to disclose before the whole world. I complimented Barry on his watch, and he gave it to me. (Laughter and applause.) And, cravenly, as we politicians are, I took it without blinking. (Laughter.) He swears it cost \$18.00. (Laughter.)

But I'll tell you why I bragged on it -- and all of you more or less of my age group can identify with this -- look how big the numbers are, I can -- (laughter.) It's the first watch I've ever seen I don't need glasses for. The more expensive they are, the smaller the numbers get. (Laughter.) So, thank you, Barry.



I would like to begin today, if I might, with a very personal and serious word. This is the first opportunity I have had, really, to say something publicly about the death of Al Shanker yesterday, one of the greatest educators of the 20th century in this country. He was my friend for

many years. I considered him my colleague. He believed that all children could learn -- with high expectations and high standards, high-quality teaching and high accountability. He literally lived a life that was nothing less than a crusade, with intense passion and power. And I know that all of you will join me in wishing his wife and his family and the members of the American Federation of Teachers the best, and giving them our sadness and our thanks for a remarkable American who did his job very, very well.

I also want to come here to thank you. Secretary Riley said, in his inimitable way, that this is a big day for us -- and this is a big day for us -- starting with the community colleges and their trustees and then going to this organization which represents, I thought at last count, almost 1,700 two- and four-year colleges and universities. Your views matter, your voice is heard, and your endorsement of our college opportunity agenda, including the HOPE Scholarships, the tax deduction for tuition and the large increase in Pell Grants will help to bring that opportunity into reality, and to fulfill my dream of opening the doors of college to every single American who wants to go. Thank you very, very much. I'm grateful to you. (Applause.)

This is a remarkable time in the history of our democracy. At the end of the Cold War we find ourselves as the world's remaining superpower, with a special responsibility to try to shape the future in a way that will advance the cause of peace and prosperity. We find our own economy strong and growing, producing more jobs in the last four years than in any comparable term in our history, with record numbers of new businesses being formed each and every year.

We know that this is a time of enormous change, but the impulse to satisfaction I'm sure is great. Normally, when democracies have times this good, one of two things happens -- sometimes both at the same time -- people get very self-satisfied and begin to relax, and, therefore, miss the underlying currents of what is really going on for the future; or they become too easily preoccupied with small matters and begin to divide among themselves over things that bring them down, instead of lift them up. We must give in to neither impulse.

Because the growth of the global economy and the absolute explosion in scientific and technical information associated with the Information Age give us an opportunity -- but not a guarantee, an opportunity -- for undreamed of new jobs and careers, for greater knowledge and understanding, not just for greater material wealth, but for enhancements in the quality of lives for families and communities, it is literally true that in the era toward which we are moving more people than ever before in all of human history will have a chance to live out their dreams. But it is also true that the chance cannot be realized unless we give them the power to make the most of their own lives. So this is no time to rest.

Four years ago, we knew we couldn't rest, and we set about laying the foundation for progress by changing the economic policy of the country to focus on investing in our people, getting our fiscal house in order, emphasizing science and technology and opening the doors of trade with the rest of the world. We changed our social policy, centering it clearly on family and community and focusing on action instead of rhetoric. The result is that we've had marked drops

in crime, the biggest drop in welfare rolls in the history of the country, the Family and Medical Leave law, action to stop teenagers from being exposed illegally to the sales and marketing of cigarettes, and a number of other initiatives.

Our foreign policy has begun to articulate the world that we want to make, working in an interdependent way with allies and friends of like mind throughout the world not only to advance the cause of peace and freedom and prosperity, but to stand up against the new threats to our security.

Along the way, we have fought -- and I hope largely resolved -- the battle that has dominated America for nearly 20 years now over what the proper role of our nation's government should be. You hardly hear anyone saying anymore that government is the enemy.

It was interesting -- in the last couple of days Hillary and I went to see -- or brought in the movie, because we have a theater at the White House -- it's the best perk of the job, I think -- (laughter) -- but we had about all the seriousness we could stand, and we watched that movie, "Dante's Peak," about the volcano exploding. And I couldn't help thinking, you know, the hero works for the U.S. Geological Service, and his life is saved in the end by a contraption developed not here at home for uses on the ground, but by NASA for use in space. And I thought, the government is not the enemy. The role of the government is to create the conditions and to give people the tools to build strong lives and families and communities and a strong nation -- and to give people the chance to live out their dreams.

Now that that foundation has been laid, and now that I believe we have also moved away from the very dangerous rhetoric of the last several years that seeks to divide us against one another based on our racial or ethnic or religious or other differences, toward an understanding that it is actually a great Godsend for us to be the world's most multiethnic, multiracial, multireligious democracy, we now can actually seize the opportunities that are before us. But the first and most important thing we have to do is to recognize that, beginning at the beginning, our education system will not provide us the opportunity to do that unless we change it.

For the beginning years we have to raise standards. For our colleges and universities, which are plainly the finest in the world, we simply have to make sure that the access is there for everyone who should go to have a chance to go.

The main point I want to make is that we actually are in a position now to mold our future untroubled by war abroad or disruption at home in a way that is very, very rare in human history. We have no idea how long this moment of tranquility will last. We have no idea how long we will be fully free to wake up and say, what am I going to do today, without being impinged upon by some external force that will shape us.

I was interested when the Secretary talked about Abraham Lincoln and the land grant. I used to teach at a land grant school, so I like that. But it's interesting that President Lincoln signed that land grant bill during the Civil War. And Lincoln once said during the Civil War --

he gave a statement today that I would be ridiculed nationwide if I said -- he said, my policy is to have no policy; I am controlled by events. Well, of course, he did have a policy -- he had the most important one of all -- I'm going to hold this Union together if we all have to die to do it, including me. That was his policy. But he also told an important truth: When the wheel runs off and things fall apart, you are to some extent controlled by events.

Today in a rare moment, America is not especially controlled by events, but we cannot be unmindful of the larger historical trends which will shape our future. And it is the moral obligation of every person in a position of responsibility in the United States to take this opportunity -- not to lay down on the job and not to fall into mindless debates, but to lift our sights and our visions to take advantage of this rare moment and make the most of it. And we could do no better than to give our people the finest set of educational opportunities in the world and to make sure every single one of them has those opportunities. (Applause.)

I was encouraged by the report I got out back, very brief, about the words that Senator Lott said earlier here today. During the Cold War we had a bipartisan foreign policy, because -- literally because the future of the country was at stake -- everybody agreed we'd like to fight with you and we'd like to kick you out if you're not in our party, but politics should stop at the water's edge.

Today, in the Information Age, politics should stop at the schoolhouse door, because our security depends upon our ability to give all our people the finest education in the world. (Applause.) My shorthand expression for what we're trying to do -- and you will all recognize there are many other things at stake -- is that we have to create an America in which every 8-year-old can read, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old can go on to college, and every adult can keep on learning for a lifetime. My balanced budget makes an unprecedented commitment to these goals -- \$51 billion next year. But far more than money is required.

Three weeks ago at the State of the Union I issued a call to action for American education based on 10 principles necessary to prepare our people for the 21st century. First, we have to set world-class standards for our schools and develop a system of accountability, beginning for the first time with national standards-based reading tests in the 4th grade and math tests in the 8th grade.

Second, we have to make sure we have the best teachers in the world.

Third, we must make sure that every child can read on his or her own by the third grade. I see my friend the President of the Miami-Dade Community College out here, the largest community college in our country and one of the most diverse student bodies. Forty percent of the 8-year-olds in this country cannot read a book on their own -- 40 percent. And we have to do better than that if we want all of our children to be in two- and four-year colleges when their time comes.

Fourth, we have to make sure parents are more deeply involved in a constructive way in their child's learning from birth. The First Lady and I are going to host a conference on early childhood learning and brain development in the spring here.

Fifth, we have to give parents more power to choose the right public schools for their children and encourage school reforms like charter schools that set and meet high standards.

Sixth, we should encourage the teaching of character education in our schools -- and Secretary Riley has done a marvelous job of that -- and promote order and discipline at the same time by supporting local school initiatives, like school uniforms or truancy enforcement or curfews, and demanding zero tolerance for guns and drugs. I have seen in the most difficult neighborhoods in this country that children do not have to put up with violent, disruptive and destructive school environments. There are schools that are succeeding against all the odds. And if some can, all can. And until they all do none of us should be satisfied.

Seventh, we should support school construction at the national level. I believe, for the very first time -- because we have record numbers of school populations now, for the first time we've got a group bigger than the baby-boomers coming through, and the schools are growing at record rates while their facilities are deteriorating at record rates.

Eighth, we should make sure that learning is available for a lifetime by transforming what can only be described as a tangle of federal training programs into a simple skill grant that goes directly to workers. People who need and are eligible for federal training help, nearly all of them live within driving distance of a community-based educational institution that can give them what they need. And we do not need a lot of federal programs to get between them and those institutions. I have been trying for four years to pass this program. I hope you will help me get this done in this session of Congress, to create a new G.I. Bill for America's Workers that simply gives people a skill grant and lets them take it to the institution of education nearest them most able to meet their needs.

Ninth, we are determined to connect every classroom and library in this country to the Internet by the year 2000 and we're making good progress on that. But finally, and the thing that you have endorsed today, is our effort to meet the last goal, to throw open the doors of college to all people who are willing to work for the opportunity.

As the Secretary said, we have always expanded education. He began with Abraham Lincoln, and we might have begun with Thomas Jefferson, who advocated even as he advocated buying Louisiana -- for which I'm very grateful; otherwise I wouldn't be President -- (laughter) -- and America becoming a continental nation, that we should educate all of our children. Thomas Jefferson even advocated the education of every single child, boy or girl, of slave families in America. And we know from the beginning that it was the education of our leaders that gave them the vision to chart the course that has brought to this day.

I do believe, based on the sheer economic realities and the need for greater understanding of our interdependence in the world in which we're living that we have to make the first two years of college as universal as a high school education is today. Fifteen years ago, the typical worker with a college degree earned 38 percent more than a high school graduate; today, it is 69 percent. Two years of college alone means a 20-percent increase in learning and a quarter of a million dollars more in earnings over a lifetime.

Now, over the past four years we have put in place an unprecedented college opportunity strategy: Student loans provided directly to people who need them and that enable people to repay those loans as a percentage of their income. AmeriCorps, which has already helped 70,000 young people earn their way through college by serving their communities and their country. Two hundred thousand more students in Work Study as a result of last year's budget, and a very large increase in Pell Grants last year, taking the maximum grant to \$2,700 and expanding the number of people eligible.

The plan I have put before the Congress in my balanced budget would expand work-study again so that one million students will be able to work their way through college by the year 2000. We want 100,000 of these new work-study students to join our America Reads efforts to help make sure all our 8-year-olds can read independently by the year 2000.

I know that more than 80 college presidents have already committed thousands of their work-study students to work as reading tutors. I thank those of you who are here leading this effort, many of you on the front row here, and I'd like to ask all the rest of you to join us. Go back home, look at how many people you've got in work-study, see how many you could allocate to this effort.

We're going to have about 35,000 AmeriCorps students trained especially to train tutors. We're going to challenge the parents and the schools to open up to make sure we can get these volunteers in there to teach these kids to read. We cannot expect the schools to operate efficiently if children have to leave the third grade not even being able to read. They will never learn what they need to know. And college students will relate well to these young kids and have a chance to literally revolutionize future learning in America.

A lot of these children are not just poor kids, they simply -- many of them come out of cultures where their first language is not English and they did not learn to read properly. We should not let them go past the 3rd grade without knowing we have all done everything we humanly can to make sure that they can read independently. So I thank those of you from the bottom of my heart, who have volunteered already, and I ask the rest of you to join in that crusade. We need you and it will make all the difference.

Finally, let me say we have got to do more in other areas. For three years in a row now we've expanded Pell Grants for deserving students. But our budget this year, our balanced budget contains the largest increase in Pell Grant scholarships in 20 years. We are adding \$1.7

billion in grants, a 25-percent increase, which will make 348,000 more students eligible -- many of them older students -- and will increase the maximum grant to \$3,000. And for 4 million low and middle income students the budget will cut student loan fees in half.

But if we're truly going to set a new standard, a 14-year standard, we've got to do more. That's why I have proposed America's HOPE scholarship based on the Georgia pioneering program; two years of a tax credit of \$1,500 for college tuition, enough to pay for the typical community college. We know it will work because of the testimonial you have already heard from President Knapp.

Second, I propose a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for all tuition after high school to help families send children or parents to college, or to graduate, or medical school, or any other education after high school.

Third, I proposed an expanded IRA, expanded in terms of eligibility, in terms of who can save and in terms of purpose, so that families can save tax free to pay for education. Together these proposals mean that a family could save money for college tuition and never pay a penny of taxes on it. For example, families could put up to \$2,000 of income into the IRA each year without paying taxes, then withdraw up to \$10,000 a year for tuition and deduct that from income so that there will not be any taxes when they're paid out.

Cutting taxes to help people pay directly for college has never been done before on a national level. But we have cut taxes for years to help people buy a home or invest in a business because that's the way we felt we could encourage people to invest in their future and build the American Dream. And it has worked.

In the last four years we have seen homeownership rise to a 15-year high, and if the rate of increase continues by the year 2000 more than two-thirds of Americans will live in their own home -- an all-time record. In the last four years we have seen in each successive year a record number of new businesses formed in America. Today we ought to have that same kind of encouragement to invest in education, an even more important investment for the future. And I think that it is highly appropriate to adopt this device to achieve that goal.

Let me assure you, the Treasury Department is committed to working with the Department of Education and all of you to make this tax plan work. The IRS will not interfere with the affairs of educational institutions. We are committed to making this simple and straightforward for the academic community and especially for the students of every age. The plan will give families the power to choose the right education for themselves and the flexibility to decide the best way in which to pay for that education.

Now, just think about what this could mean. A young person who can't afford tuition or whose family can't afford it can now go down to a local community college right away and sign

up if they meet the standards, because the HOPE Scholarship will pay for it. Someone with a new family who is worried about college costs down the road can multiply his or her savings power by putting tuition money in an IRA tax-free every year while the children are growing up. Then, when they're 40 and worried they might need more education to move ahead, but can't spare time off from work, not only can they withdraw from the IRA for the kids, but the parents can to part-time, or at night. But all can go to college without tax consequences.

My plan is simple: \$1,500 a year tax cut for individuals to pay for college for two years; a \$10,000 a year tax deduction for families for any year of tuition after high school; an expanded IRA to help families save tax-free for education, plus the more and larger Pell Grant scholarships for deserving students, 300,000 more work-study positions, AmeriCorps, the Direct Loan Program.

This plan will throw open the doors of college and give every American the great chance to make the most of the world that we are moving into. College is opportunity for tomorrow. And creating that opportunity is our responsibility today.

I thank you again for your support of this plan. As we work in the weeks and months ahead to craft a bipartisan balanced budget, your endorsement today will be an historic element in making sure that this will be part of the ultimate budget plan. We need a balanced budget, but it has to reflect our values and it has to pave the way to a better future.

Today, we have committed to expanding educational opportunities by enacting the Hope Scholarship tax cut, the college tax deduction, the Pell Grant increases, the work-study increases. I thank you for standing with us. You are standing for opportunity for generations to come in a way that will change America forever for the better.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

2:40 P.M. EST

Meeting with NEA staff

Thursday, June 18, 1998 -- 2:30 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.

The White House -- The Vice President's West Wing Office

Event requested by Bob Chase

Briefing prepared by Paul Tuchmann, Karen Tramontano, and Jonathan Schnur

EVENT

- You will meet with President Bob Chase of the NEA and six of his staff members. The purpose of this meeting, which was requested by President Chase when you met privately with him on April 29, is to give selected NEA leaders the chance to highlight and briefly elaborate on a few issues of importance to them, in order to provide a context for your appearance at the NEA convention in New Orleans on July 3. The purpose is also to give you the opportunity to learn from NEA staff the day-to-day concerns of teachers across the country. At the convention you will be meeting with rank and file members of the NEA in a roundtable format, and then you will be answering questions in front of the whole convention, in town hall format.
- President Chase will open today's meeting with a brief statement on the importance of public education for American children. Then he will go around the room and ask the NEA staff members to highlight an issue -- issues likely to be presented include: literacy, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the problem of failing schools, and the upcoming shortage of teachers. Because a major purpose of this meeting is for you to get a feel for how classroom teachers feel about their jobs and major issues, you should consider asking the following types of questions about these issues:
 - How does this issue affect teachers in the classroom?
 - How we can do more to retain quality teachers, in addition to recruiting new ones?
 - What are the real rewards that most teachers feel they derive from their jobs?
 - What are the things that make being a teacher in America today most difficult?
- Toward the close of the meeting, you may want to ask the following questions as well:
 - How do you feel about the issue of requiring new teachers to pass proficiency tests?
 - How do you feel about the issue of teacher peer review and intervention?
 - How do you feel about the issue of reforming teacher tenure?

BACKGROUND

- NEA staff attending (please see attachments for full bios):
 - President Bob Chase
 - Peter Arum, Assistant to the NEA President
 - Susan Carmon, Senior Policy Analyst, NEA's Teacher Development Team

Marcie Dianda, Senior Policy Analyst, NEA's National Center for Innovation
Marian Galbraith, Member NEA Board of Directors
Robert Tate, Senior Policy Analyst, NEA
Mary Elizabeth Teasley, Director of Government Relations

- White House staff attending this meeting will be Karen Tramontano, Jonathan Schnur, and Michael Cohen.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Biographies of meeting participants
- Copy of speech on education given by Senator Kerry on 6/16/98
- Bob Chase's speech on "The New Unionism" from last September

"The New NEA: Reinventing Teacher Unions for a New Era"

Remarks by Bob Chase

President, National Education Association

Before the National Press Club

February 5, 1997

Washington, D.C.

I appreciate that very kind introduction, Richard [Sammon, reporter for *Congressional Quarterly*, president of the National Press Club]. I came here, this afternoon, to introduce the new National Education Association -- the new union we are striving to create in public education. By way of preface, however, I'd like to speak not about our union per se, but about teachers and the teaching profession.

Teaching has always been more a calling than a career. Speaking from 25 years' experience in the classroom, I can testify: As a teacher, you never face an existential crisis about the meaning of your work. Because if you are a good teacher, you see it in your kids' faces ... You see it in the fires you kindle in their minds ... You see it in your students' gratitude when they come back to visit you years later.

But there is another side to teaching -- a side that can be painful: The almost casual belittling and denigration of teachers that is all too commonplace in our society.

To take just one example: Several weeks ago, John Silber, former Boston University president and now chair of the Massachusetts Board of Education, said (and I quote): "We don't have the people going into the teaching profession that we used to. The women's movement ... gave women alternatives more attractive than teaching. Before it was secretary, teacher, prostitute."

In the uproar that followed, Dr. Silber claimed to have been speaking in jest. But the damage was done.

And my point is this: I will be talking today about NEA's new ideas for lifting up teachers as professionals and boosting the quality of schools. But the fact is that all our plans will come to naught if Americans do not honor the work of teachers ... if Americans don't respect the incredibly difficult and important work that public school teachers do.

When I was young, I studied for a time at seminary. And I faced a tough choice between the priesthood or a career in education. In large part because of all the terrific teachers I had when growing up, I chose teaching. And I have never regretted the choice.

I chose teaching for one reason: To make a difference for children. Likewise, last year, I campaigned for and was elected president of NEA for that same reason: To make a difference for children ... but on a larger scale: By

recreating -- *by fundamentally recreating* -- NEA as *the* champion of quality teaching and quality public schools in the United States.

Now, as we all know, the last several years have not been kind to newly elected leaders who come to Washington in the guise of revolutionaries. However, I am not shy about my plans to redirect our great Association in big ways. Nor am I naive about the magnitude of this challenge.

Bear in mind that, for nearly three decades now, the National Education Association has been a traditional, somewhat narrowly focused union. We have butted heads with management over bread-and-butter issues -- to win better salaries, benefits, and working conditions for school employees. And we have succeeded.

Today, however, it is clear to me -- and to a critical mass of teachers across America -- that while this narrow, traditional agenda remains important, it is *utterly inadequate* to the needs of the future. It will not serve our members' interest in greater professionalism. It will not serve the public's interest in better quality public schools. And it will not serve the interests of America's children ... the children we teach ... the children who motivated us to go into teaching in the first place.

And this latter interest must be decisive. After all, America's public schools do not exist for teachers and other employees. They do not exist to provide us with jobs and salaries. Schools *do exist for the children* -- to give students the very best ... beginning with a quality teacher in every classroom.

Ladies and gentlemen, the imperative now facing public education could not be more stark: Simply put, in the decade ahead, we must revitalize our public schools from within, or they will be dismantled from without. And I am not talking here about the critics on talk radio who seek higher ratings by bashing public education and trashing teachers. I am talking about the vast majority of Americans who support public education, but are clearly dissatisfied. They want higher quality public schools, and they want them *now*.

Even in the many school districts across America that are already performing at high levels -- and there are thousands of them, including, locally, Montgomery County, Maryland and Fairfax County, Virginia ... even in these high-performance systems, the public is demanding that we do better. And given these expectations, I am convinced that school unions best serve their members by pursuing an aggressive agenda of excellence and reform in public education.

To this end, we aim not so much to *redirect* NEA, as to *reinvent* it. Yes, reinvention is a tall order. But we know we can do it, because we did it once before. In the 1960s, we took a rather quiet, genteel professional association of educators, and we reinvented it as an assertive -- and, when necessary, militant -- labor union.

But here is a critical point: When we reinvented our association in the 1960s, we modeled it after traditional, industrial unions. Likewise, we accepted the industrial premise: Namely, that labor and management have distinct, conflicting roles and interests ... that we are destined to clash ... that the union-management relationship is inherently adversarial.

Yes, these traditional industrial-style teacher unions have brought major improvements to public education: We have won smaller class sizes and better conditions for teaching and learning. We have also fought for decent salaries to

attract and retain qualified teachers. And we have put our money where our mouth is when it comes to school reform. Over the past decade, NEA has spent some \$70 million on reform initiatives -- most recently, sponsoring six charter schools across the country.

So the National Education Association is a proud organization -- proud of the major improvements we have won in public education. However, these gains have been inadequate. And, too often, they have been won through confrontation at the bargaining table or, in extreme cases, after bitter strikes.

Which brings me to the crux of my message, today. These industrial-style, adversarial tactics simply are not suited to the next stage of school reform. After much soul-searching and self-criticism within NEA, we know that it's time to create a new union -- an association with an entirely new approach to our members, to our critics, and to our colleagues on the other side of the bargaining table. But to clear the air, I must publicly speak some rather blunt truths.

The fact is that while the vast majority of teachers are capable and dedicated -- professionals who put children's interests first -- there are indeed some bad teachers in America's schools. And it is *our* job as a union to improve those teachers or -- that failing -- to get them out of the classroom.

*their
responsibility
to weed out
bad
teachers*

The fact is that while some of NEA's critics aim only to dismantle public education, many others care deeply about our schools, and we have been too quick to dismiss their criticisms and their ideas for change.

The fact is that, in some instances, we have used our power to block uncomfortable changes ... to protect the narrow interest of our members, and not to advance the interests of students and schools.

The fact is that while NEA does not control curriculum, set funding levels, or hire and fire, we cannot go on denying responsibility for school quality. We can't wash our hands of it and say "that's management's job." School quality -- the quality of the environment where students learn and where our members work -- must be *our* responsibility as a union.

The fact is that, while the majority of NEA members teach in successful -- for the most part suburban -- schools, we have been wrong to ignore the plight of inner-city schools. And to rectify this wrong, we have convened an Emergency Commission on Urban Children to put NEA foursquare in the fight to save urban children and their schools.

The fact is that, too often, NEA has sat on the sidelines of change ... naysaying ... quick to say what won't work and slow to say what will. It is time for our great association to lead the reform, to engineer change, to take the initiative, to be in the vanguard.

And, on that score, the fact is that no group knows more about the solutions that will work in our schools than America's teachers. We *know* what our schools need: higher academic standards; stricter discipline; an end to social promotions; less bureaucracy; more resources where they count, in the classroom; schools that are richly connected to parents and to the communities that surround them.

To an amazing degree, teachers, school boards, and administrators all agree on this reform agenda. And this commonality cries out for us to build an entirely new union-management relationship in public education.

Our challenge is clear: Instead of relegating teachers to the role of production workers -- with no say in organizing their schools for excellence -- we need to enlist teachers as full partners, indeed, as co-managers of their schools. Instead of contracts that reduce flexibility and restrict change, we -- and our schools -- need contracts that empower and enable.

Many traditionalists within NEA, predictably, have difficulty accepting this new unionism. They say that what I propose is a threat to union clout and solidarity. To which I give a direct answer: This new collaboration is not about sleeping with the enemy. It is about waking up to our shared stake in reinvigorating the public education enterprise. It is about educating children better, more effectively, more ambitiously.

Permit me to add a personal note, here. I well understand the traditional union view -- the view that says a union's job is strictly quote-unquote "to look out for me." I understand it because I once held this view myself.

In 1983, after the *Nation at Risk* report came out, NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell tried to mobilize our union to lead the reform movement in American public education. At the time, as a member of NEA's executive committee, I took a leading role in *opposing* her. I argued that we should stick to our knitting -- stick to bargaining for better pay and working conditions.

That, ladies and gentlemen, was the biggest mistake of my career. I was wrong. And today, with all due respect, I say to the traditionalists in NEA's ranks -- to those who argue that we should stick to our knitting, leaving education reform to others: You are mistaken.

I also say -- I insist -- that the new course we have charted at NEA is not strictly about vision. As British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan said long ago: "If you want a vision, consult a saint. I am a politician." And so it is with me. I am a teacher whose heart and soul are still in the classroom; I still instinctively check for chalk smudges on my clothes. I am also a committed unionist; a veteran of more hard-fought collective bargaining sessions than I can remember. I deal in practical, concrete, tangible changes. I deal in results.

The new direction we are charting at NEA is not only about vision, it is about *action*. It is about changing how each of our local affiliates does business, changing how they bargain, changing what issues they put on the table, changing the ways they help their members to become the best teachers they can be.

I repeat, the new NEA is about *action*. And, on that score, I challenge the American public: Watch what we *do*, not what we *say*.

Our new directions are clear: Putting issues of school quality front and center at the bargaining table ... collaborating actively with management on an agenda of school reform ... involving teachers and other school employees in organizing their schools for excellence.

The good news is that teachers on the front line are already advancing this agenda. They are way ahead of NEA's leadership. Indeed, my motto as NEA president should be: I am their leader, I must follow them.

For example, imagine a future where teachers -- under their union contract -- have responsibility for nearly three-quarters of a school system's budget ... and they use that authority to cut class sizes and boost academic quality. Well, that

future is now. I just described the work of our local union in New Albany, Indiana.

Imagine a 21st century school district where the teachers throw out the traditional contract entirely, and replace it with a joint labor-management "constitution" -- an agreement that allows teachers, in effect, to co-manage the school district. Utopian speculation? Hardly. Our affiliate in Glenview, Illinois has been operating under such an agreement since 1989.

Or imagine the president of a local NEA union taking the lead in founding a public charter school ... a new school that she and her colleagues manage by themselves, without a principal. I just described the work of Jan Noble, president of our affiliate in Colorado Springs.

By any measure, these are bold new arrangements. But a growing number of NEA teachers insist on going one step further. They argue that it's not enough to cooperate with management on school reform. Quality must begin at home -- within our own ranks. If a teacher is not measuring up in the classroom -- to put it baldly, if there is a bad teacher in one of our schools -- then we must do something about it.

To the traditional unionists who say that this is heresy -- a threat to union solidarity -- I say: Come visit our NEA local in Columbus, Ohio. The Columbus Education Association designates senior teachers to serve as full-time consultants in the classroom. They intervene to help veteran teachers whose skills need sharpening. In most cases, this intervention is successful. But in roughly 10 percent of cases, the consultants -- *members of our union* -- take the lead in counseling a problem teacher to leave the profession...and, if necessary, they recommend dismissal.

This is courageous work -- work that entails real political risk for teacher-leaders within their local unions. I believe it is exactly the right course for the new NEA.

And while I'm on the subject of teacher professionalism, I'd like to use this occasion to announce that NEA has entered into a partnership with Stetson University to play a major role in the new Celebration Teaching Academy. This remarkable academy will be part of Walt Disney Company's new town of Celebration, Florida, and it will work hand in hand with the local public school. It will be for educators what a teaching hospital is for doctors: A place where teachers from around the nation can come to sharpen their skills and be exposed to "best practices." NEA professionals on site will help to shape the curriculum and to direct the academy's Master Teacher Institute. And we'll have other partners in this venture as well, including Johns Hopkins, Auburn, Harvard, and the University of Minnesota.

As you can imagine, we are delighted to play a major role in this important project. Indeed, the Celebration Teaching Academy is exactly what the new NEA is all about: A commitment to lifting up teachers as professionals and to revitalizing public education.

This commitment is good for children. What's more, as I have argued today, it is also tough-minded unionism -- looking out for the enlightened self-interest of our members ... responding to their demands for a union that cares deeply about quality.

At the end of the 19th century, labor pioneer Samuel Gompers famously stated the goal of his union in one word: "More!" Today -- entering a new era --