

Domestic Policy Council

West Wing, 2nd Floor

Education Q&A/ Press Releases

Minnesota Education Issues
Q&A
May 4, 2000

- Q: Senator Paul Wellstone has introduced a bill (S 2348) that calls for the fair use of tests and would ban the use of high stakes test as a sole measure of promotion. What is the Administration's position on the bill?**
- A: The Administration shares Senator Wellstone's goal that high-stakes tests are used fairly. The Department of Education has released guidelines about the valid and fair use of tests and I would refer you to that. Our ESEA reauthorization proposal advocates the use of multiple measures for promotion decisions, but it does so in the context of an agenda of high standards, real accountability, ending social promotion the right way and making proven investments in strategies such as after-school, teacher quality, and reducing class size. We do believe it is important that schools are held accountable for student performance.
- Q: Minnesota has an educational tax credit or deduction to help families with educational expenses. Families can use the deduction for private school tuition. What is the Administration's position on this?**
- A: This Administration supports the effort to help defray the cost for general educational opportunities for low-income families, but we do not support tax credits, deductions and vouchers for private school expenses. As we have said repeatedly, we believe that the taxpayers' dollars ought to be focused on improving the educational opportunities where 9 out of 10 students across the nation attend school – the public schools.
- Q: In Minnesota, there is a debate going on over funding for charter schools or lease-aid. What is the President's view of this debate since he is such a strong supporter of charter schools?**
- A: The President believes that decisions about charter schools are appropriately left to state and local governments. The President believes that charter schools should be open to all, publicly accountable and held to high standards. The federal charter school law reflects these principles. More specific issues such as this should be decided by states and localities.
- Q: The teachers' unions in Minnesota are upset about the new state standards called the "Profiles of Learning" and also about a recent state law that allows school districts to hire community experts who aren't certified teachers to work in schools. What is the President's view on these issues?**
- A: Both of these issues are state and local issues for the citizens of Minnesota to decide.

PRESIDENT CLINTON VISITS NATION'S FIRST PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL, ANNOUNCES NEW STEPS TO SUPPORT CHARTER SCHOOLS

May 4, 2000

Today President Clinton will visit the City Academy public charter school in St. Paul, Minnesota, to highlight the success of the charter school movement and to unveil new steps to help charters. City Academy is the nation's first charter school and was the only charter school in operation when the President was first elected in 1992. Thanks in part to the Administration's leadership, there are now over 1,700 charter schools. Today the President will meet with students from City Academy, release an Executive Memorandum directing the Secretary of Education to develop guidelines for businesses and faith-based organizations to help charter schools succeed, announce the release of \$16 million in new grants and \$121 million in continuation grants for charter schools, and participate in an online webside chat with students from around the country. May 1-5 is National Charter Schools Week and the President will take this opportunity to challenge communities to create more high quality public charter schools to increase choice and competition in public education.

CHARTER SCHOOLS: IMPROVING PUBLIC EDUCATION AND EMPOWERING PARENTS.

Public charter schools exemplify a standards-based approach to education. Every charter school works with a public authority to establish clear performance standards. A charter school that fails to meet the terms of its charter is closed down. The federal government helps fund charter schools through the Department of Education's Public Charter Schools Program. The program, reauthorized with the President's leadership in 1998, gives priority to states that have strong standards for academic accountability. Charter schools receiving funding from the federal government must be measured by the same state assessments as any other public school. A recent national survey found that 65 percent of parents rated their child's public charter school as better than their former public school (only 6 percent rated them worse), and the Education Department reports that seven out of ten charter schools have a waiting list of students who want to enroll.

AWARDING NEW GRANTS TO EXPAND THE CHARTER SCHOOL MOVEMENT. President Clinton has long been a champion of charter schools. When he was first elected, there was only one public charter school open in the United States. Now, thanks in part to almost \$400 million in federal funding and efforts to disseminate effective strategies, there are now 1,700. Thirty-six states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia now have laws on the books that enable the creation of charter schools. The President's FY 2001 budget includes a \$30 million increase in funding for charters, bringing total funding to \$175 million annually. Today, the President will announce the release of \$16 million in new grants to charter schools and \$121 million in continuation grants. Local charter schools use federal funding for planning, development, and start-up costs.

DRAWING SUPPORT FROM BUSINESSES AND FAITH-BASED GROUPS. The President today will also release an Executive Memorandum that calls on the Secretary of Education to develop guidelines explaining how business groups and faith-based organizations can be involved with charter schools. The President believes that employers can play a key role in helping launch and sustain charter schools, and the proposed guidelines will help local businesses understand how they can be involved. There are now more than 100 employer-linked charters nationwide. Likewise, although charter schools must be non-sectarian in their admissions and practices, faith-based groups can play a positive role in creating and supporting public charter schools. There are successful partnerships between public schools and faith communities across the nation in after-school programs, school safety, discipline and student literacy.

ONLINE WEBSITE CHAT WITH STUDENTS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY. While at City Academy, the President will participate in a live "Webside Chat," hosted by ChannelOne.com, with middle school and high school students from across the country. In the tradition of President Franklin Roosevelt's Fireside Chats, the President will use the latest technology to communicate directly with students on a range of topics. Last fall, the President conducted his first live Internet chat. He plans to host other "Webside Chats" on other vital issues.

**PRESIDENT CLINTON HIGHLIGHTS EDUCATION REFORM AGENDA WITH
ROUNDTABLE ON WHAT WORKS**

May 4, 2000

Concluding his national School Reform Tour today at Eastgate Elementary School in Columbus, Ohio, President Clinton will highlight his education reform agenda with a roundtable discussion of what works. Columbus is raising student achievement by improving teacher quality, reducing class size, and investing in what works. By demanding more through high standards and real accountability, and by investing more in smaller classes, reading, and teacher quality, the Columbus Public Schools are achieving measurable results in some of their lowest-performing schools. Joining with educators, parents and students in a roundtable discussion, President Clinton will call on Congress to follow Columbus's lead by passing an education budget and education accountability bill to invest in our nation's schools and demand more from them.

REDUCING CLASS SIZE TO INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. The President will highlight the impact in Columbus of his initiative to hire 100,000 new teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. The Columbus Public Schools used funding from the President's initiative to add 58 teachers in 13 elementary schools, targeting funds to the lowest-performing schools as part of a broader effort to turn them around. With these additional teachers, all of whom are fully certified, the Columbus Public Schools have been able to reduce class sizes in grades 1-3 by about 10 students per class to an average of 15 students. At Eastgate Elementary test scores are up after just one year of this intensive effort. The percentage of 4th-graders who are proficient in reading has gone from 9.5 percent to 45.4 percent, and in math, from 9.5 percent to 30.3 percent in just one year. Science and writing scores are up as well at the school.

REFORMS THAT WORK. The Columbus Public Schools are applying a number of proven strategies: reducing class size, improving teacher quality through mentoring and peer review, providing after-school help, and ending social promotion the right way. The President will take part in a roundtable discussion with educators, parents, and students on what is working in Columbus, and how to apply those lessons elsewhere.

INVESTING IN OUR SCHOOLS AND DEMANDING MORE FROM THEM. The President will conclude his School Reform Tour by calling on Congress to send him education legislation that invests more in our schools and demands more from them. The President has sent a plan to Congress that would increase accountability and invest in successful strategies such as reducing class size, expanding after-school and summer school programs, modernizing schools, and improving teacher quality to ensure that all students receive the high quality education they need. The President's budget includes a \$4.5 billion increase in education funding – up 12 percent from last year. The President has also sent Congress strong accountability legislation that would continue the work of identifying low-performing schools, require states to end out-of-field teaching, end social promotion the right way by ensuring that all students can meet high standards, and require school report cards for parents.

EDUCATION REFORM ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

May 4, 2000

Rosa Smith – Superintendent, Columbus Public Schools. Rosa Smith has served as the Superintendent of the Columbus Public Schools since September 1997. Her initiatives include reshaping the district's reading program, expanding student access to technology by establishing a computer to student ratio of 1:5 and purchasing 13,400 new computers, and reforming high schools by raising standards and offering career-related coursework. Prior to coming to Columbus Public Schools, she served as Superintendent of Schools for the Beloit School District in Wisconsin, and was selected by the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators as the 1997 Superintendent of the Year. Dr. Smith also has worked as a teacher in South Bend Public Schools in Indiana and St. Paul Public Schools in Minnesota.

Barbara Blake – Principal, Eastgate Elementary School. Barbara has been the Principal of Eastgate Elementary School since 1989, and has focused on improving the overall reading and mathematics skills of her students. To accomplish this goal, Barbara has worked with her staff of teachers to develop innovative teaching strategies, utilize the latest reading programs, and increase overall time that the students spend on reading and math. Because of Ms. Blake's commitment, the test scores of her students have improved dramatically.

Ms. Blake also instituted a teacher-home visits program, which requires teachers to visit students and parents at home to increase communication between the school and the family, and improve the overall education for the student. She has worked in the field of education for 22 years, previously as an elementary school teacher in Ohio. Throughout her career, she has received a number of awards, including Ohio's Teachers of the Year for Social Studies Award; the Jennings Scholar Award; Ohio Excellent Teaching in the Field of Economics Award; Columbus Board of Education commendations; and Woman of the Year for the National Association of University Women. She has also been recognized by Who's Who Among Black Women.

Heather Knapp – Teacher, East Linden Elementary School. Heather was hired with the help of federal class-size reduction funds in the fall of 1999 as a first-grade teacher at East Linden Elementary School. Ms. Knapp team-teaches a class of 18 first-graders with Karen Johnston, a 25-year veteran of Columbus public schools. Due to a large immigrant population in Columbus, students in early grades often lack adequate reading and language skills. Thanks to their small class size and ability to team teach, Ms. Knapp and Ms. Johnston are able to give individual attention to the students falling behind because of a language barrier. Without the federal class-size reduction funds, both Ms. Knapp and Ms. Johnston would each be teaching a first-grade class with over 30 students. Prior to coming to East Linden, Ms. Knapp taught pre-school and worked as a nanny. She graduated in 1996 from Ohio University with a teaching degree.

John Grossman, President, Columbus Education Association. Mr. Grossman has served as the President of the Columbus Education Association, an affiliate of the National Education Association (NEA), since 1978. John was instrumental in implementing the Peer Assistance & Review Program (PAR) program in Columbus. This partnership, with the Columbus Public Schools and the Columbus Education Association, provides a "coaching/mentoring" program so that successful teachers can help new teachers develop the skills they need to increase teacher

quality. In a system of over 4,8000 teachers, PAR has served almost 3,300 teachers since its beginning in 1986, through the 1996-97 school year. Mr. Grossman is a former Vice Chair for the NEA Commission on the Crisis of the Urban Child, and served on the NEA Legislative Committee for four years. Currently he is a charter member of the TURN Network, on the Holmes Partnership Board, Co-Chair of the Unite Project, and Vice President for the Midwest region for the Holmes Partnership.

Michael B. Coleman – Mayor of Columbus, Ohio. Mayor Coleman took office on January 1, 2000, as Columbus' first Democratic Mayor in 28 years and first African American mayor. Mayor Coleman created the first Office of Education, which works to coordinate the efforts of the city, families and schools to help develop after-school opportunities for children city-wide. Prior to becoming mayor, Coleman served as President of Columbus City Council. Since he was first elected to Council in 1992, he focused his efforts on enhancing the economic vitality of neighborhoods and generating jobs for residents. On Friday, May 5, the Mayor will host an education conference – “The Promise of After-School: A Forum on Extended Day Programs in Columbus” – which will focus on the benefits of extended-day programs in helping schools, parents and communities meet their goals.

Linda Hoetger – Parent, East Columbus Elementary School. Linda and her husband, Ray, have four boys, ages 9, 13, 14 and 15, who are all in the Columbus Public School System. Linda and Ray both volunteer full time at their 9 year old's school, East Columbus Elementary School, which received a federal “21st Century Community Learning Center” grant to start an after-school program. The after-school program includes a 4th grade proficiency tutoring program to help students prepare for their proficiency tests. Linda's youngest son participated in the program, and Linda believes the extra help definitely helped her son. The after-school program also offers homework assistance for students and programs on "kindness and justice." Linda's 15 year-old son also volunteers at the school by baby-sitting children of adults who participate in the adult education/computer courses that are offered at the school.

Laura Avalos-Arguedas – Americorps, City Year. Laura is a City Year-Americorps volunteer in Columbus. Laura was born in San Jose, Costa Rica, and moved to the United States with her family when she was 6 years old. After graduating from Grandview Heights High School in 1998, she began a two-year volunteer program with City Year-Americorps. She tutors four 1st grade students in reading at Second Avenue Elementary School. These students, who read below their grade level, greatly benefit from the one-on-one attention that the City Year volunteers provide them. City Year also runs a Peaceful Playground program during recess to eliminate youth violence and to promote a more structured playground environment. In addition to tutoring, Laura also coordinates an after-school program at East Columbus Elementary School – the After-School Activities Program, (A.S.A.P.), which teaches students to become caring and contributing citizens in their communities. At the conclusion of her work with City Year, Laura plans to attend Ohio State University.

Darrell Byrom – Teacher (Troops to Teacher program), Eastgate Elementary School. Darrell is a second-year teacher at Eastgate Elementary School. He teaches a 4th/5th grade split class with 23 students. With the help of the “Troops-to-Teachers” program, Mr. Byrom began a career in teaching in 1998 after serving in the Air Force for 20 years and retiring in 1996 at the

rank of Master Sergeant. After volunteering as a tutor while in the military, he decided to change careers and become a teacher. He believes that his military experience makes him a better teacher because it drives him to impose higher expectations on his students. Mr. Byrom is very enthusiastic about his new career.

Shirley Goins – Teacher, Monroe Middle School. Shirley is a 6th grade teacher at Monroe Traditional Middle School. She has worked as a teacher for 30 years and has taught at Monroe for the last 18 years. To allow students to better concentrate on their studies, Monroe recently instituted a school uniform policy, which requires all of the children to wear white shirts and blue bottoms. The school adopted this uniform policy with full support of the parents of the student population.

Education Tour – School Reform, Columbus, OH

Q&A

May 4, 2000

Q: Why is the President visiting Eastgate Elementary school in Columbus, Ohio?

A: Eastgate Elementary illustrates the success students and schools can reap from the President's formula for education reform: set high standards for all children, insist on accountability for results and invest in what works. The percentage of Eastgate students passing the state's proficiency test in fourth grade reading has almost doubled since 1996-97, the percentage passing fourth grade math has tripled, and the percentage passing fourth grade science has increased more than five-fold. The dramatic improvements in student achievement at Eastgate show that proven strategies can turn around failing schools. Moreover, the Columbus school district is helping to turn around failing schools and improve all public schools with its strong Peer Assistance and Review Program, strategic use of federal money to reduce class sizes in the early grades, and significant after school programs. The President urges Congress to pass his proposal to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and help districts across the country take similar steps towards success.

Q: What will the President do at Eastgate?

A: President Clinton will host a roundtable on education reform with local educators and leaders to discuss their efforts and to find out how his initiatives are influencing them. The President will also meet some of the students from Eastgate.

Q: Is the President's Higher Standards-Higher Pay for teachers initiative modeled on the Columbus Peer Assistance and Review program?

A: President Clinton strongly believes that innovative reforms around the country are overcoming challenges in education every day, and that the federal government can play a positive role by identifying what is working, and helping to replicate it in other places. Most of his education reform strategies build on effective programs around country, and the Higher Standards-Higher Pay design draws heavily from Columbus program. Higher Standards-Higher Pay for Teachers is a \$50 million initiative that will award grants to high-poverty school districts to help them attract and retain high-quality teachers. Participating partnerships would agree on steps to recruit talented, certified new teachers; evaluate new teachers; provide mentors for new teachers and principals; reward good teaching; and adopt faster but fair ways to identify, and improve or remove low performing teachers.

Q: Last month the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) proposed a national test for new teachers, what is the President's view of this?

A: The President strongly supports proposals to increase teacher quality and is supportive of challenging competency tests as one strategy to accomplish that. In the 1980's, under

Education Reform Tour – Audubon Elementary

Q&A

May 3, 2000

Q: Why is the President going to Owensboro, Kentucky?

A: The President will make his first stop on the Education Reform Tour in Owensboro, KY, at Audubon Elementary in the Daviess County School District. At Audubon, the President will highlight the Clinton-Gore agenda of investing more in our schools and demanding more from them. He will note that Kentucky has been a national leader in standards-based reform and accountability and that Audubon is a prime example of how the agenda of high standards, real accountability, and investing in what works is what is working to turn around schools. He will also announce that he is signing an Executive Order directing Secretary of Education Richard Riley to take steps to make the U.S. Department of Education more effectively help states and localities turn around failing schools.

Q: What precisely does the Executive Order direct Secretary Riley to do?

A: The Executive Order empowers Secretary of Education Richard Riley to take steps to help states and districts turn around low-performing schools – for instance, by disseminating research and providing technical assistance – and to make federal education programs more responsive to low-performing schools. The order also directs the Secretary to submit an annual education accountability report that identifies trends in low-performing schools in states, the resources they are receiving to help turn around low-performing schools and what strategies are most effective.

Q: Why is the President visiting this particular school?

A: Audubon is a good example of what can happen when we invest more in our schools and demand more from them. Formerly a low-performing school and one with two-thirds of its students in poverty, Audubon has made substantial improvements in student performance. It was recognized as a National Title I Distinguished School in 1998-1999. The school ranks 18th in student performance among elementary schools across the state. Student achievement numbers are remarkable: the increase in the percent of students who are meeting Kentucky's standards in writing has increased from 12% to 57% in writing; 5% to 70% in reading; and 0% to 64% in science.

Q: Isn't local decision making a major part of the Kentucky reform story? That sounds more like what the Republicans are proposing in their ESEA proposals than what the President has offered. Any comment?

A: The Kentucky story is one of setting high standards, holding schools accountable for results and making the investments that schools need to turn around and help kids reach high standards. The President's ESEA proposal and budget invest in proven strategies like teacher quality, after-school and summer school, and technology, and providing for real accountability. GOP plans fail to make such targeted investments in what works; instead, it throws money into block grants. In his speech the President will call on Congress to double the Educational Accountability Fund to \$250 million to help districts turn around failing schools or shut them down.

Education Tour – Central High School

Q&A

May 3, 2000

Q: The President is going to Davenport, Iowa. What will he talk about?

A: The President will visit Central High School in Davenport Iowa as part of an Education Tour to highlight his agenda of investing more in our schools and the commitment to helping states and local districts build and modernize schools nationwide. The President's School Construction and Modernization proposal includes a \$1.3 billion emergency initiative that supports 5,000 school renovation projects through grants and loans to high-need school districts with little or no capacity to fund urgent repairs. The President also has proposed a tax credit for school modernization that would help build or modernize 6,000 schools nationwide. Central High School is almost 100 years old and is about to undergo renovation and so it exemplifies the challenges schools are facing nationwide.

Q: Why does the Federal government need to get involved in this issue?

A: In 1996, a U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) report estimated that the cost of bringing America's schools into overall good condition was at least \$112 billion. Today, the National Education Association released a report that puts the cost at \$322 billion, more than double the GAO figure from just 4 years ago. Although the NEA figure includes new school construction to accommodate rising enrollment and modernization that is needed to support new technology, \$322 billion is a staggering figure. The President believes that a national need of this magnitude requires national action and that's why his balanced budgets have for the past 3 years included school modernization proposals.

Q: What's the significance of the report the President released today?

A: The new report from the U.S. Department of Education "School as Centers of Community: A Citizen's Guide for Planning and Design" serves as a solid resource for educators, planners, and community members to help them meet the challenge of providing modern educational facilities that our children deserve, and highlights methods of providing safe, motivating learning environments by providing guidance on making schools the center of the community. The report includes specific examples so that communities can get ideas and also has a planning guide.

Q: Davenport is about to modernize their schools without federal assistance – doesn't this indicate that federal support isn't needed?

A: Schools across the country are struggling to renovate schools without federal assistance because Congressional Republicans refuse to support the President's school modernization proposal. However, rather than cutting education programs to

fix schools the President's proposal would allow local school districts to modernize their schools and improve academic services to students. In addition, there are many communities across the country that simply can't afford to renovate or modernize their schools so students are in overcrowded classrooms and poor learning environments.

Q: Does the President support the Johnson-Rangel school construction proposal?

A: The President has said that he would sign the bipartisan compromise that Representative Johnson and Rangel have reached.

**Senate ESEA
Q&A
May 2, 2000**

Q: The Senate is taking up the Elementary and Secondary Education Act today, what is the President's view of this bill?

A: The President has communicated to the Senate that the bill that the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committee passed on a party line vote is unacceptable and that he would veto it were it presented to him. The bill fails to support standards-based reform, increase accountability, improve teacher quality, or expand important supports for students, such as high quality after-school programs, smaller classes, and school modernization. The President hopes that the Senate will adopt Democratic amendments to include accountability provisions, teacher quality provisions, school modernization, and class size reduction, and to remove the irresponsible block grant provision in this legislation.

Q: Some moderate Senate Democrats have introduced a bill that is intended to be a bipartisan compromise, what is the President's view of that bill?

A: There are provisions in that bill that the President supports, such as increased accountability, greater targeting on the students most in need, and expanded public school choice. However, there are also provisions in that bill that the President does not support such as the consolidation of technology and after-school programs. We want to work with all Democrats to develop a bill that meets the President's priorities.

**PRESIDENT CLINTON TOUTS EDUCATION REFORM AGENDA
OF INVESTING MORE IN SCHOOLS AND DEMANDING MORE FROM THEM**

April 14, 2000

Today, in an address to the Education Writers Association conference in Atlanta, President Clinton will highlight the Administration's strategy of investing more in our schools and demanding more from them. The President will also release a new Education Department report detailing the substantial progress he and Vice President Gore have made in boosting accountability and student achievement, strengthening teacher quality, making schools safer, expanding school choice and charter schools, and opening the doors of college to all Americans. The President will call on Congress to pass an education bill that invests in proven strategies for reform – instead of gimmicks like vouchers – and includes his Education Accountability Act, which requires states to help turn around failing schools or shut them down. Finally, the President will announce he is leading a School Reform Tour in May, during which he will travel to schools across the country that are meeting high standards and investing in reform.

NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS PROGRESS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION SINCE 1993. The report that the President will release today, *Challenging the Status Quo: The Clinton-Gore Education Record* outlines the Administration's progress in improving public education. The report also details how the Clinton-Gore agenda for education reform – investing more and demanding more – has achieved results for all Americans, especially those most in need. For example, the report finds that reading scores of 4th graders in the highest-poverty schools rose almost an entire grade level between 1992 and 1996. Low-income high school graduates are now attending college at all-time high rates, and 90 percent of the poorest schools now have access to the Internet, up from 19 percent in 1993.

INVESTING MORE AND DEMANDING MORE TO RAISE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. Since taking office in 1993, President Clinton and Vice President Gore have made standards and accountability, as well as investment in proven strategies, the centerpieces of their education reform agenda. Beginning with the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which required states to develop and implement standards and assessments by 2000-01, the Administration has pursued an agenda of demanding more from public schools. In 1999, the Administration proposed and Congress enacted an Education Accountability Fund, which provides funds to districts to turn around failing schools and allows parents to send children to higher-performing public schools. In addition, the President sent Congress an ESEA reauthorization proposal, which would require states to turn around failing schools or shut them down. The President today will tout his agenda of accountability and high standards, but he will also emphasize that teachers and schools need support and resources to reach those standards. While presiding over an era of fiscal discipline, the Administration has nearly doubled the nation's investment in education and training. These investments have helped to raise student achievement in reading and math, enroll more children in Head Start, reduce class size in the early grades, provide after-school and summer school opportunities to 850,000 students, boost the percentage of classrooms with Internet access from 3 percent in 1993 to 65 percent today, support charter schools, and open the doors of college to all.

PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES A TOUR OF PROMISING SCHOOLS AND REFORM EFFORTS. Finally, the President today will announce that he will embark on a School Reform Tour in May. The President will visit schools across the country to highlight promising reform efforts where high standards are producing results and accelerating achievement. The tour will also highlight the challenges our schools must meet to give all children a world-class education – and the investments that are needed to help them address those challenges.

**Education
Q&A
April 13, 2000**

You should be aware of an ongoing controversy around Governor Barnes' education reform proposals, particularly his proposal to end teacher tenure. The major components of the Barnes plan are class size reduction in grades 1-3, more rigorous standards and assessments, and a plan to eliminate some procedural protections for new teachers. The politics around the testing proposal are analogous to other states; however, the proposal to end teacher tenure has set off a firestorm. Critics of the plan, including the Georgia affiliate of the NEA, have accused the Governor of "political grandstanding" and trying to blame low-test scores on dismissal rights.

Q: Here in Georgia, the Governor, the legislature, and the teachers' unions have been battling over the issue of teacher tenure, what is your view of this.

A: As I said today, we must invest more in education and demand more from our schools. Teachers are no exception to either part of that equation. Every teacher should be entitled to job protections like any other worker – and there should also be fast and fair ways to remove low-performing teachers or help them improve. My budget request to Congress this year included a \$50 million request for a higher standards-higher pay initiative that would raise teacher salaries and require teachers to participate in a rigorous peer review.

Q: You talked a lot about standards and assessments. As you know, in many places around the country, most recently in Massachusetts, students, teachers, and parents are growing increasingly concerned about the amount of testing going on in our schools. Do you think the standards movement has gone too far?

A: As the report I'm releasing today shows, our commitment to higher standards and real accountability is showing dividends for all students, particularly our most disadvantaged. I think that it is very important that we not lose sight of this. Well developed standards that are linked to a challenging curriculum and assessed by good tests are a key way that we can ensure that all students are getting the kind of education that they need. And when they don't, these assessments are a guide for us to intervene and help struggling students and schools get up to where they need to be. I can understand that some people think we're testing kids too much, but we should judge the standards movement by its success as a whole – particularly for disadvantaged students – rather than by isolated cases.

Q: In 1989 you went to Charlottesville with President Bush and set the nation on the course to standards and accountability. Recent articles in the press have portrayed Governor Bush as the heir to this progress rather than the Vice President. What is your view of this?

A: I really don't think that's the case. The Vice President has put forward a plan that focuses on both investing in what works and ensuring real accountability for results. The Vice President's plan includes funding for smaller classes, more extended learning

programs, modernizing schools, and increasing teacher quality. It also provides resources to fix failing schools, increase accountability, and help expand the charter schools movement. Governor Bush's plan, on the other hand, promotes through vouchers, which drain resources from public schools instead of reforming them, and he has proposed very little investment in what works for our students.

Q: Governor Bush has also characterized the past seven years as a stagnant time for education reform and blames your administration for this. How would you respond to that?

A: Again, that just isn't the case. As the report I'm releasing today shows, during the past seven years we have invested record amounts in our schools and also demanded more than ever before from them. Test scores are rising – even amongst our most disadvantaged students. More students are going to college. And overall, the belief has taken hold that we can reform our public schools instead of abandoning them through vouchers. I'm proud of the work my Administration has done and I think today's report is further evidence of our successes.

Q: As you know, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is up for reauthorization in the Congress right now. How do you see that playing out?

A: I'm disappointed in the work that has been done so far. Rather than invest in what works, increase accountability, and develop a bill that helps reform our schools, the majority in Congress has chosen to focus on gimmicks and politics. I have repeatedly called on Congress to send me an ESEA bill that I can sign, one that increases accountability, improves teacher quality, expands after school and summer school programs, continues the work of reducing class size, and increases access to technology for our students. I hope that as the Senate and the House finish their work on this important legislation in the coming weeks they address the shortcomings in the bills so far and send me legislation that I can sign.

Q: Senator Lieberman and 7 other New Democratic senators have introduced an education bill as an alternative to the Administration's ESEA proposal and the Republican block grant bill. What is your view of this bill?

A: As you know, I have worked with Senator Lieberman for years and have tremendous respect for him and his commitment on these issues. There are a lot of things in his education bill that I like – for example, its emphasis on accountability, targeting resources to the most disadvantaged students, public school choice and accountability. However, the consolidation of programs in the bill concerns me, I believe that we must continue to support programs for after-school and summer school and technology rather than folding them into larger programs. I look forward to working with Senator Lieberman, Senator Kennedy, and others as the process moves forward.

**PRESIDENT'S ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
TO TURN AROUND FAILING SCHOOLS ADOPTED IN FINAL BUDGET
November 18, 1999**

"States and school districts must turn around their worst-performing schools – or shut them down."

President Clinton

State of the Union Address – January 19, 1999

In an important step forward for educational accountability, the President's plan to help turn around low-performing schools has been included in the final budget agreement. Along with the many other strides to improve public education in this budget – such as \$1.3 billion to keep on track to hiring 100,000 quality teachers to reduce class size; \$450 million to more than double federal support to expand after-school programs; \$200 million to help disadvantaged students prepare for college; and increased funding for Title I, Hispanic education, educational technology, charter schools, and other important efforts, such as helping families pay for college – this accountability initiative will help strengthen the schools that need it most. It will set aside \$134 million to ensure that failing schools are held accountable for results.

TURNING AROUND LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS. In January, President Clinton called on states and districts to identify and turn around their worst-performing schools – or shut them down. The final budget agreement provides communities the resources to help do so. It targets \$134 million in new funds to districts with schools identified as low-performing under Title I. These are schools with the lowest achievement levels that have consistently failed to show improvement. Districts must use these resources for corrective strategies to improve the performance of these schools. The budget also includes a \$75 million increase in Title I base funding, for a total Title I increase of \$209 million over the Labor/HHS bill the President vetoed.

A STRATEGY THAT WORKS. The President's plan builds on the experience of local communities nationwide that have carried out these reforms to turn around their schools:

- North Carolina sent assistance teams into its 15 worst-performing elementary and middle schools in 1997. Within a year, 14 of these schools met state standards in reading and math. Students in North Carolina have made dramatic gains in educational achievement in recent years.
- The Miami-Dade School District identified 45 low-performing schools in 1995, and implemented an intensive three-year corrective action plan, including school-wide reading programs and improved technology. Last year, the district determined that all the schools had made progress and removed all 45 schools from the state's list of low-performing schools.

EXPANDING PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE. The final budget also includes a provision to give students in low-performing schools in districts that receive accountability funds, the option to transfer to another public school not identified for improvement, unless the school district can show the state that it does not have the capacity to provide all students that option.

PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT ON PLAN TO HIRE 100,000 HIGH-QUALITY TEACHERS TO REDUCE CLASS SIZE

November 11, 1999

PRESERVES PRESIDENT'S PLAN TO HIRE 100,000 TEACHERS OVER 6 YEARS TO REDUCE CLASS SIZE

- Late Wednesday, Congressional leaders and the White House reached an agreement in principle to preserve the President's plan to hire 100,000 teachers over the next 6 years to reduce class size in the early grades.
- The agreement provides at least \$1.3 billion in FY 2000, a 10% increase from \$1.2 billion in FY 1999.
- The Education Department estimates that communities are using the funds from last year's agreement to hire more than 29,000 teachers and reduce the average class size for 1.7 million children from 23 down to 18. With the funds in this new agreement, communities will be able to retain those 29,000 teachers; hire more teachers; and remain on track to hiring 100,000 teachers to reduce class size in the early grades to a nationwide average of 18 by the year 2005.

PROVIDES FOR MORE TEACHERS AND BETTER TEACHERS

- The agreement ensures that all teachers hired under the class size program must be fully qualified. Teachers must be certified in their state or have completed an alternative route to certification, must have a baccalaureate degree, and must know the subjects they're teaching and demonstrate the skills to teach them.
- School districts can spend up to 25% of the funds on training existing teachers, testing new teachers, and providing high-quality professional development to ensure that all teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach effectively.
- School districts with an exceptionally high percentage (more than 10%) of uncertified elementary school teachers have the flexibility to use additional funds to help those teachers meet certification standards in time for the 2001-02 school year.

PROVIDES LOCAL FLEXIBILITY FOR TEACHER TRAINING, NOT BLOCK GRANTS AND VOUCHERS

- Republicans abandoned their plan to turn the President's class size reduction program into a block grant. The agreement guarantees that funds must be used primarily to recruit, hire, and train teachers to reduce class size in the early grades.

- The bill the President vetoed did not guarantee a single dollar for class size reduction, and would even have allowed school districts to use the money for vouchers. Under the agreement, taxpayer dollars will go for smaller classes in public schools, not vouchers to private schools.
- Because the purpose of the program is smaller classes with qualified teachers, the agreement gives school districts the option to spend up to 25% of the funds on teacher training and testing of new teachers. This is an increase from 15% last year.

PRESERVES OTHER KEY ELEMENTS OF PRESIDENT'S PLAN

- The agreement preserves existing provisions to target funds to high-poverty communities, with 80% of funds allocated on the basis of poverty and 20% on the basis of population. This will ensure that children who stand to gain the most from smaller classes and better teachers will get them.
- The agreement continues to provide communities with flexibility to tailor class size reduction efforts to meet local needs and priorities.
- The agreement strengthens provisions to hold schools and districts accountable for results by reporting to parents on progress in reducing class size with fully qualified teachers.

PRESIDENT CLINTON HONORS BLUE-RIBBON SCHOOLS AND CALLS ON CONGRESS TO INVEST IN TARGETED STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE PUBLIC EDUCATION

October 27, 1999

In a speech today to parents, teachers and principals from award-winning elementary schools, President Clinton will underscore the Administration's strategy for improving public education by reducing class size, turning around failing schools and making other targeted investments in our children. Pointing to the world-class education that Blue Ribbon Schools provide, the President will remind Americans that the budget debate is not just about how much we spend on education but how wisely we spend it. Finally, he will emphasize that the current Republican appropriations bill undermines the improvements our nation's public schools need.

EXCELLENCE THROUGH SMALLER CLASSES AND MORE ACCOUNTABILITY. President Clinton today will call on Congress to support excellence in public education by investing in proven strategies for reform. As he honors the winners of the 1999 Blue Ribbon Schools Awards, the President will point out that targeting our education dollars -- on 100,000 highly-qualified teachers to reduce class sizes, and on turning around schools that are failing -- is the best way to achieve results.

Blue Ribbon Schools are tangible proof of the effectiveness of high standards, school accountability and targeted investment. These 266 schools from urban, rural and suburban communities in 37 states have demonstrated sustained success over time or have overcome obstacles to make significant advances in student achievement. The Blue Ribbon Schools Awards were established in 1982.

REPUBLICAN EDUCATION BILL FAILS MAKE THESE KEY INVESTMENTS IN WHAT WORKS.

President Clinton will note that the Republican appropriations bill shortchanges children and teachers by gutting the class size reduction initiative and failing to provide funds to turn around failing schools. The bill also underfunds after-school and summer school programs and underinvests in the recruitment and training of high-quality teachers. The President believes that the prosperity generated by years of fiscal discipline and the hard work of the American people should be invested wisely in their top priorities. Unfortunately, Republican plans continue to defy common sense and the public interest. The Republican education spending bill:

- Reneges on the class size reduction initiative that both parties agreed to last fall, and provides no guarantee that the 29,000 teachers hired for this year can continue teaching in smaller classes throughout the country. It also provides no funding for the additional 8,000 teachers the President's plan would support this year.
- Fails to hold low-performing schools accountable for results by not funding the President's plan for a \$200 million Title I accountability fund to fix schools identified as failing. The President believes that we must invest more in our schools and demand more from them. The current appropriations bill does not provide funding for turning around failing schools.
- Underfunds after-school and summer school programs, denying at least 800,000 students access to a safe place to learn during the after school hours when most juvenile crime and drug and alcohol abuse occur.
- Undercuts efforts to improve teacher quality, by shortchanging teacher quality and recruitment programs, and eliminating the successful Troops to Teachers program that enables retired military personnel to teach in high-need areas.
- Underinvests in the GEAR-UP program and in education technology, denying more than 130,000 disadvantaged young people the help they need to get into college, and undermining crucial investments in education technology.

Education Q & A
President's Speech to the National Board
October 22, 1999

Q: This morning, the President spoke to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. What did he talk about?

A: The President went to this conference to congratulate the National Board on its work of raising standards for the teaching profession as a way to improve teaching and raise student achievement. As the President noted, you can't build a system of world-class schools without world-class teachers. The President also called on Congress to pass a budget that makes strategic investments in education and accountability.

- getting 100,000 highly qualified teachers into the classroom to reduce class size and raise student achievement in the early grades,
- holding schools accountable for results, including a \$200 million set-aside to help states and school districts turn around failing schools, and
- helping students meet high standards by investing in after-school and summer school, the GEAR-UP program to help disadvantaged students prepare for and enter college, and his Hispanic Education Action Plan.

Q: Who is the National Board?

A: The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was founded in 1987. It conducts a system of national, voluntary certification for master teachers. The Board has set rigorous standards for the teaching profession with the goal of improving teaching, "professionalizing" the job of teaching and to push standards-based reform of teaching in the states. At present there are nearly 2000 certified teachers working in 27 states across the country.

Q: Yesterday, the House passed HR 2, the Students Results Act. Is the President prepared to sign the bill?

A: The President is very pleased that the House worked in a bipartisan spirit to craft a bill that reflects many of the priorities of his education reform plan, The Educational Excellence for All Children Act. He is pleased that this bill would continue standards-based reform, recognizes the importance of accountability, and emphasizes public school choice. And he was heartened that a bipartisan majority voted yesterday to reject the false promise of vouchers. But for this bill to work, we must ensure that it targets funds to our most disadvantaged students, strengthens accountability, invests in turning around our lowest-performing schools, and raises teacher quality. The President will work with Congress to

improve this bill as it moves forward.

Q: Was the President surprised that the proposed amendments on vouchers were defeated by fairly comfortable margins?

A: The President was pleased that the House took action to reject what he believes is the false promise of vouchers and to concentrate on providing quality educational services to public schools—where nine out of every ten students goes to school.

Q: Last night, the House passed HR 2300, the Straight A's bill. Does the Administration have a position on the bill as it was signed last night?

A: While the President is pleased by the bipartisan effort in the House to reauthorize ESEA, he is discouraged by the partisan gimmickry of "Straight A's" that would undo all of this work and harm our most disadvantaged students. This block grant bill would undercut both targeting and accountability in federal education programs. Limiting to 10 the number of states that would receive block grants doesn't address any of the key flaws in this bill, it simply limits to 10 the number of states in which poor children can be harmed by this gimmick. This bill fails to target funds to our neediest students and schools, contains almost no accountability for taxpayer dollars, and could in fact convert federal aid to our most needy schools into voucher schemes.

Education Q and A
Senate Labor/H Subcommittee Mark-Up
September 28, 1999

Q Last night the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education subcommittee marked up an appropriations bill. Does the Administration have an opinion on that bill?

A First, the bill is still a work in progress; the full committee will consider it this afternoon and so it is a little early to get into too much detail. But from what we know so far, while the bill is less partisan than the irresponsible one that the House Labor/H subcommittee passed last week it also fails to make adequate investments in key education priorities. Last year, we made a national bipartisan commitment to reduce class size in the early grades and it appears that this Senate bill, like the House Republican bill, walks away from that commitment. We can't hold students to high academic standards without giving them the tools to reach them and smaller classes in the early grades where students learn to read and master the basics are an essential tool. Along those same lines, the bill also fails to invest sufficiently in after-and-summer school programs, another proven strategy to raise student achievement nor does it set-aside money to turn around failing schools as the President has proposed and seriously neglects education technology. The President is committed to fixing failing schools and building a world-class public education system and investment and accountability are equally critical to that process.

Q On the aggregate it looks like this bill spends more on education than the President's budget. Shouldn't you all be happy about that?

A First, it is unclear how the Senate committee plans to pay for this bill. The President sent Congress a balanced budget that allowed for investment in key priorities while saving Social Security, strengthening Medicare, and paying down the debt. The President believes that fiscal discipline is a key component of the prosperity we are enjoying and is committed to maintaining this course. Second, the issue here is not dollars spent but rather how strategically those dollars are invested. That is why the President is committed to investing in proven strategies to raise student achievement through reducing class size in the early grades, supporting after-and-summer school programs and fixing failing schools. Obviously, the President is pleased that the Senate is acting more responsibly than House Republicans on education but he believes that if this bill does not adequately invest in reducing class size, expanding after-and-summer school programs, and fixing failing schools it will be unacceptable for our nation's children.
[Note: We are preparing a statement with a veto threat to release once the Senate markup is completed.]

Education Q & A
ESEA and Vouchers
September 28, 1999

Q: The *Washington Post* is reporting that draft legislation for Title I from the House Committee on Education and the Workforce does not include vouchers. Does the Administration have any comment on this?

A: The President is pleased that it appears the House Committee is moving away from the divisive and destructive policy of vouchers. The President is firmly against vouchers. He believes that the way to turn around failing schools and to improve all public schools—where 9 out of every 10 students go to school—is to raise standards and make them meaningful by ending social promotion, holding schools accountable for results, and providing the tools that students and schools need to succeed. Across the country, states and districts are proving that this strategy is effective. The President believes that vouchers drain scarce resources from the public schools in order to send select students to private schools while failing to address pressing needs. The President's plan proposes investing in schools and holding them accountable for results, not abandoning them. Vouchers move us in the wrong direction—away from accountability.

Q: Does the Administration support the House Committee's proposal to require school districts to allow disadvantaged students in failing schools to transfer to another public school?

A: We haven't actually seen the language of the House bill so it is difficult to comment on that. The President strongly supports public school choice, magnet schools, and charter schools which have grown in number from 1 to more than 1700 during the President's time in office. The President's proposal for ESEA reauthorization would allow districts to give students the option of transferring to a new school. The President's proposal also provides funds for swift intervention to turn around failing schools. The President believes that we must hold schools accountable and give them the tools they need to succeed.

Q: From your responses, it doesn't appear that the President supports Governor Bush's proposal to convert Title I dollars into vouchers for students at failing schools. Is that the case?

A: The President believes in accountability, standards and investment in our schools and students, not walking away from them. The President wants to work with Congress to reach an agreement on education legislation that will increase accountability and provide states and school districts with the tools to help them succeed rather than drain resources from the schools that need them most.

**Education/Gates Scholarship
Q&A
September 16, 1999**

Q: Today, Bill Gates pledged \$1 billion to fund full scholarships over the next 20 years for minority students in education, math, science and engineering. The program will seek to help a minimum of 1,000 high school students a year. Does the Administration have any views on this?

A: We applaud the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for their commitment to improving access to higher education. The Gates Millennium Scholarships will help address real needs – the need to create more incentives for young people to choose teaching as a profession, and the need to ensure that all our students are well-prepared in math and science. Our administration has worked hard to ensure that students in our nation's public schools get the skills they must have to succeed, and to make higher education affordable for all Americans through such programs as the Hope Scholarship and the Lifetime Learning Tax Credit. The Gates Scholarships remind us of the important part that philanthropies can play in support of these same goals.

Q: If you support private philanthropy to improve access to higher education, do you support private scholarships for students to attend private schools?

A: This Administration is committed to improving our public schools. We believe public dollars should go to improve public schools – the schools that 9 out of 10 children in America attend. That said, we certainly respect the right of private citizens to invest their funds as they see fit. This Administration is focused on improving public education.

PRESIDENT CLINTON RELEASES \$100 MILLION IN GRANTS TO SUPPORT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

August 28, 1999

In his weekly radio address, President Clinton announced that the U.S. Department of Education will distribute almost \$100 million in grants to support public charter schools. The awards include \$41 million in new grants and \$54 million in continuation grants. Charter schools are public schools founded by parents and teachers, and are open to all. In exchange for high levels of accountability for student achievement, they are given more autonomy and flexibility than traditional public schools in staffing decisions, curricula design and other areas.

INVESTING IN CHARTER SCHOOLS – INVESTING IN ACCOUNTABILITY

The grants that the President released today will help new charter schools cover the costs of planning, opening or expanding a new school. The money may be used to purchase materials and supplies, hire staff, and provide high-quality professional development for teachers. Public charter schools also use federal funds to develop accountability systems for student achievement that are aligned with state standards. This year, successful charter schools with at least three years of experience will also be able to use funds to share best practices with other schools or to help those starting new public charter schools learn from their experience.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S LEADERSHIP KEY TO GROWTH OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

When President Clinton was first elected, there was only one public charter school operating in the United States. This year, according to the U.S. Department of Education, more than 1700 public charter schools will be operating. Federal leadership and assistance has played a key role in this rapid growth by supporting the development and growth of individual public charter schools and helping to disseminate effective practices and strategies among schools. Thirty-six states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia now have laws on the books that enable the creation of charter schools.

CHARTER SCHOOLS: IMPROVING PUBLIC EDUCATION AND EMPOWERING PARENTS

- **Public charter schools exemplify a standards-based approach to education.** Every charter school works with a public authority to establish clear performance standards. A charter school that fails to meet the terms of its charter is closed down. The federal grant program for charter schools, which was reauthorized with the President's leadership in 1998, gives priority to states that have strong standards of academic accountability. Charter schools receiving funding from the federal government must also be measured by the same state assessments as any other public school.
- **Public school choice empowers parents and helps build a public school system that meets the individual needs of every student.** States and school districts around the country are using public charter schools, inter-district choice options, and other innovations to offer parents and children high-quality and well-tailored educational options. Surveys find high levels of support and satisfaction among parents of public charter school students. A recent national survey found that 65 percent of parents rated their child's public charter school as better than their former public school (only 6 percent rated them worse). The U.S. Department of Education reports that seven out of ten charter schools have a waiting list of students who want to enroll.

Education
Question and Answers
July 27, 1999

Q: The Republicans are arguing that the President is being dishonest about the impact of their tax plan on Medicare, Social Security, and the kind of investments in education that the President described today. Are the kinds of cuts the President announced today real?

The President announced Administration estimates about the very real long-term impact of the Republican budget and tax plans on vital investments in education. Under the Republican budget and tax plan, this nation could be forced --in the tenth year alone of the Republican tax cut -- to deny nearly 6 million students in high-poverty communities extra support under the Title I program; and deny millions more students the opportunity to enroll in Head Start programs, learn to read well by the end of the third grade, attend after-school programs, and afford college. Even if the Republican tax cuts were scaled back so much that not a dollar was squeezed out of education spending, their plan still wouldn't provide adequately for our schools. The President's tax proposal includes support to help build and modernize 6000 public schools, while the Republican tax cut only marginally addresses the needs of one tenth that many.

Are these cuts in education real? They are -- *if* we take the Republicans at their word about the size of their tax cuts already approved in the House, they keep defense spending at least at the levels requested by the President, and pay down debt as much as they promise. Either these cuts are real, or the Republicans are playing risky games with numbers that don't add up on the serious national question of how to use the surplus.

Q: Republicans are questioning the Administration's use of such specific estimates when the Republican budget and tax plans give no specific indication of which programs will be cut. Where did these estimates come from?

The President believes that this is a time to enact a responsible tax plan targeted to help communities modernize schools and help families finance their retirement, child care, and long-term care while saving Social Security and Medicare, and leaving room for vital investments in education and defense. But the reckless Republican tax plan -- costing \$800 billion over the next ten years and a staggering \$3 trillion over the next 20 years -- would squeeze funding away from such priorities as education. That's why the President asked OMB to calculate the impact this bill would have on key education programs. OMB's calculations assume that Congress allocates nearly \$800 billion to tax cuts over the next ten years, and that it also funds defense at the Administration's requested level and pays down the debt as much as Republicans promise. Given these assumptions, domestic discretionary programs must be cut by roughly half from current funding levels. OMB assumed that the spending cuts required by the tax cut would be spread evenly across discretionary programs to calculate the estimates of specific education cuts released today. The point is that the Republican budget and tax plans simply do not leave room for the vital investments we need to make in education if we are to prepare all of our people for the 21st century.

Q: Last week, the House approved 239-185 (including 24 Democrats) legislation to provide flexibility to states and school districts in allocating funds among several purposes: recruiting new teachers, training current teachers, reducing class size. Why has the President threatened to veto this bill?

A: Last year, Congress came together across party lines to enact a down payment on the President's plan to hire 100,000 well-prepared teachers to reduce class size in the early grades to a nationwide average of 18. The President has repeatedly called on them to honor and build on that commitment this year, but the Republican legislation approved last week would kill the class size initiative and replace it with a program that denies adequate funding to the communities that need it most and doesn't guarantee that one red cent will go to hiring a single teacher to reduce the size of a single class. Their approach makes little sense when research shows what parents and teachers have long known: smaller classes make an important difference for our students, especially for our students in greatest need.

The President has already sent Congress a plan that would build on progress to further reduce class size, improve teacher quality, and raise standards and strengthen accountability in our public schools, and he is eager to work with Congress to enact sensible legislation to achieve all of these important purposes. That's why he supported a Democratic measure offered by Representative Martinez last week, supported by 207 members of Congress (including 3 Republicans), to authorize \$3.5 billion to ensure smaller classes in the early grades and improved teaching across America, while targeting funding to high-poverty school districts and providing school districts great flexibility to use these resources effectively. Our children shouldn't have to choose between smaller classes and better teachers – we can and must give them both.

Q: A Washington Post article yesterday suggested -- other than the importance of Democrats seeking to target resources to low-income communities and children -- that the differences between the Democratic and Republican approaches to education might be fairly minimal at this point. Have the Republicans neutralized the President and Democrats' longstanding dominance on the education?

A: The substantive question here, an important one for the American people, is how we are going to strengthen our schools and prepare all of our people to succeed in the 21st century? The President has made education a top priority, making the largest investment in education in 30 years, opening the doors of college to all, working with Congress to enact a down payment on his plan to hire 100,000 teachers to reduce class size all across America. This year, he has proposed an ambitious and specific agenda to help finish the job on hiring those 100,000 teachers, build and modernize 6000 public schools, strengthen accountability in public schools and raise standards for students, teachers, and schools. The President wants to work with both parties on behalf of America's children and schools.

Now, the Republican party that tried to eliminate the Education Department has been talking more about education, but what have they actually done? Last week, the Republicans passed a bill to end the bipartisan national effort to reduce class size in the early grades just when a

growing body of research has shown smaller classes have lasting positive effects on student achievement. Now, they are voting for enormous, risky tax cuts that would squeeze out funding for vital investments in modern school buildings, better reading skills, expanded after-school programs, Head Start, access to college and the list goes on. These actions do not suggest that Republicans are prepared to exercise leadership and work with the President to address his challenges on strengthening our nation's schools.

Q: Senator Coverdell may try to offer an amendment to the Senate tax bill a measure that would allow parents to withdraw funds from an IRA tax-free to pay expenses for K-12 students who attend public, private or parochial schools or who are taught at home. Last year, the President vetoed a similar measure. What is the administration's position?

We don't yet know if Republicans are going to offer this measure again. But this measure would have little practical benefit for the vast majority of our nation's students that are enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools. Public schools serve approximately 90 percent of students in grades K-12 and currently face record-breaking enrollments. Rather than siphoning funds away from public schools, the President believes a tax cut should be targeted to build and modernize schools and leave enough funding for all of the other education priorities he is discussing today to ensure that all children get a high-quality education. This bill's predecessors offered by Senator Coverdell would have negligible benefits for the vast majority of American families -- last year's bill provided an average tax return benefit of only \$7 to taxpayers with children in public schools and \$37 to taxpayers with children in private schools. Moreover, these measures would disproportionately benefit affluent families and provides little benefit to middle- and lower- income families.

Q: The Republicans appear to be saying, we're for education, we're just for more local control. They say the President is coming out against local control and flexibility for school districts and states. What is your response?

A: The real debate here is whether we are going to make the serious investments at the national level in education, and take aggressive steps to improve our schools. As a former Governor, President Clinton respects that education is a state and local responsibility. But he also believes that our nation has a stake in educating all of our people, and that we should make investments and advocate reforms at the national level to improve our schools. The President's agenda combines dramatic new investments in our schools, efforts to strengthen accountability and raise standards for schools, teachers, and students, and real flexibility in how funds are spent in order to help all students --- particularly those in greatest need -- succeed.

Q&A's on Bilingual Education
June 8, 1998

Q: What is your reaction to the passage of Proposition 227 in California?

A. The most important message coming from voters in California is that we have to make sure that students, particularly those who are immigrants or children of immigrants, learn English as quickly as possible. I agree with that message, though I disagree with the particular approach in Proposition 227.

I opposed the Unz Initiative because it is the wrong way to accomplish this goal. The one-year time limit is simply too short for many students, and the one-size-fits all approach will limit the ability of local communities and schools to choose the best approaches for our children.

But the status quo is not acceptable either. That is why I believe we must set a goal of helping students learn English within 3 years, give our schools the flexibility and assistance necessary to meet that goal, and hold them accountable if they fail to do so.

Q. How do you explain that so many Latinos in California voted for Prop 227 in spite of your opposition?

A. Many Latino parents are dissatisfied with the educational opportunities available to their children -- as they should be. Many feel that it takes too long for their children to master English. That is why we have called for strengthening bilingual programs by increasing funding for bilingual teachers and by establishing a three year goal for all children to move into all-English classes. We believe this approach is preferable to Proposition 227.

Q. Will you support legislation currently in Congress (the Riggs bill) to overhaul the federal bilingual education program?

A. I oppose the Riggs bill. Among other problems, its requirement that every child be placed in regular English-language classes within 2 years is too inflexible and will stand in the way of all students learning English. In addition, the bill eliminates federal support for teacher training and interferes with the enforcement of existing civil rights laws. Efforts to strengthen the federal bilingual education program should instead (1) set a goal for students to learn English within 3 years; (2) hold schools accountable for results; (3) provide local flexibility for determining how best to achieve results; and (4) make the necessary investments in providing qualified teachers. I will send legislation to Congress fully consistent with these principles at an appropriate time.

Q: Will the Administration join those who are planning to bring legal action to stop the implementation of Proposition 227?

A. We are not at this time joining in legal challenges to Proposition 227. The Departments of Justice and Education will carefully monitor the educational programs that are put in place under the proposition to ensure that they comply with the civil rights laws. We will keep a close watch on how the programs are implemented and whether children with limited English proficiency are provided a realistic opportunity to succeed academically.

**Q&A on National School Safety Training Program
for Teachers and Educational Personnel
June 4, 1999**

Q: What did the President announce with respect to school safety?

A: Today the President announced a major nationwide public/private partnership with the National Education Association (NEA), EchoStar, and other partners to improve school safety. The partnership, which includes the Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services, will create and run a comprehensive program that will be available at the beginning of the new school year with the goal of reaching every school across the country and providing training to teachers, school personnel, and community members on how to improve school safety. The partnership will provide both lesson plans for educational and community members working to make schools safer and the technology for schools to receive the new materials.

Q: How many training sessions will there be, and what are their topics?

A: Beginning in October of this year, there will be at least 10 training sessions. In its first event in October of this year, the partnership will host a training session at which teachers and school personnel can learn about identifying warning signs of troubled kids and what resources they have to help those children. In addition to the first session focusing on helping troubled children, topics for future meetings include discussion of common sense school security measures; school mental health services; programs addressed to isolated and stigmatized students; safe school plans; assistance in creating partnerships between schools and persons in the community, including law enforcement and other local organizations; and outreach to parents and community involvement.

Q: How will the training sessions work?

A: The partnership plans to transmit the training to school districts that will then be able to distribute the material by videotape to local schools and hold hands-on training sessions with teachers, educational personnel, and community participants, including law enforcement. In order to make sure school districts have the technology to receive the new materials, the satellite company EchoStar, which is based in Littleton, Colorado, and its partner Future View, Inc., are donating satellite dishes to 1000 school districts and 40 hours of free time for programming.

Q: What are the Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services contributing to this partnership?

A: The Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services will participate in this public-private partnership by providing funding and other

resources to develop at least three training sessions; assisting in the distribution of any materials; providing technical assistance in developing lesson plans; making government experts available for training sessions; and working with NEA, EchoStar, and the other partners to make sure that the resources and the goals of this initiative are coordinated in order to facilitate outreach to schools.

Q: How does this fit in with other efforts the Administration has made in the area of school safety?

A: This proposal builds on other efforts the President has made in the area of school safety. The Administration's revamped Safe and Drug-Free Schools proposal contains a number of new initiatives to help keep our schools safer, more disciplined, and drug-free. The safe schools proposal will require counseling for students who bring guns and bombs to school, promote programs that educate students on the risks associated with firearms, provide more school counselors to help deal with troubled youth, and inform parents when guns are brought to school. This proposal also promotes more orderly and disciplined classrooms by allowing more education funds to be spent on alternative schools for disruptive youth, and character education to help instill common sense values in our young people.

This proposal also provides more effective prevention programs for the reduction of drugs and violence in schools, more accountability for results, and better targeting to those schools that need the most assistance. Under the revamped program, school districts will be expected to develop plans that: require schools to adopt comprehensive school safety plans, use proven anti-drug and violence prevention programs, establish security procedures for schools, and give parents an annual school report of incidents of drug use and violence. In addition, the Administration's safe schools initiative would create Project SERV--the School Emergency Response to Violence --to dispatch a coordinated FEMA-like response if a school tragedy should occur.

But whole communities need to get involved with keeping our schools safe. That is why the Administration created a new \$380 million program, the Safe Schools-Healthy Students initiative, to establish community-wide responses to school safety. Our initiative will give communities funds to provide comprehensive services for our young people, such as mental health services, school resource officers, mentoring, and after school programs.

Youth violence is a problem that government cannot solve alone. That is why the Administration called for the creation of a national campaign to reduce youth violence. This campaign will work at the grass-roots level with all sectors of our society -- the media, education groups, parents, religious leaders, and young people -- to focus on this problem, find what is working, and spread it to new communities.

Education Q&A
April 21, 1999

Q: Today Ted Forstmann of the Children's Scholarship Fund is announcing the winners of a lottery for \$170 million in scholarships for 40,000 kids from low-income families to attend private or parochial schools. Does the President support this action?

A: The Administration's objection to vouchers has always been over the use of federal funds, not local funds and certainly not private money. The President applauds the involvement of private citizens and organizations in promoting good education, and urges that we all work together to focus on strengthening the public schools that serve nearly 90% of students and on expanding choice within the public education system, such as through charter schools.

Q: Many people are citing the 1.25 million applications received as a sign that parents feel the public education system is failing their children and as a victory for school voucher advocates. If vouchers are supported by so many parents, why does the President continue to oppose their use?

A: Publicly funded vouchers would siphon critical dollars from neighborhood public schools -- which serve nearly 90% of our children and are already short on resources -- in order to send a few selected students to private schools, and would distract attention from the hard work of reform needed to change failing schools into good schools and good schools into outstanding schools.

The President agrees that no child deserves to get a second class education. Where schools are failing, local and state education officials must step in and redesign them, or close them down and reopen them with new, more effective leadership and staff who will raise standards, put into place effective reforms, and create safe, disciplined learning environments where students can succeed.

Q: Some argue that vouchers are vital to help children escape ineffective, dangerous schools. What is the Administration's response to that?

A: The President's opposition to vouchers is based more on what happens to students who do not participate in a voucher program than on what may happen to the few who do. The fact is that 90% of our students attend public schools, and our primary responsibility, especially with limited federal resources, is to make sure that the public schools they attend are among the best in the world. This means concentrating our time and money on raising academic standards, improving teaching, providing schools with technology and other up-to-date learning tools, and creating charter schools and other forms of choice within the public school system. That is why the President is sending legislation to

Congress with tough accountability provisions that will require states to identify failing schools and take the tough measures necessary to redesign them, by putting in place high standards, quality teachers, and safe learning environments. Vouchers only drain financial resources and energy away from our most important task -- improving our public schools.

Education Q&A
April 21, 1999

Q: House Republicans said yesterday that they would try to get a \$1 billion increase in the Federal Pell Grant loan program this year. Does the President support this proposed increase?

A: The President welcomes any discussion of increased funding for critical education programs including Pell Grants, however he is concerned that House Republicans have not explained how they would pay for this increase. Most likely, it would mean disastrous cuts in other programs for children. Despite the fact that the budget resolution passed by the Majority last week fell \$2.9 billion below the President's request for spending on education and training, this week they propose an increase in Pell Grants that could only be supported at the expense of other important education initiatives.

In contrast, the President's balanced budget plan is fully paid for and makes needed investments in improving our children's education at every level –preschool, elementary, high school and college. We cannot pit one group of students and interests against another when all need our support to help them succeed in the 21st century.

National Teacher of the Year Q&A's
April 19, 1999

Q: What is the President announcing today?

A: The President is honoring the 1999 National Teacher of the Year, and recognizing the State Teachers of the Year in a ceremony in Presidential Hall. Started in 1952, the National Teacher of the Year continues as the oldest and most prestigious national honors program that focuses public attention on excellence in teaching. Co-sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers and Scholastic Magazine, the National Teacher of the year is chosen from among the State Teachers of the Year by a national selection committee representing the major education organizations. The 1999 National Teacher of the Year, Andrew Baumgartner, a kindergarten teacher from Augusta, Georgia, will spend the year traveling nationally and internationally as a spokesperson for the teaching profession. Fifty-five State Teachers of the Year including DOD schools, Guam, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia will be represented at today's ceremony.

Q: When will the Administration propose the Education Accountability Act that the President referenced in his remarks?

In the next few weeks we hope to transmit our proposal to Congress to strengthen accountability in our nation's schools.

Q. Is it appropriate for the federal government to be mandating reforms like ending social promotion and ending the use of unqualified teachers?

A. As a former governor, the President believes that states and localities must have primary responsibility for education and must have the flexibility to decide what to teach and how to teach it. But he also believes that it's appropriate -- and imperative -- to hold states and school districts that receive federal funds accountable for results. A growing number of states, cities, and schools are implementing these reforms. They are, almost without exception, the places making the biggest student achievement gains. The President's proposal will ensure that all our children reap the rewards of strengthened accountability measures, and he is committed to securing the resources necessary to support states and districts as they undertake these critical steps.

Q. How much progress is being made on the President's class size reduction initiative to hire 100,000 teachers?

A. Last year the President proposed a 7-year, \$12.4 billion proposal to reduce class size to a national average of 18, by hiring 100,000 additional teachers over seven years. In the FY 1999 appropriations bill, Congress provided \$1.2 billion -- \$100 million more than the President asked for -- enough money to hire approximately 30,000 teachers. Now we

must continue the effort. In his FY 2000 budget, the President is asking for \$1.4 billion -- an additional \$200 million -- which will enable communities to continue to pay for the initial 30,000 teachers, and hire an additional 8,000 teachers. This gradual phase in will keep us on the path to 100,000 additional teachers in seven years, as originally proposed by the President. And we are especially pleased that the Conference Committee working on the Ed-Flex bill has agreed to drop a provision in the Senate Ed-Flex bill that would have allowed communities to opt out of class size reductions.

Q: Given the situation in Kosovo and the increase in regional conflicts around the world, it seems like a poor time to be introducing an initiative that would draw people out of the military. Doesn't the Troops to Teachers proposal undermine efforts to maintain military readiness?

A. The President's proposal would provide financial support only for *retiring* military personnel -- i.e., those military personnel who are already planning to leave the military and are now deciding what to do after they leave the military. While the original Troops to Teachers program had also provided incentives for those who left the military early to become a teacher, so as to accelerate downsizing efforts, the President's proposal provides benefits only to those who would be retiring anyway. With the changing needs of the military, this program has changed as well, but continues to help retiring military personnel, as well as to serve the needs of our schools.

Education Q&A's
April 13, 1999

Q: Recent test scores and reports indicate that states are making headway in undertaking school reforms. If states are already implementing accountability measures, why are you proposing to require them as a matter of federal policy?

A. States and school districts have made great progress in raising academic standards, but not all of them are taking the steps necessary to ensure that schools, teachers, and students meet these high standards. Too many schools in depressed communities still fail to give disadvantaged children the tools they need to break their way out of poverty. Too many public school students still move from grade-to-grade without having mastered the basics. And too many of our teachers aren't appropriately prepared to teach the subjects they're assigned to.

For example, only 26 states require students to pass high school graduation exams, and far fewer have policies preventing unprepared students from being promoted. Only 19 states have policies in place to intervene in low performing schools and take responsibility for turning them around. And every year, approximately 50,000 individuals teach on "emergency" certificates, which means that they do not meet the standards states themselves have set for beginning teachers.

We need to do better than this. We need to take the education reforms that some states and cities are showing produce the best results -- turning around failing schools, phasing out the use of unqualified teachers, ending social promotion while providing extra support to help students achieve -- and spread those reforms throughout the nation. I have probably supported more state options for more policies than any President in history -- but I can't think of one good reason why continuing social promotion or ignoring failing schools or hiring unqualified teachers ought to be an option for states or anybody else. My proposal will ensure that states and school districts adopt proven and effective accountability measures that will help to lift student achievement in every public school and close the opportunity gap by giving special attention to disadvantaged students.

Q. Is it appropriate for the federal government to be mandating reforms like ending social promotion and ending the use of unqualified teachers?

A. I believe, as strongly as I did when I was a governor, that states and localities must have primary responsibility for education and must have the flexibility to decide what to teach and how to teach it. But I also believe it's appropriate -- and imperative -- to hold schools that receive federal funds accountable for their results. We should invest in what works and not in what doesn't. We should put into place the accountability measures that study after study show produce results and increase student achievement. A growing number of states, cities, and schools are implementing these reforms. They are, almost without exception, the places

making the biggest student achievement gains. My proposal will ensure that all our children reap the rewards of strengthened accountability measures, and I am committed to securing the resources necessary to support states and districts as they undertake these critical steps.

Q. Will states that decline to adopt these policies lose their share of federal education funds?

A. We fully expect that states will adopt these accountability mechanisms, just as they have complied with the current law's requirements to adopt academic standards and measure student performance. Governors of both parties, state and local school superintendents, and other educators know that these reforms work, and many are implementing them already. So we do not expect to face compliance problems. But if we do, we will take steps to ensure compliance and, in the last resort, we will withhold some or all federal money. We cannot continue to invest in failing educational systems. That would be cheating American taxpayers -- and cheating our children.

Q. Are you concerned that a requirement to end social promotion will lead to an increase in retention rates, especially for minority youngsters?

A. I believe that when a "no social promotion" policy is done fairly, it helps all students -- particularly minority and disadvantaged students. We have to insist on high standards and we have to give students the assistance they need to meet these standards -- including early intervention, reduced class size, more training for teachers, and extended learning time. I am committed to securing resources to help states take these steps and provide extra help to students who need it. My FY 2000 budget asks Congress for \$1.4 billion to continue on the path to hire 100,000 teachers to reduce class size in the early grades; \$600 million to fund summer and after-school programs; \$200 million to help states turn around their lowest-performing schools; and a sixfold increase in college scholarships for students who commit to teach in inner cities, isolated rural areas, and Indian communities. With these kinds of investments, we should be able to set high standards and expect all students to meet them.

Q: Recent reports suggest that Florida is about to pass the first statewide program offering vouchers for private school tuition to students whose public schools fail to meet state standards. Do you support this policy?

A: We need to focus our attention and resources on strengthening the public schools that serve nearly 90% of students -- and especially on fixing failing public schools. Vouchers siphon critical dollars from neighborhood public schools that are already short on resources in order to send a few selected students to private schools. Rather than abandon public schools, we should improve them. That is why I am sending legislation to Congress with tough accountability provisions that will require states to identify failing schools and take the tough measures necessary to redesign them, by putting in place high standards, quality teachers, and safe learning environments.

Q: Will you veto the Ed-Flex bill over the class size issue?

A. Yes, although I am hopeful that the Conference Committee will drop the provision in the Senate bill to allow communities to opt out of class size reductions. We are working with the many legislators in both the House and Senate who support class size reduction to reverse the Senate's unfortunate vote, and we are confident we will succeed. Last year, Congress made a bipartisan commitment to help local school districts reduce class size in the early grades -- when children learn to read and master the basics. Congress should not retreat from that commitment now, and it certainly should not put this good education flexibility bill in jeopardy by attempting to revoke class size reduction.

For-Profit Schools Qs & As
April 7, 1999

Q: The Washington Post is reporting that the Edison Project -- currently the largest for-profit venture into public education -- is reporting a substantial increase in their students' achievement test scores. According to the Post, Edison students' scores rose by six percentage points in a year, while the national increase was less than one percentage point. Does the Administration support this for-profit approach to public education?

A: The President supports innovative approaches to raising standards, expanding choice and strengthening accountability in public education. We are very open to local school districts or boards of public charter schools contracting with for-profit firms, as long as those schools focus on raising standards for all students, use taxpayer dollars responsibly and are truly held accountable to the public. We are always pleased to see improvements in public schools -- and believe this report is consistent with trends of increasing test scores in many public schools and districts across the nation.

Ed-Flex Q&A
February 17, 1999

Q. Will you support an Ed-Flex bill when it comes to the Senate floor later this month?

A. I have long supported the Ed-Flex concept, but I would strongly prefer to see Congress consider this bill as part of the overall reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, rather than as a freestanding bill.. This would ensure that Ed-Flex is designed to fit the federal education programs of the next five years, rather than the last five years. If Congress does take up Ed-Flex prior to ESEA reauthorizaation, I will insist that it is consistent with my approach to ESEA and that it include tough accountability measures. It is essential that an Ed-Flex provision strike the right balance between flexibility and accountability for results. In addition, I will support efforts to take up other parts of my education agenda at the same time -- particularly my proposal to reduce class size. We must not let a good but relatively minor measure to reduce regulatory burdens distract us from the more important effort of improving the in-class education of our children.

Education Q&A
January 22, 1999

Q: The New York Times today reports on studies that show that ending social promotion is harmful to students because it leads to higher retention rates, which in turn leads to more failure and an increased likelihood of dropping out. Doesn't this suggest that the President's proposal to end social promotion is ill conceived and likely to harm rather than help students.

A. No. The President is not proposing to hold more students back, and he rejects the argument that the only options for students who do not measure up is to pass them along to the next grade anyway, or to hold them back and make them repeat the same failed experience again. The same NY Times story also cites studies showing that promoting students who do not meet academic standards is a harmful practice, and the President is proposing to end that practice and to help more students meet promotion standards on time.

The President's proposal calls on states and school districts to set clear promotion standards and to implement the steps that we know are necessary, and will work, to help students meet those standards. In particular, the President's proposal calls on states and school districts to strengthen learning opportunities in the classroom, with clear standards, smaller classes with well prepared teachers, and the use of proven teaching practices. It calls for identifying students who need extra help early, and giving them the help they need, including through tutors, after-school and summer-school programs. Further, the President's budget includes funding to help states, school districts and schools take these very steps, including a tripling of funding for after-school and summer-school programs from \$200 million in FY 1999 to \$600 million in FY 2000, a \$200 million increase in funding (to \$1.4 billion) to reduce class size by beginning to hire 100,000 new teachers, funding for his America Reads program that will help train teachers in effective ways to teach reading and will provide tutors to students who need extra help and a new \$200 million initiative to help states and school districts turn around low-performing schools.

**Q&A for 1/7 Education Event
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Q. You have proposed increasing this fund from \$40 million to \$600 million in a two-year period. Is this huge increase warranted?

A. Today, there is an overwhelming demand for after-school programs. Over 28 million school-age children have both parents or their only parent in the workforce. At least 5 million children -- and possibly as many as 15 million -- are left alone at home each week. Experts agree that school-age children who are unsupervised during the hours after school are far more likely to use alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, commit crimes, receive poor grades, and drop out of school than those who are involved in supervised, constructive activities. Statistics also show that most juvenile crime takes place between the hours of 2 and 8 pm, and that children are also at much greater risk of being the victim of crime during the hours after school. The nationwide demand for expanded after-school programs has made the 21st Century Community Learning Center program one of the most highly competitive programs ever managed by the U.S. Department of Education. In the Education Department's last completed grant competition for this program, the Department received nearly 2,000 applications, requesting more than \$550 million to fund programs in over 6,000 schools in every state in the nation.

Q. How do you know whether these after-school programs are effective?

A. Last year the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice released a report, "*Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Count*," that documented the effectiveness of quality after-school and summer programs. The report shows that quality after-school and summer programming can make a difference in student safety and achievement, students' test scores, their attendance, and their behavior. They can also keep kids from experimenting with risky behaviors, such as alcohol, drug, and tobacco use. After-school programs are not only good for education, they make sense to the American public.

Q. What is social promotion?

A. "Social promotion" means allowing students to continue to pass through school with their peers regardless of whether or not the students meet academic standards.

Q. How much of the funds for this program are going to go to districts that end social promotion?

A. The 21st Century Community Learning Center program distributes funds through a grants process. As part of that process, school districts that end social promotion will receive a priority in the grant awards. Because we do not know how many applicants will have a policy to end social promotion, we will not know until the grants are awarded exactly how

much money will go to these schools.

Q. If the President believes ending social promotion is so important, why not make this a condition of funds for school districts that receive 21st Century Community Learning Center grants?

A. New legislation would be required to condition all after-school money on a policy to end social promotion. By contrast, no new legislation is needed to do what the President is doing today: making clear that schools with a policy to end social promotion will get priority in the grants process. The President may propose new legislation on this issue as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Q. Won't efforts to raise standards and end social promotion end up hurting disadvantaged students?

A. On the contrary, it is the current policies of social promotion and retention that are hurting disadvantaged students. The results of these policies are unacceptably high dropout rates, especially for poor and minority students, and inadequate knowledge and skills for students. We can best assist disadvantaged children if we end these practices and give students the tools they need to meet high standards, including extended learning time -- particularly after-school and summer school -- for children who need extra help and access to the highest quality teachers.

Education Q&A's
October 26, 1998

Q. The Omnibus Appropriations bill included \$1.2 billion in funding for your initiative to hire 100,000 teachers. Yet this will only hire approximately 30,000 teachers, and only provides the funding for one year. Haven't you overstated how big a victory this has been for your Administration.

A. This is clearly a major victory for the Administration, and for young students and their parents. The class size reduction program in the omnibus bill is nearly the same as the one I proposed in my FY 1999 budget. They both:

- are designed to reduce class size in the early grades to a national average of 18
- will help local schools recruit and hire additional teachers
- provide funds to make sure teachers are well trained
- target funds on the neediest districts, where research shows class size reductions will have the greatest impact
- get the funds to local school districts and not to federal or state bureaucracies
- require annual school report cards to parents and the public on student achievement and class size

The plan I submitted to Congress in my FY 1999 budget called for hiring 100,000 additional teachers -- the number needed to reduce class size in grades 1-3 to an average of 18 -- over seven years. The funding provided in the omnibus bill will enable local communities to hire more than 30,000 additional teachers, approximately the same as in my original proposal. Now that the Congress has made this large commitment of resources, I do not believe it will want to pull the rug out from under communities that will just be beginning to lower class size. Next year, I will work with the Congress to ensure that this program remains on track toward the goal of 100,000 teachers.