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Gore
2000

**The Gore Agenda:
Revolutionizing American Education
in the 21st Century**

***"Education must
become not just a
period in our lives
but a way of life in
the 21st Century."***

- Al Gore



Des Moines, IA - May 15, 1999

Al Gore will strengthen our families with a program of revolutionary change in education. He will build on and extend the aggressive efforts since 1993 to improve our schools through higher standards, extra help to students who need it the most, and equal access to higher education. But he will also go farther - much farther - in bringing change to our schools.

His new agenda for 21st century education includes:

**Making pre-school
available to every child**

**Grants to enable every state to develop
and expand pre-school programs**

**Fundamentally changing
the American high school**

**Smaller schools and "schools within
schools"**

**Smaller classes - 18 students per
teacher in the early grades and 20
students per teacher in the upper
grades**

**Principals empowered, advised by
teachers, to hire their staff
(regardless of seniority) and to
manage their budget**

**Improving teacher
quality and elevating
the teaching profession**

**21st Century Teachers Corps to reward
college students who choose to teach in
schools that need their help**

**Turning around
failing schools**

**Required aggressive plans to turn
around failing schools, with
accountability for results and
incentives for success**

Rigorous tests of knowledge and teaching skills for all new teachers before they enter the classroom Mentors and professional support for new teachers Tough standards for licensing or tenure, with evaluations by teams of accomplished teachers and administrators Rigorous but fair performance evaluations after the granting of a teaching license Fast but fair procedures for identifying, helping, and when necessary removing low-performing teachers Good teachers rewarded, with bonuses to master teachers, to teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and to teachers in schools that have shown improved student performance	Reformed curricula that work for low-achieving students More public school choice for parents Expanded summer school for failing students Intensified efforts to reduce Hispanic dropout rates Using technology to improve our educational productivity Every classroom and library wired to the Information Superhighway Enhanced teacher training in technology New educational software for all schools Carefully screened volunteer army of on-line tutors and mentors
Adopting a new focus on discipline, character, values, safety, and parental involvement Zero tolerance for guns Second chance schools where students with serious problems can get help Increased commitment to after-school care Codes of discipline and required meetings on the first day of school for parents, teachers and their students to sign this code Civic and character education in every school Family and Medical Leave Act extended to cover the first day of school and subsequent parent-teacher conferences	Savings plans and tax cuts to make college and job training more affordable National Tuition Savings program tying together state tuition programs in more than 30 states with a goal of all states participating in a program that would allow parents to save for college tax free and use those savings in participating states New 401-J accounts where employers help employees save tax free for lifelong learning for the employee and his or her spouse, or a child's college education

"Let us renew education to renew opportunity."

Al Gore believes that strengthening our families begins with bringing revolutionary change in education. The new stresses on modern family life, the changing economy that puts a premium on education, and the growth of the largest generation of children in American history all demand we make the next decade America's education decade.

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Governor George W. Bush - No Child Left Behind

Latin Business Association Luncheon September 2, 1999

It is good to be with you – with men and women who are building the new economy of California.

We are witnessing a Latino economic miracle – un milagro economico. There

are now 440,000 Latino businesses in Southern California. They generate \$47 billion in sales each year. Latino businesses are the largest and fastest growing part of the small business community in this region. When half of the new businesses in Los Angeles are Latino-owned, this is no longer a niche market. It is the mainstream of our economic hopes.

This marks a new era – a permanent revolution – in California, and in many other places, including my state of Texas. An era in which the Latino market will demand the attention of our whole economy. An era in which our prosperity is as broad and diverse as our nation. This community has saved and worked and struggled. And now it has arrived.

The health of the Latino business community is reflected in the health and growth of this organization – the largest association of Latino entrepreneurs in the state. The Latin Business Association is doing well, and it is also doing good work by helping other entrepreneurs realize their dreams.

I am here with you today because you are leaders and because you embody the permanent hope, the durable dream, of this nation: to build a better life for ourselves and our children.

I am an optimist. I believe that the next century will be a time of incredible prosperity – if we create an environment where entrepreneurs like you can dream and flourish. A prosperity sustained by low taxes, unleashed by lighter regulation, energized by new technologies, expanded by free trade. A prosperity beyond all our expectations, but within our grasp.

Yet all around this country, I have argued that prosperity must have a higher purpose. The purpose of prosperity is to make sure the American dream touches every willing heart. The purpose of prosperity is to leave no one out – to leave no one behind.

This noble goal will remain a distant goal until our nation fulfills a solemn pledge: to educate every child. In coming weeks, I plan to talk about the safety of our schools, the character of our children, the

education standards we should set, and the accountability we should expect.

But I want to start where educational failure has its highest price. I want to begin with disadvantaged children in struggling schools, and the federal role in helping them. Their voices are not the loudest in our education debates. But we owe them the pride and promise of learning. Our new economy – requiring higher and higher skills – demands it. And so does our conscience. No child in America should be segregated by low expectations ... imprisoned by illiteracy ... abandoned to frustration and the darkness of self-doubt.

National wealth is a worthy goal. But what would it profit our nation to gain the whole world and lose our own children?

In response to this challenge, the last several years have been a time of bold change in education. A drizzle of innovation has become a flood of reform – a great movement of conscience and hope. A movement of parents and political leaders, voters and educators, hungry for high standards, tough accountability and real choices. Five years ago, only eight states had charter school laws. Today there are 35. A few years ago, no state had school-by-school report cards. Now there are at least three dozen.

Unlike past fads and fashions, these reforms are proving that public education can be improved – swiftly and dramatically.

I have seen it with my own eyes. The skeptics of education reform should visit KIPP Academy in Houston – a charter school that mainly serves the children of Latino immigrants. KIPP refuses to accept the "high-risk" label, demanding high standards and hard work. Children have nine-and-a-half-hour days, class on Saturday and two hours of homework a night. The director promises, "If you're off the bus, you're working." And

it is an incredibly cheerful and hopeful place. When you go there, you can see the light of ambition and discovery in young eyes. You can sense the self-esteem that comes from real accomplishment. After one year at KIPP, nearly 100 percent of students pass our state skills test in math and reading, making it the number one public middle school in all of Houston.

Or look at the Bennett-Kew Elementary School near here in Inglewood. A school I recently visited. A haven of hope. Nearly 8 in 10 students are disadvantaged, but it posts some of the strongest test scores in Los Angeles County. It teaches mastery of reading in kindergarten, and promotion in every grade level is tied to achievement. The principal explains: "We believe all children can learn. And they do."

Why do some schools work in places where so many schools fail? We can see

the emerging outlines of an answer. In places all around our country, like Texas and North Carolina and California and Virginia and Massachusetts, governors and parents and teachers – Republicans and Democrat and none-of-the-above – are embracing reforms and

calling for excellence.

· First, schools must have a few clear, measurable goals, focused on basic skills and essential knowledge. Education is about results, not theories; about knowledge, not intentions. "If you don't know where you are going," said Yogi Berra, "chances are, you'll end up someplace else." When I became Governor of Texas, we had 48 separate educational goals – which meant that a school might achieve 40 goals, and still not teach children to read. We reduced that number to four goals: excellence in reading, math, science and social studies.

· Second, we must measure to make sure standards are met. In Texas, we measure. We test because parents must know if education is taking place. We test because informed parents become more involved. We test because children must get the help they need before they are lost in the system. We test because hard data allows teachers and principals to examine their methods and change their direction. Measurement makes some people nervous. But without tests, there is no pressure for progress.

· Third, effective reform requires accountability. Someone should be praised when schools succeed, and someone must be responsible when schools fail. As much as 37 percent of school principals in low-performing Texas schools have been replaced or retired each year, because citizens and parents have refused to accept failure.

· Fourth, accountability is empty without local control of schools. It is essential to align responsibility and accountability at the local level; to separate them provides a convenient excuse for failure – just blame the central office. Higher standards demand broader flexibility.

· Finally, we must recognize the essential role of competition in achieving our goals – competition from charters and parental choice and home schooling. All monopolies are slow to reform when consumers have no power to express their frustration. In education, parents who have options have influence. When the Children's Scholarship Fund recently offered 40,000, privately funded, partial scholarships to poor children, it received a million applications. One million – even though parents had to match this help with money of their own. This was a direct challenge to failing public schools – and should be a motive for change. Charter schools are another good example. When they passed in Texas, critics charged they'd be a haven for fleeing Anglo students. In reality, 78 percent of students enrolled in Texas charters are minorities. These diverse, creative schools are proof that parents from all walks of life are willing to challenge the status quo if it means a better education for their children.

These reforms are proving their worth, but the movement I am talking about requires more than sound goals.

It requires a mindset that all children can learn, and no child should be left behind. It does not matter where they live, or how much their parents earn. It does not matter if they grow up in foster care or a two-parent family. These circumstances are challenges, but they are not excuses. I believe that every child can learn the basic skills on which the rest of their life depends.

Some say it is unfair to hold disadvantaged children to rigorous standards. I say it is discrimination to require anything less – the soft bigotry of low expectations. Some say that schools can't be expected to teach, because there are too many broken families, too many immigrants, too much diversity. I say that pigment and poverty need not determine performance. That myth is disproved by good schools every day. Excuse-making must end before learning can begin.

This reform movement also requires a different mindset in politics. Education is too important to have a strategy of divide and conquer. Unless parents and principals, teachers and academics, Republicans and Democrats can find common purposes, reform will fail. I have worked closely with both parties in my state, because I know that if we set out to score partisan points, we will never solve problems. If we do not share credit for progress, all of us deserve the blame for failure.

In Texas, we are proud of our results. We have more than 7,000 public schools, as diverse as any in America. Since 1994, the number of minority children passing our state skills test jumped from 38 percent to 69 percent. Between 1994 and 1999, Hispanic eighth graders posted a 40 point gain on our math exam. African-American fourth graders have better math skills in Texas than in any state in the country.

A lot of people deserve credit – students and parents and teachers and principals and legislators – and I am proud of my part. Education has been and will be a priority for me. I will carry a passion for high standards and high hopes to the highest office in the land.

For all the advances some states have made, too many children are being left behind. We are a nation where a majority of fourth graders in our cities can't read or understand a simple children's book. Where ninth-graders too often have fourth-grade reading skills. Where the achievement gap between rich and poor, Anglo and minority, is wide – and, in some cases, growing wider still.

It is a scandal of the first order when the average test scores of African-American and Latino students at age 17 are roughly the same as white 13-year-olds. Whatever the cause, the effect is discrimination. Children who never master reading will never master learning. They face a life of frustration on the fringes of society. Large numbers turn to crime and end up in prison. This is a personal tragedy. More and more, we are divided into two nations, separate and unequal. One that reads and one that can't. One that dreams

and one that doesn't.

For many years the federal government has tried to close this gap of hope – armed with good intentions and billions of dollars. But sacks of money and the best of motives have made little difference in the performance of disadvantaged children.

At last count, the federal government had 760 different education programs operating within 39 different agencies, boards and commissions. Each was launched as a step toward reform. But the actual results are usually a mystery, because no one measures them. The only thing we know for sure is that federal money comes with a lot of regulations and paperwork. By one estimate, this consumes about 50 million hours each year – the equivalent of 25,000 full-time employees just to process forms.

The problem here is that failure never turns to wisdom. New layers of federal mandates and procedures have been added to the old, until their original purpose is long forgotten. It is a sad story. High hopes, low achievement. Grand plans, unmet goals.

My administration will do things differently.

We do not have a national school board, and do not need one. A president is not a federal principal, and I will not be one.

The federal government must be humble enough to stay out of the day-to-day operation of local schools, wise enough to give states and school districts more authority and freedom, and strong enough to require proven performance in return. When we spend federal money, we want results – especially when it comes to disadvantaged children.

Today, I want to outline three reforms to help ensure that no child is left behind:

We will start by funding only what works in education – only those methods and ideas that prove their power to close the achievement gap. We need good, reliable, scientific information on the best methods of teaching. What the federal government sponsors, however, is often sloppy and trendy, focusing on self-esteem over basic skills. My administration will require every federal program – in teacher training, curriculum research, school safety – to prove results. If it can't, we will shift that money into a program that is using it wisely. No federal education program will be reauthorized merely because it has existed for years. It is more important to do good than to feel good.

Take, for example, teaching children to read and comprehend English. If a good immersion program works, I say fine. If a good bilingual program works to teach children English, we should applaud it. What matters is not the varying methods, but the common standards and goals. The standard is English literacy. The goal is equal opportunity. All in an atmosphere where every heritage is respected and celebrated.

Esta propuesta la he llamado "Inglès y Màs," porque yo me opongo al

"Inglès solamente." "Inglès solamente" significa "solo yò," sin tomar en cuenta a otros. "Inglès y Màs" significa "todos nosotros, pero juntos." Children – of any background – should not be used as pawns in bitter debates on education and immigration, or punished to make a broader political point.

There is one area where the teaching research is definitive: The best way to teach children to read is phonics. No new theory or method has ever improved on it, as Californians know better than anyone. The National Institutes of Health – in the kind of rigorous research we need – has proven that phonics works, and that children can learn to read much earlier than we assumed.

But we must take this a step further. We now have compelling evidence that children ages three and four can begin to read. We also have a massive Head Start program, serving 840,000 disadvantaged children at just those ages. This is a perfect fit. My administration will reform Head Start programs and aggressively emphasize early reading skills.

Head Start was originally intended as a literacy program, designed to close the achievement gap between rich and poor. It evolved into a day-care, health and nutrition program. And it has done good work, not only helping poor children, but also employing some of their parents as teachers and aides. Yet at \$4.4 billion a year, it could be accomplishing so much more. Last year, Washington set some new goals for this program. Now we need a president to strongly implement them. My administration will move Head Start out of the Department of Health and Human Services and over to the

Department of Education. Head Start will be an education program. It will fund only those local centers that emphasize the first steps toward reading and school-readiness. We will provide them with the basic research and material on early childhood education. And each time a Head Start contract is up for renewal, we will subject that site to an independent evaluation – to make sure they are successfully putting our children on the track to learning and literacy. If not, the operation of a Head Start site will be put up for competitive bidding – allowing someone, including churches and synagogues and community groups, to serve our children better. These children deserve the opportunities found in many private preschools, with trained teachers and high expectations. And all this will be done without sacrificing Head Start's important social and medical services.

The third reform concerns Title 1 – at \$7.7 billion, the federal government's largest educational commitment to poor children. I respect that commitment, and will honor it. But I do not respect poor results with public money. In my administration, federal money will no longer flow to failure. Public funds must be spent on things that work.

My plan will make sure that every school getting Title 1 funds tests its disadvantaged students on the academic basics every year. The state, not the federal government, will choose and administer those tests. If the scores are improving – making progress toward the state standard – a school will be rewarded with a grant and special

recognition. If the disadvantaged children in a school are not making progress, the school will be warned that it is failing. It will be given time to adjust, to reform, to change. But if, at the end of three years, there is still no progress, its Title 1 funds will be divided up, matched by other federal education money given to the state, and made directly available to parents – coming to about \$1,500 per year. This money can then be used by students for tutoring, for a charter school, for a working public school in a different district, for a private school – for whatever parents choose. For whatever offers hope.

States that want to pursue this kind of reform immediately will be free to do so. But eventually, in every case where a school does not teach and will not change, the status quo must be challenged.

The goal here is to strengthen public schools by expecting performance – to increase the number of schools where children are likely to learn. But if a school, with ample time to change, continues to fail, there must be some final point of accountability. Some moment of truth. In the best case, these schools will rise to the challenge and regain the confidence of parents. In the worst case, we will offer scholarships to America's neediest children, allowing them to get the emergency help they should have. In any case, the federal government will no longer pay schools to cheat poor children.

The enormous frustration with public education in America leads to two temptations. One is to dictate local policies from Washington. But this is an approach that has been discredited by 30 years of failure. Our schools do not need more bureaucratic oversight, they need the pressure to perform and the freedom to change. Education, it's been said, is not the filling of a pail, it is the lighting of a fire. We need that spirit today, and no master plan of government can light it.

But there is another temptation – to give up on public education entirely. To talk only of ending agencies or slashing programs. But this approach is too limited. One sixth of the American population is in public schools. The content of their education will determine the character of our country. Will America be prepared for the new economy? Will we have the informed citizens that self-government requires?

At their best, America's public schools have been a source of shared ideals. They gave millions of immigrants a start in life and a dream to follow. They were united by a golden thread of principle: that everyone, if given a chance, could rise in the world and contribute to their country. In all its simplicity, that is still the mission and mandate of public education in America.

A president does not bear responsibility for every policy in every school in every district. But every president must be the keeper of our common ideals. A president speaks for everyone. Not just for schools and those who run them. Not for one interest or ethnic group over another. Not for one class above the rest. A president – and sometimes only a president – can speak for the common good.

Our common good is found in our common schools. And we must make those

schools worthy of all our children. Whatever their background, their cause is our cause, and it must not be lost.

Thank you.

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Governor George W. Bush - A Culture of Achievement

New York, New York
October 5, 1999

It is an honor to be here – and especially to share this podium with Rev. Flake. Your influence in this city – as a voice for change and a witness to Christian hope – is only greater since you returned full-time to the Allen AME Church. I read somewhere that you still call Houston your hometown, 30 years after you moved away. As governor of Texas, let me return the compliment.

We are proud of all you have accomplished, and honored to call you one of our own. It's been a pleasure touring New York these past few days with Governor Pataki. Everywhere I've gone, New York's old confidence is back – thanks, in large part, to a state senator who challenged the status quo six years ago. From tax cuts to criminal justice reform to charters, your agenda has been an example to governors around the country.

It is amazing how far this city has come in the 21 years since the Manhattan Institute was founded. You have won battles once considered hopeless. You have gone from winning debating points to winning majorities – and I congratulate you.

Last month in California, I talked about disadvantaged children in troubled schools. I argued that the diminished hopes of our current system are sad and serious – the soft bigotry of low expectations.

And I set out a simple principle: Federal funds will no longer flow to failure. Schools that do not teach and will not change must have some final point of accountability. A moment of truth, when their Title 1 funds are divided up and given to parents, for tutoring or a charter school or some other hopeful option. In the best case, schools that are failing will rise to the challenge and regain the confidence of parents. In the worst case, we will offer scholarships to America's neediest children.

In any case, the federal government will no longer pay schools to cheat poor children.

But this is the beginning of our challenge, not its end. The final object of education reform is not just to shun mediocrity; it is to seek excellence. It is not just to avoid failure; it is to encourage achievement.

Our nation has a moral duty to ensure that no child is left behind.

And we also, at this moment, have a great national opportunity – to ensure that every child, in every public school, is challenged by high

standards that meet the high hopes of parents. To build a culture of achievement that matches the optimism and aspirations of our country.

Not long ago, this would have seemed incredible. Our education debates were captured by a deep pessimism.

For decades, waves of reform were quickly revealed as passing fads, with little lasting result. For decades, funding rose while performance stagnated. Most parents, except in some urban districts, have not seen the collapse of education. They have seen a slow slide of expectations and standards. Schools where poor spelling is called "creative." Where math is "fuzzy" and grammar is optional. Where grade inflation is the norm.

Schools where spelling bees are canceled for being too competitive and selecting a single valedictorian is considered too exclusive. Where advancing from one grade to the next is unconnected to advancing skills. Schools where, as in Alice in Wonderland, "Everyone has won, and all must have prizes."

We are left with a nagging sense of lost potential. A sense of what could be, but is not.

It led the late Albert Shanker, of the American Federation of Teachers, to conclude: "Very few American pupils are performing anywhere near where they could be performing."

This cuts against the grain of American character. Most parents know that the self-esteem of children is not built by low standards, it is built by real accomplishments. Most parents know that good character is tied to an ethic of study and hard work and merit – and that setbacks are as much a part of learning as awards.

Most Americans know that a healthy democracy must be committed both to equality *and* to excellence.

Until a few years ago, the debates of politics seemed irrelevant to these concerns. Democrats and Republicans argued mainly about funding and procedures – about dollars and devolution. Few talked of standards or accountability or of excellence for all our children.

But all this is beginning to change. In state after state, we are seeing a profound shift of priorities. An "age of accountability" is starting to replace an era of low expectations. And there is a growing conviction and confidence that the problems of public education are not an endless road or a hopeless maze.

The principles of this movement are similar from New York to Florida, from Massachusetts to Michigan. Raise the bar of standards.

Give schools the flexibility to meet them. Measure progress. Insist on results. Blow the whistle on failure. Provide parents with options to increase their influence. And don't give up on anyone.

There are now countless examples of public schools transformed by great expectations. Places like Earhart Elementary in Chicago, where

students are expected to compose essays by the second grade.

Where these young children participate in a Junior Great Books program, and sixth graders are reading To Kill a Mockingbird. The principal explains, "All our children are expected to work above grade level and learn for the sake of learning... We instill a desire to overachieve. Give us an average child and we'll make him an overachiever."

This is a public school, and not a wealthy one. And it proves what is possible.

No one in Texas now doubts that public schools can improve. We are witnessing the promise of high standards and accountability. We require that every child read by the third grade, without exception or excuse. Every year, we test students on the academic basics. We disclose those results by school. We encourage the diversity and creativity of charters. We give local schools and districts the freedom to chart their own path to excellence.

I certainly don't claim credit for all these changes. But my state is proud of what we have accomplished together. Last week, the federal Department of Education announced that Texas eighth graders have some of the best writing skills in the country. In 1994, there were 67 schools in Texas rated "exemplary" according to our tests. This year, there are 1,120. We are proud, but we are not content. Now that we are meeting our current standards, I am insisting that we elevate those standards.

Now that we are clearing the bar, we are going to raise the bar – because we have set our sights on excellence.

At the beginning of the 1990s, so many of our nation's problems, from education to crime to welfare, seemed intractable – beyond our control. But something unexpected happened on the way to cultural decline. Problems that seemed inevitable proved to be reversible. They gave way to an optimistic, governing conservatism.

Here in New York, Mayor Giuliani brought order and civility back to the streets – cutting crime rates by 50 percent. In Wisconsin, Governor Tommy Thompson proved that welfare dependence could be reversed – reducing his rolls by 91 percent. Innovative mayors and governors followed their lead – cutting national welfare rolls by nearly half since 1994, and reducing the murder rate to the lowest point since 1967.

Now education reform is gaining a critical mass of results.

In the process, conservatism has become the creed of hope. The creed of aggressive, persistent reform. The creed of social progress.

Too often, on social issues, my party has painted an image of America slouching toward Gomorrah. Of course there are challenges to the character and compassion of our nation – too many broken homes and broken lives.

But many of our problems – particularly education, crime and welfare

dependence – are yielding to good sense and strength and idealism. In states and cities around the country, we are making, not just points and pledges, but progress. We are demonstrating the genius for self-renewal at the heart of the American experiment.

Too often, my party has focused on the national economy, to the exclusion of all else – speaking a sterile language of rates and numbers, of CBO this and GNP that.

Of course we want growth and vigor in our economy. But there are human problems that persist in the shadow of affluence. And the strongest argument for conservative ideals – for responsibility and accountability and the virtues of our tradition – is that they lead to greater justice, less suffering, more opportunity.

Too often, my party has confused the need for limited government with a disdain for government itself.

But this is not an option for conservatives. At the constitutional convention in 1787, Benjamin Franklin argued that the strength of our nation depends "on the general opinion of the goodness of government." Our Founders rejected cynicism, and cultivated a noble love of country. That love is undermined by sprawling, arrogant, aimless government. It is restored by focused and effective and energetic government.

And that should be our goal: A limited government, respected for doing a few things and doing them well.

This is an approach with echoes in our history. Echoes of Lincoln and emancipation and the Homestead Act and land-grant colleges. Echoes of Theodore Roosevelt and national parks and the Panama Canal. Echoes of Reagan and a confrontation with communism that sought victory, not stalemate.

What are the issues that challenge us, that summon us, in our time? Surely one of them must be excellence in education. Surely one of them must be to rekindle the spirit of learning and ambition in our common schools. And one of our great opportunities and urgent duties is to remake the federal role.

Even as many states embrace education reform, the federal government is mired in bureaucracy and mediocrity.

It is an obstacle, not an ally. Education bills are often rituals of symbolic spending without real accountability – like pumping gas into a flooded engine. For decades, fashionable ideas have been turned into programs, with little knowledge of their benefits for students and teachers. And even the obvious failures seldom disappear.

This is a perfect example of government that is big – and weak. Of government that is grasping – and impotent.

Let me share an example. The Department of Education recently streamlined the grant application process for states. The old procedure involved 487 different steps, taking an average of 26

weeks. So, a few years ago, the best minds of the administration got together and "reinvented" the grant process. Now it takes a mere 216 steps, and the wait is 20 weeks.

If this is reinventing government, it makes you wonder how this administration was ever skilled enough and efficient enough to create the Internet. I don't want to tinker with the machinery of the federal role in education. I want to redefine that role entirely.

I strongly believe in local control of schools and curriculum. I have consistently placed my faith in states and schools and parents and teachers – and that faith, in Texas, has been rewarded.

I also believe a president should define and defend the unifying ideals of our nation – including the quality of our common schools. He must lead, without controlling. He must set high goals – without being high-handed. The inertia of our education bureaucracy is a national problem, requiring a national response. Sometimes inaction is not restraint – it is complicity. Sometimes it takes the use of executive power to empower others.

Effective education reform requires both pressure from above and competition from below – a demand for high standards and measurement at the top, given momentum and urgency by expanded options for parents and students. So, as president, here is what I'll do. First, I will fundamentally change the relationship of the states and federal government in education. Now we have a system of excessive regulation and no standards. In my administration, we will have minimal regulation and high standards.

Second, I will promote more choices for parents in the education of their children. In the end, it is parents, armed with information and options, who turn the theory of reform into the reality of excellence.

All reform begins with freedom and local control. It unleashes creativity. It permits those closest to children to exercise their judgment. And it also removes the excuse for failure. Only those with the ability to change can be held to account.

But local control has seldom been a priority in Washington. In 1965, when President Johnson signed the very first Elementary and Secondary Education Act, not one school board trustee, from anywhere in the country, was invited to the ceremony. Local officials were viewed as the enemy. And that attitude has lingered too long.

As president, I will begin by taking most of the 60 different categories of federal education grants and paring them down to five: improving achievement among disadvantaged children; promoting fluency in English; training and recruiting teachers; encouraging character and school safety; and promoting innovation and parental choice. Within these divisions, states will have maximum flexibility to determine their priorities.

They will only be asked to certify that their funds are being used for the specific purposes intended – and the federal red tape ends there.

This will spread authority to levels of government that people can

touch. And it will reduce paperwork – allowing schools to spend less on filing forms and more on what matters: teachers' salaries and children themselves.

In return, we will ask that every state have a real accountability system – meaning that they test every child, every year, in grades three through eight, on the basics of reading and math; broadly disclose those results by school, including on the Internet; and have clear consequences for success and failure. States will pick their own tests, and the federal government will share the costs of administering them.

States can choose tests off-the-shelf, like Arizona; adapt tests like California; or contract for new tests like Texas. Over time, if a state's results are improving, it will be rewarded with extra money – a total of \$500 million in awards over five years. If scores are stagnant or dropping, the administrative portion of their federal funding – about 5 percent – will be diverted to a fund for charter schools.

We will praise and reward success – and shine a spotlight of shame on failure.

What I am proposing today is a fresh start for the federal role in education. A pact of principle. Freedom in exchange for achievement. Latitude in return for results. Local control with one national goal: excellence for every child.

I am opposed to national tests, written by the federal government.

If Washington can control the content of tests, it can dictate the content of state curricula – a role our central government should not play.

But measurement at the state level is essential. Without testing, reform is a journey without a compass. Without testing, teachers and administrators cannot adjust their methods to meet high goals. Without testing, standards are little more than scraps of paper.

Without testing, true competition is impossible. Without testing, parents are left in the dark.

In fact, the greatest benefit of testing – with the power to transform a school or a system – is the information it gives to parents. They will know – not just by rumor or reputation, but by hard numbers – which schools are succeeding and which are not.

Given that information, more parents will be pulled into activism – becoming participants, not spectators, in the education of their children. Armed with that information, parents will have the leverage to force reform.

Information is essential. But reform also requires options. Monopolies seldom change on their own – no matter how good the intentions of those who lead them. Competition is required to jolt a bureaucracy out of its lethargy.

So my second goal for the federal role of education is to increase the

options and influence of parents.

The reform of Title 1 I've proposed would begin this process. We will give parents with children in failing schools – schools where the test scores of Title 1 children show no improvement over three years – the resources to seek more hopeful options. This will amount to a scholarship of about \$1,500 a year.

And parents can use those funds for tutoring or tuition – for anything that gives their children a fighting chance at learning. The theory is simple. Public funds must be spent on things that work – on helping children, not sustaining failed schools that refuse to change.

The response to this plan has been deeply encouraging. Yet some politicians have gone to low performing schools and claimed my plan would undermine them.

Think a moment about what that means. It means visiting a school and saying, in essence, "You are hopeless. Not only can't you achieve, you can't even improve." That is not a defense of public education, it is a surrender to despair. That is not liberalism, it is pessimism. It is accepting and excusing an educational apartheid in our country – segregating poor children into a world without the hope of change.

Everyone, in both parties, seems to agree with accountability in theory. But what could accountability possibly mean if children attend schools for 12 years without learning to read or write? Accountability without consequences is empty – the hollow shell of reform. And all our children deserve better.

In our education reform plan, we will give states more flexibility to use federal funds, at their option, for choice programs – including private school choice.

In some neighborhoods, these new options are the first sign of hope, of real change, that parents have seen for a generation.

But not everyone wants or needs private school choice. Many parents in America want more choices, higher standards and more influence *within* their public schools. This is the great promise of charter schools – the path that New York is now beginning. And this, in great part, is a tribute to the Manhattan Institute.

If charters are properly done – free to hire their own teachers, adopt their own curriculum, set their own operating rules and high standards – they will change the face of American education. Public schools – without bureaucracy. Public schools – controlled by parents. Public schools – held to the highest goals. Public schools – as we imagined they could be.

For parents, they are schools on a human scale, where their voice is heard and heeded. For students, they are more like a family than a factory – a place where it is harder to get lost. For teachers, who often help found charter schools, they are a chance to teach as they've always wanted. Says one charter school teacher in Boston: "We don't have to wait to make changes. We don't have to wait for

the district to decide that what we are doing is within the rules...

So we can really put the interests of the kids first."

This morning I visited the new Sisulu Children's Academy in Harlem – New York's first charter school. In an area where only a quarter of children can read at or above grade level, Sisulu Academy offers a core curriculum of reading, math, science and history. There will be an extended school day, and the kids will also learn computer skills, art, music and dance. And there is a waiting list of 100 children.

This is a new approach – even a new definition of public education. These schools are public because they are publicly funded and publicly accountable for results. The vision of parents and teachers and principals determines the rest. Money follows the child. The units of delivery get smaller and more personal. Some charters go back to basics... some attract the gifted ... some emphasize the arts.

It is a reform movement that welcomes diversity, but demands excellence. And this is the essence of real reform.

Charter schools benefit the children within them – as well as the public school students beyond them. The evidence shows that competition often strengthens *all* the schools in a district. In Arizona, in places where charters have arrived – teaching phonics and extending hours and involving parents – suddenly many traditional public schools are following suit.

The greatest problem facing charter schools is practical – the cost of building them. Unlike regular public schools, they receive no capital funds. And the typical charter costs about \$1.5 million to construct. Some are forced to start in vacant hotel rooms or strip malls.

As president, I want to fan the spark of charter schools into a flame. My administration will establish a Charter School Homestead Fund, to help finance these start-up costs.

We will provide capital to education entrepreneurs – planting new schools on the frontiers of reform. This fund will support \$3 billion in loan guarantees in my first two years in office – enough to seed 2,000 schools. Enough to double the existing number.

This will be a direct challenge to the status quo in public education – in a way that both changes it and strengthens it. With charters, someone cares enough to say, "I'm dissatisfied."

Someone is bold enough to say, "I can do better." And all our schools will aim higher if we reward that kind of courage and vision.

And we will do one thing more for parents. We will expand Education Savings Accounts to cover education expenses in grades K through 12, allowing parents or grandparents to contribute up to \$5,000 dollars per year, per student. Those funds can be withdrawn tax-free for tuition payments, or books, or tutoring or transportation – whatever students need most.

Often this nation sets out to reform education for all the wrong

reasons – or at least for incomplete ones. Because the Soviets launch Sputnik. Or because children in Singapore have high test scores. Or because our new economy demands computer operators.

But when parents hope for their children, they hope with nobler goals. Yes, we want them to have the basic skills of life. But life is more than a race for riches.

A good education leads to intellectual self-confidence, and ambition and a quickened imagination. It helps us, not just to live, but to live well.

And this private good has public consequences. In his first address to Congress, President Washington called education "the surest basis of public happiness." America's founders believed that self-government requires a certain kind of citizen.

Schooled to think clearly and critically, and to know America's civic ideals. Freed, by learning, to rise, by merit. Education is the way a democratic culture reproduces itself through time.

This is the reason a conservative should be passionate about education reform – the reason a conservative should fight strongly and care deeply. Our common schools carry a great burden for the common good. And they must be more than schools of last resort.

Every child must have a quality education – not just in islands of excellence. Because we are a single nation with a shared future. Because, as Lincoln said, we are "brothers of a common country."

Thank you.

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**Get Active In
Your State:**



Governor George W. Bush - 'The True Goal of Education'

**GORHAM, NH
November 2, 1999**

It is a pleasure to be here, and to join in marking the chamber's Business Appreciation Month. New Hampshire is a state of small businesses. Many of them here in the north country are prospering, and this organization has played an important part. I am honored by your invitation.

I am an optimist. I believe that the next century will be a time of incredible prosperity -- if we can create an environment where entrepreneurs like you can dream and flourish. A prosperity sustained by low taxes, unleashed by lighter regulation, energized by new technologies, expanded by free trade. A prosperity beyond all our expectations, but within our grasp.

But this hope, in the long-run, depends directly on the education of our children -- on young men and women with the skills and character to succeed. So, for the past few months, I have focused on the problems and promise of our public schools.

In September, I talked about disadvantaged children left behind by failed schools. The diminished hopes of our current system are sad and serious -- the soft bigotry of low expectations. Schools that do not teach and will not change must have some final point of accountability. A moment of truth, when their federal funds, intended to help the poorest children, are divided up and given to parents -- for tutoring or a charter school or some other hopeful option.

Last month, I talked about raising the academic ambitions of every public school in America -- creating a culture of achievement. My plan lifts the burden of bureaucracy, and gives states unprecedented freedom in spending federal education dollars. In return for this flexibility, each state must adopt a system of real accountability and high standards. Students must be tested on the basics of reading and math each year -- and those results posted, by school, on the Internet. This will give parents the information to know if education is actually taking place -- and the leverage to demand reform.

My education proposals are bound by a thread of principle. The federal government must be humble enough to stay out of the day-to-day operation of local schools. It must be wise enough to give states and school districts more authority and freedom. And it must be strong enough to require proven performance in return. The federal role in education is to foster excellence and challenge failure with charters and choice. The federal role in education is not to serve the system. It is to serve the children.

Yet this is only part of an agenda. Yes, we want our children to be smart and successful. But even more, we want them to be good and kind and decent. Yes, our children must learn how to make a living. But even more, they must learn how to live, and what to love. "Intelligence is not enough," said Martin Luther King, Jr. "Intelligence plus character -- that is the true goal of education."

So today, here in New Hampshire, I want to make the case for moral education. Teaching is more than training, and learning is more than literacy. Our children must be educated in reading and writing -- but also in right and wrong.

Of course, every generation worries about the next. "Children today are tyrants," said one educator. "They contradict their parents, gobble their food, and tyrannize their teachers." And that teacher's name was ... Socrates.

Some things don't change. The real problem comes, not when children challenge the rules, but when adults won't defend the rules. And for about three decades, many American schools surrendered this role. Values were "clarified," not taught. Students were given moral puzzles, not moral guidance. But morality is not a cafeteria of personal choices -- with every choice equally right and equally arbitrary, like picking a flavor of ice cream. We do not shape our own morality. It is morality that shapes our lives.

Take an example. A Massachusetts teacher -- a devoted supporter of values clarification -- had a sixth grade class which announced that it valued cheating, and wanted the freedom to express that value during tests. Her response? "I personally value honesty," she said. "Although you may choose to be dishonest, I will insist that we be honest on our tests here. In other areas of your life, you may have to be dishonest."

This is not moral neutrality. It is moral surrender. Our schools should not cultivate confusion. They must cultivate conscience.

In spite of conflicting signals -- and in spite of a popular culture that sometimes drowns their innocence -- most of our kids are good kids. Large numbers do volunteer work. Nearly all believe in God, and most practice their faith. Teen pregnancy and violence are actually going down. Across America, under a program called True Love Waits, nearly a million teens have pledged themselves to abstain from sex until marriage. Our teenagers feel the pressures of complex times, but also the upward pull of a better nature. They deserve our love and they deserve our encouragement.

And sometimes they show character and courage beyond measure. When a gun is aimed at a seventeen-year-old in Colorado -- and she is shot for refusing to betray her Lord. When a seventeen-year-old student, during a madman's attack on a Fort Worth church, is shot while shielding a friend with Downs Syndrome -- and continues to comfort her, even after her own injury. We are finding, in the midst of tragedy, that our children can be heroes too.

Yet something is lost when the moral message of schools is mixed and muddled. Many children catch a virus of apathy and cynicism.

They lose the ability to make confident judgments -- viewing all matters of right and wrong as a matter of opinion. Something becomes frozen within them -- a capacity for indignation and empathy. You can see it in shrugged shoulders. You can hear it in the watchword of a generation: "Whatever."

Academics like Professor Robert Simon report seeing many students -- nice, well-intentioned young men and women -- who refuse to make judgments even about the Holocaust. "Of course I dislike the Nazis," he quotes a student, "but who is to say they are morally wrong?"

At the extreme, in the case of a very few children -- lawless, loveless and lonely -- this confusion can harden into self-destruction or evil, suicide or violence. They find no elevating ideals -- from parents or church or school -- to counter the chaos in their souls. "We laugh at honor," said C.S. Lewis, "and are shocked to find traitors in our midst."

But something is changing in this country. Perhaps we have been sobered by tragedy. Perhaps the Baby Boom generation has won some wisdom from its failures and pain. But we are no longer laughing at honor. "Values clarification" seems like a passing superstition. Many states have instituted real character education in their schools, and many more are headed in that direction. After decades of drift, we are beginning a journey of renewal.

Above all, we are relearning a sense of idealism for our children. Parents and teachers are rediscovering a great calling and a heavy burden: to write on the slate of souls.

We must tell our children -- with conviction and confidence -- that the authors of the Holocaust were evil men, and the authors of the Constitution were good ones. That the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is not a personal opinion, but an eternal truth.

And we must tell our children -- with clarity and certainty -- that character gives direction to their gifts and dignity to their lives. That life is too grand and important to be wasted on whims and wants, on getting and keeping. That selfishness is a dark dungeon. That bigotry disfigures the heart. That they were made for better things and higher goals.

The shape of our society, the fate of our country, depends on young men and women who know these things. And we must teach them.

I know this begins with parents. And I know that is easy for a politician to say. Mark Twain once commented, "To do good is noble. To instruct others in doing good is just as noble, and much easier." But the message of our society must be clear. When a man or woman has a child, being a father or mother becomes their most important job in life. Not all teachers are parents, but all parents are teachers. Family is the first school of manners and morals. And the compass of conscience is usually the gift of a caring parent.

Yet parents should expect schools to be allies in the moral education of children. The lessons of the home must be reinforced by the

standards of the school -- standards of safety, discipline and decency.

Effective character education should not just be an hour a week on a school's virtue of the month. Effective character education is fostered in schools that have confidence in their own rules and values. Schools that set limits, enforce boundaries, teach high ideals, create habits of good conduct. Children take the values of the adult world seriously when adults take those values seriously.

And this goal sets an agenda for our nation.

First, we must do everything in our power to ensure the safety of our children. When children and teenagers go to school afraid of being bullied, or beaten, or worse, it is the ultimate betrayal of adult responsibility. It communicates the victory of moral chaos.

In an American school year there are more than 4,000 rapes or cases of sexual battery; 7,000 robberies; and 11,000 physical attacks involving a weapon. And these are overall numbers. For children attending inner-city schools, the likelihood of being a victim of violence is roughly five times greater than elsewhere. It is a sign of the times that the same security company used by the U.S. Mint and the FBI has now branched out into high-school security.

Surveying this scene, it is easy to forget that there is actually a federal program designed to confront school violence. It's called the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. The program spends about \$600 million dollars a year, assisting 97 percent of the nation's school districts.

What's missing from the program is accountability. Nobody really knows how the money is spent, much less whether it is doing any good. One newspaper found that federal money had gone to pay for everything from motivational speakers to clowns to school puppet shows to junkets for school administrators.

As president, I will propose major changes in this program. Every school getting this funding will report their results -- measured in student safety. Those results will be public. At schools that are persistently dangerous, students will be given a transfer to some other school -- a safe school.

No parent in America -- no matter their income -- should be forced to send their child to a school where violence reigns. No child in America -- regardless of background -- should be forced to risk their lives in order to learn.

In the same way, it is a federal crime for a student to bring a gun into any public school. Yet this law has been almost completely ignored by federal prosecutors in recent years. Of some 3,900 violations reported between 1997 and 1998, only 13 were prosecuted. It is easy to propose laws. Sometimes it is easy to pass laws. But the measure of our seriousness is enforcing the law. And the safety of our children merits more than lip service.

Here is what I'll do. We will form a new partnership of the federal

government and states -- called Project Sentry. With some additional funding for prosecutors and the ATF, we can enforce the law and prosecute the violators: students who use guns illegally or bring guns to school, and adults who provide them. And for any juvenile found guilty of a serious gun offense, there will be a lifetime ban on carrying or purchasing a gun -- any gun, for any reason, at any age, ever.

Tougher enforcement of gun laws will help to make our schools safer. But safety is not the only goal here. The excellence of a school is not just measured by declines in robbery, murder, and aggravated assault. Safety is the first and urgent step toward a second order of business -- instilling in all of our public schools the virtues of discipline.

More than half of secondary-school teachers across the country say they have been threatened, or shouted at, or verbally abused by students. A teacher in Los Angeles describes her job as "nine-tenths policeman, one-tenth educational." And many schools, intimidated by the threat of lawsuits, have watered down their standards of behavior. In Oklahoma, a student who stabbed a principal with a nail was suspended for three days. In North Carolina, a student who broke her teacher's arm was suspended for only two days.

In too many cases, adults are in authority, but they are not in control.

To their credit, many schools are trying to reassert that control -- only to find themselves in court. Generations of movies from *The Blackboard Jungle* to *Stand and Deliver* cast as their hero the teacher who dares to bring discipline to the classroom. But a modern version of this drama would have to include a new figure in the story -- the lawyer.

Thirty-one percent of all high schools have faced lawsuits or out-of-court settlements in the past two years. This is seriously deterring discipline, and demands a serious response.

In school districts receiving federal school safety funds, we will expect a policy of zero-tolerance for persistently disruptive behavior. This means simply that teachers will have the authority to remove from their classroom any student who persists in being violent or unruly. Only with the teacher's consent will these students be allowed to return. The days of timid pleading and bargaining and legal haggling with disruptive students must be over. Learning must no longer be held hostage to the brazen behavior of a few.

Along with this measure, I will propose a Teacher Protection Act to free teachers, principals and school board members from meritless federal lawsuits when they enforce reasonable rules. School officials, acting in their official duties, must be shielded from liability. A lifetime dedicated to teaching must not be disrupted by a junk lawsuit. We do not need tort lawyers scouring the halls of our schools -- turning every classroom dispute into a treasure hunt for damage awards.

Safety and discipline are essential. But when we dream for our

children, we dream with higher goals. We want them to love learning. And we want them to be rich in character and blessed in ideals.

So our third goal is to encourage clear instruction in right and wrong. We want our schools to care about the character of our children.

I am not talking about schools promoting a particular set of religious beliefs. Strong values are shared by good people of different faiths, of varied backgrounds.

I am talking about communicating the values we share, in all our diversity. Respect. Responsibility. Self-restraint. Family commitment. Civic duty. Fairness. Compassion. The moral landmarks that guide a successful life.

There are a number of good programs around the country that show how values can be taught in a diverse nation. At St. Leonard's Elementary School in Maryland, children take a pledge each morning to be "respectful, responsible, and ready to learn." Character education is a theme throughout the curriculum -- in writing, social studies and reading. And discipline referrals were down by 70 percent in one year. At Marion Intermediate School in South Carolina, virtues are taught by studying great historical figures and characters in literature. Consideration is encouraged, good manners are expected. And discipline referrals are down by half in one year.

The federal government now spends \$8 million on promoting character education efforts. My administration will triple that funding -- money for states to train teachers and incorporate character lessons into daily coursework.

We will require federal youth and juvenile justice programs to incorporate an element of character building.

Our government must get its priorities straight when it comes to the character of our children. Right now, the Department of Health and Human Services spends far more on teen contraception than it does on teen abstinence. It takes the jaded view that children are nothing more than the sum of their drives, with no higher goal than hanging out and hooking up. We owe them better than this -- and they are better than this. They ask for bread, and we give them a stone.

Abstinence programs show real promise -- exactly because more and more teenagers understand that true love waits. My administration will elevate abstinence education from an afterthought to an urgent goal. We should spend at least as much each year on promoting the conscience of our children as we do on providing them with contraception.

As well, we will encourage and expand the role of charities in after-school programs. Everyone agrees there is a problem in these empty, unsupervised hours after school. But those hours should not only be filled with sports and play, they should include lessons in responsibility and character. The federal government already funds after-school programs. But charities and faith-based organizations are prevented from participating. In my administration they will be

invited to participate. Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the YMCA and local churches and synagogues and mosques should be a central part of voluntary, after-school programs.

Schools must never impose religion -- but they must not oppose religion either. And the federal government should not be an enemy of voluntary expressions of faith by students.

Religious groups have a right to meet before and after school. Students have a right to say grace before meals, read their Bibles, wear Stars of David and crosses, and discuss religion with other willing students. Students have a right to express religious ideas in art and homework.

Public schools that forbid these forms of religious expression are confused. But more than that, they are rejecting some of the best and finest influences on young lives. It is noble when a young mind finds meaning and wisdom in the Talmud or Koran. It is good and hopeful when young men and women ask themselves what would Jesus do.

The measure of our nation's greatness has never been affluence or influence -- rising stocks or advancing armies. It has always been found in citizens of character and compassion. And so many of our problems as a nation -- from drugs, to deadly diseases, to crime -- are not the result of chance, but of choice. They will only be solved by a transformation of the heart and will. This is why a hopeful and decent future is found in hopeful and decent children.

That hope, of course, is not created by an Executive Order or an Act of Congress. I strongly believe our schools should reinforce good character. I know that our laws will always reflect a moral vision. But there are limits to law, set at the boundaries of the heart. It has been said: "Men can make good laws, but laws can not make men good."

Yet a president has a broader influence and a deeper legacy than the programs he proposes. He is more than a bookkeeper or an engineer of policy. A president is the most visible symbol of a political system that Lincoln called "the last best hope of earth." The presidency, said Franklin Roosevelt, is "preeminently a place of moral leadership."

That is an awesome charge. It is the most sobering part of a decision to run for president. And it is a charge I plan to keep.

After power vanishes and pride passes, this is what remains: The promises we kept. The oath we fulfilled. The example we set. The honor we earned.

This is true of a president or a parent. Of a governor or a teacher. We are united in a common task: to give our children a spirit of moral courage. This is not a search for scapegoats -- it is a call to conscience. It is not a hopeless task -- it is the power and privilege of every generation. Every individual can change a corner of our culture. And every child is a new beginning.

In all the confusion and controversy of our time, there is still one

answer for our children. An answer as current as the headlines. An answer as old as the scriptures. "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things."

If we love our children, this is the path of duty -- and the way of hope. Thank you.

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Bush Seeks Safer Schools

By Will Lester
Associated Press Writer
Tuesday, Nov. 2, 1999; 11:18 a.m. EST

MANCHESTER, N.H. — George W. Bush, challenging the "moral chaos" that he said is threatening America's schools, today called for legislation to protect teachers from lawsuits resulting from disciplinary actions against students and for a lifetime ban on gun ownership for juveniles found guilty of a serious gun offense.

"No child in America, regardless of background, should be forced to risk their lives in order to learn," the Republican presidential candidate said in remarks prepared for delivery today in Gorham, N.H.

The Texas governor called for a zero-tolerance policy for disruptive behavior in America's classrooms, and said teachers should have the right to remove persistently violent and unruly students. Those children, he said, should only be allowed to return with the teacher's consent.

He proposed a Teacher Protection Act to protect teachers and school officials who enforce reasonable rules from "a junk lawsuit."

He also called for strengthening enforcement of federal laws making it a crime to bring a gun into a public school. "For any juvenile found guilty of a serious gun offense, there will be a lifetime ban on carrying or purchasing a gun — any gun, for any reason, at any age, ever," he said.

If schools remain unsafe, he said, states and districts should be required to give children the option of transferring to a different school.

"When children and teen-agers go to school afraid of being bullied or beaten or worse, it is the ultimate betrayal of adult responsibility," he said. "It communicates the victory of moral chaos."

In his third major education speech, Bush called for increased spending on character education so schools can teach "the moral landmarks that guide a successful life." He listed these as respect, responsibility, self-restraint, family commitment, civic duty, fairness and compassion.

Today is Bush's seventh day of campaigning in New Hampshire, which holds the nation's first primary. Though the Texas governor leads in the polls, Sen. John McCain of Arizona has been gaining.

In recent weeks, Bush was criticized by his opponents for skipping two

candidate forums in New Hampshire because of schedule conflicts. But a close call when a truck-trailer overturned near his jogging path in Austin, Texas, Monday didn't keep him away this time. Bush suffered minor injuries to his right leg and hip.

Bush started today at a breakfast in tiny Dixville Notch, whose two dozen voters traditionally are the first to cast their ballots in New Hampshire's leadoff primary. He talked about fostering entrepreneurship, and cited as examples Neil and Louise Tillotson, the owners of the luxury hotel and resort where he stayed Monday night.

In earlier education speeches, Bush called for making schools more accountable for poor performance and for giving parents more information on school performance and then offering them alternatives such as charter schools.

He said his education proposals are "bound by a thread of principle."

"The federal government must be humble enough to stay out of the day-to-day operation of local schools," he said. "It must be wise enough to give states and school districts more authority and freedom. And it must be strong enough to require proven performance in return."

Bush's emphasis on character education, abstinence education and "zero tolerance" for disruptive students echo themes that have been prominent in the governor's efforts to reform schools in Texas.

The school safety proposals come after a series of school shootings, including the April massacre of 12 students and a teacher at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo. Bush said some of these problems arise from muddled school policies that result in an atmosphere of confusion.

"At the extreme, in the case of a very few children – lawless, loveless and lonely – this confusion can harden into self-destruction or evil, suicide or violence," Bush said. "They find no elevating ideals – from parents or church or school – to counter the chaos in their souls."

Among his other proposals:

- increasing federal spending for character education from \$8 million to \$25 million.

- increasing abstinence education in schools to the level of attention given to contraception.

- allowing voluntary expressions of religious faith in schools, including

reading Bibles, saying grace before meals and wearing religious symbols like the cross or the Star of David.

"Public schools that forbid these forms of religious expression are confused," Bush said. "But more than that, they are rejecting some of the best and finest influences on young lives."

And he said the president should offer one of the most important moral examples for the nation's young people.

"It is the most sobering part of a decision to run for president," Bush said. "And it is a charge I plan to keep."

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Bush offers prescription for safer schools, character training
EDS: Will be UPDATED after speech at noon event; speech delivery
expected about 12:45 p.m. EST.

By WILL LESTER

Associated Press Writer

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) - Allowing teachers to reasonably enforce discipline and providing more character education for students would improve safety at America's schools, Gov. George W. Bush said today.

"When children and teen-agers go to school afraid of being bullied or beaten or worse, it is the ultimate betrayal of adult responsibility," Bush said in a draft of a speech to be given today in Gorham, N.H.

He said states and districts should have to provide children the option of transferring out of schools that remain unsafe. Under his program, Bush said, "No parent in America - no matter their income - would be forced to send their children to a school where violence reigns."

visitors?

The Texas governor was in New Hampshire to deliver his third major speech on education at a time that he needs to defend his front-runner status for the Republican presidential nomination and raise his profile in the state that holds the nation's first presidential primary Feb. 1.

Sen. John McCain of Arizona has been gaining ground on Bush in New Hampshire, with recent polls showing McCain with the support of roughly 25 percent and Bush with support in the low 40s.

In recent weeks, Bush skipped two candidate forums in New Hampshire because of schedule conflicts. But a close call when a truck-trailer overturned near his jogging path in Austin, Texas Monday didn't keep him away this time. Bush suffered minor injuries to his right leg and hip.

In his education safety plan, Bush proposed a law that would protect school officials from federal lawsuits when trying to enforce discipline reasonably.

- necessary?

"The real problem comes not when children challenge the rules, but when adults don't defend the rules," he said.

"Many schools, intimidated by the threat of lawsuits, have watered down their standards of behavior," he said. "In many cases, adults are in authority, but not in control."

In earlier education speeches, Bush called for making schools more accountable for poor performance and for giving parents more information on school performance and then offering them alternatives such as charter schools.

He said his education proposals are "bound by a thread of principle."

"The federal government must be humble enough to stay out of the day-to-day operation of local schools," he said. "It must be wise enough to give states and school districts more authority and freedom. And it must be strong enough to require proven performance in return."

done - alternatives?

Bush's emphasis on character education, abstinence education and "zero tolerance" for disruptive students echo themes that have been prominent in the governor's efforts to reform schools in Texas.

The school safety proposals come after a series of school shootings, including the April massacre of 12 students and a teacher at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo. Bush said some of these problems arise from muddled school policies that result in an atmosphere of confusion.

"At the extreme, in the case of a very few children - lawless, loveless and lonely - this confusion can harden into self-destruction or evil, suicide or violence," Bush said. "They find no elevating ideals - from parents or church or school - to counter the chaos in their souls."

Among his other proposals:

- barring any juvenile guilty of a serious gun offense from ever owning a gun.

- tripling the funding for character education in schools.

- increasing abstinence education in schools to the level of attention given to contraception.

- allowing voluntary expressions of religious faith in schools, including reading Bibles, saying grace before meals and wearing religious symbols like the cross and the Star of David.

"Public schools that forbld these forms of religious expression are confused," Bush said. "But more than that, they are rejecting some of the best and finest influences on young lives."

And he said the president should offer one of the most important moral examples for the nation's young people.

"It is the most sobering part of a decision to run for president," Bush said. "And it is a charge I plan to keep."

[George&Bush]

Democratic

Democratic National Committee

News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 2, 1999

CONTACT: Jenny Backus
202/863-8033

DNC CHAIR CRITICIZES BUSH EDUCATION SPEECH

Indianapolis, IN -- Democratic National Committee (DNC) National Chair Joe Andrew criticized early reviews of Texas Governor George W. Bush's third and final education speech today.

"It seems like George W. Bush's idea of fixing our public schools is to walk away from the students and the schools that most need our help. When you strip away his shiny rhetoric, whether it is Head Start, Title I or violence in our schools, the Republican idea of reforming our schools is nothing more than abandoning them. Each 'big idea' is nothing more than a glorified voucher scheme which will only end up leaving a whole generation of children behind," Andrew said.

"Bush said he was going to give us his vision in three speeches. As hard as we try to put something together from the mishmash of proposals he has put out there, there is no clear plan or vision about how he wants to educate our children for the twenty-first century and make our schools stronger and safer. He's not the Education Governor, he's the Education Lite Governor," Andrew said.

Andrew cited three areas of concern in a comprehensive document found on the DNC Web site at www.democrats.org called "Rhetoric vs. Reality -- George W. Bush's Real Record on Protecting Texas Kids."

THE TEXAS RECORD - SCHOOL VIOLENCE IS ON THE RISE IN TEXAS

Andrew pointed out that school violence in Texas is on the rise and that a 1999 Texas audit found that Texas had not been enforcing the Texas Safe Schools Act.

"It's ironic that George W. Bush is preaching to New Hampshire voters about how to create safer schools when his own record in Texas is more in line with the National Rifle Association (NRA) than the National Education Association," Andrew said.

JUST SAYING NO TO THE NRA

Andrew also showed that Bush has failed to show leadership in the one area where he could make a significant difference in keeping guns and gun violence away from children, passing sensible gun safety legislation and standing up to the NRA.

Every time Bush is forced to choose between protecting kids from guns and heeding the NRA, he chooses the NRA. Andrew cited a 1997 law signed by Bush that would prevent authorities from prosecuting Texans who illegally carried handguns.

(more)

BUSH VOUCHER PROGRAM HURTS SCHOOLS AND KIDS

Andrew also pointed out that George W. Bush's risky ideas on education have already been rejected by the real moderates in his party. In early October, the Republican House Committee on Education and the Workforce rejected a voucher measure that, according to the October 7th *Washington Post*, "resembles a proposal made by Bush" to permit school vouchers to be used under the \$8 billion Title I proposal.

Andrew also stated the DNC will be offering a comprehensive press release and background materials immediately following the speech as well as providing react from party leaders and education experts. For more information or to set up an interview, please call Jenny Backus at 863-8033.

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RHETORIC VS. REALITY: THE TRUTH ABOUT GEORGE W. BUSH'S RECORD ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Bush Rhetoric	Texas Reality
"When children and teen-agers go to school afraid of being bullied or beaten or worse, it is the ultimate betrayal of adult responsibility," Bush said in a draft of his third education speech. [<u>Associated Press</u>, 11/2/99]	TEXAS UNDER BUSH FAILS TO PROTECT KIDS IN SCHOOL. Texas Received "D" in Protecting Kids from Guns. Texas received a poor grade from Handgun Control, Inc., for failing to pass laws to protect kids from guns. The national gun-control group cited Texas' failure to prohibit juveniles from owning handguns, as well as the state's prohibition of municipal laws that are stricter than state law. Only five other states received a lower grade than Texas, which was also criticized for allowing the carrying of concealed weapons. [<u>Houston Chronicle</u>, 9/15/98] Number of Assaults Against Students Went Up in 1997-1998. The number of assaults against students that occurred in Texas schools increased by more than 13,000 assaults during the 1997-1998 school year. In 1997-1998, there were 58,650 assaults against students reported in Texas schools, a 29 percent increase from the previous year. The year before, 1996-1997, there were 45,556 assaults. ["Note from the Comptroller on School Safety: Four-year Statewide Incident Statistics," www.cpa.state.tx.us/tspr/safety.html; <u>Houston Chronicle</u>, 8/28/99] School-Related Gang Violence Increased in Texas Under Bush. The number of school-related incidents of gang violence increased during Bush's time as governor from a low of 5,736 in 1994-1995 to a high of 8,959 in 1996-1997. ["Note from the Comptroller on School Safety: Four-year Statewide Incident Statistics," www.cpa.state.tx.us/tspr/safety.html] Guns Confiscated in Texas Schools Increased in 1997-98 School Year. According to a Texas Kids Count study, the number of guns on campus in Texas schools increased, with the number of guns confiscated on campus rose from 523 in the 1996-97 school year to 576 in 1997-98. [<u>Austin American-Statesman</u>, 5/18/99] Texas Leads the Country in Student Expulsions for Gun Violations. In 1997-1998, Texas expelled 424 students for violating the Gun-Free Schools Act, more than any other state in the country. Almost half of those expelled students were in elementary or junior high school. These offenses included 285 violations for carrying handguns, 44 violations for carrying rifles, and 95 violations for other types of firearms. Texas had more handgun violations under this Act than any other state from 1997-1998. [Department of Education, "Gun-Free Schools Act - 1997-98 Report," 8/99]

He said states and districts should have to provide children the option of transferring out of schools that remain unsafe. Under his program, Bush said, "No parent in America - no matter their income - would be forced to send their children to a school where violence reigns" [Associated Press, 11/2/99]

BUSH'S TEXAS TRANSFER PROGRAM IS A FAILURE

Bush's Texas Transfer Program Failed. Bush signed legislation that made 796,846 out of 3.7 million Texas students eligible to switch to higher-performing schools, according to the Texas Education Agency. Students qualify for transfer if less than half of the school's students pass the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test in any two of the preceding three years. The legislation expands the public education grant program, so schools receiving transfers will receive more state and local funds than schools students leave. [Austin American-Statesman, 7/8/97, 11/30/97]

Transfer Program Called a Failure in 1997. In its first two years of existence, the Bush-supported Public Education Grant program saw only 53 students exercise the option to transfer out of their low-performing schools. Critics and parents argued the program failed to move students because better schools refused to accept students from the low-performing schools. [Dallas Morning News, 3/13/97, 3/4/97, 5/27/97]

In 1998, Only 413 Students Transferred. Despite Bush-supported financial incentives to encourage schools to accept transfers, only 413 students transferred to another district in the 1998 school year. [Dallas Morning News, 1/21/99]

"The real problem comes not when children challenge the rules, but when adults don't defend the rules," Bush said. [Associated Press, 11/2/99]

BUSH HAS FAILED TO ENFORCE RULES ALREADY ON THE BOOKS.

Texas Not Enforcing Juvenile Violence Act. Texas failed to expel 850 students who committed acts of violence in school in 1997-1998, according to a 1999 state audit. The Safe Schools Act mandates that students who commit violent acts be removed and placed in an alternative learning center. Of the 850 acts of violence, 225 involved illegal knives, 218 involved other weapons, 74 involved firearms, and 196 were aggravated assaults. The audit also found that there was a disproportionate number of minority and poor students in the alternative learning center, and that there was no measure in place to assess the academic progress of students in that program. [Dallas Morning News, 9/2/99]

In a preview of his third education speech, Bush said he would bar any juvenile guilty of a serious gun offense from ever owning a gun [Associated Press, 1/12/99]

TEXAS CRIMINALS / JUVENILES HAVE EASY ACCESS TO GUNS UNDER BUSH.

Under Bush Texas Offered More Opportunities to Buy Weapons Through The Guns Show Loophole Than Any Other State. Under Bush, Texas offered convicted felons more opportunities to purchase guns than any other state in the country through a loophole that allows people to purchase guns at gun shows with no background check. Texas led the country with 472 gun shows in 1998 -- 222 more shows than the state in second place. South Texas alone hosts a gun show nearly every weekend. Police have testified that some of the shows advertise that they are not required to perform background checks. San Antonio police testified that 20 percent of guns convicted felons and juveniles used to commit crimes in Texas in 1998 were purchased at gun shows [South Bend Tribune, 2/18/99; San Antonio Express-News, 3/18/99, 4/14/99]

Bush Announced Support For Texas Background Checks Bill AFTER It Failed. Bush waited until just hours after the Texas legislature killed a bill mandating criminal background checks for purchasers of handguns at gun shows to announce his support for such checks. The chairman of the House Public Safety Committee, State Rep. Bob Turner (D-Coleman) -- who voted against the bill -- said, "He (Bush) never called me. His staff here who work with us in the House every day, all day have never visited with me at all about the bill." Bush later refused to revive the Texas Background checks bill [Houston Chronicle, 4/27/99; New York Times, 4/30/99]

BACK-TO-SCHOOL WITH GEORGE W. BUSH

Violence on the Rise

In the wake of several tragic shootings, students across America have returned to school. Yet, despite touting himself as "the education governor," George W. Bush has a history of being more in line with the National Rifle Association than the National Education Association. While school violence and expulsions due to gun violations are on the rise in Texas, Bush has signed and supported laws that have made it easier for any Texan, including criminals and children, to buy and possess firearms.

SCHOOL VIOLENCE ON THE RISE IN TEXAS

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Student Arrests for Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Increased in Texas in 1997-1998. The number of students arrested for possession, sale or use of Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs (TAOD) increased by over 2,500 arrests between the 1996-1997 and 1997-1998 school years in Texas. In 1997-1998, there were 11,342 arrests in Texas schools for possession, sale or use of TAOD, while there were 8,736 of these arrests in 1996-1997. ["Note from the Comptroller on School Safety: Four-year Statewide Incident Statistics," www.cpa.state.tx.us/tspr/safety.html]

Texas Suspensions for Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Increased Under Bush. The number of students suspended for the possession, sale or use of Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs (TAOD) has increased every year since Bush became governor. In 1994-1995 there were 10,264 suspensions related to possession, sale or use of TAOD. By 1997-1998, there were 15,113 suspensions for these offenses. ["Note from the Comptroller on School Safety: Four-year Statewide Incident Statistics," www.cpa.state.tx.us/tspr/safety.html]

Almost 600 Firearms Confiscated in Texas Schools in 1997-1998. Five hundred seventy-six firearms were confiscated in Texas schools during the 1997-1998 school year. That represents an increase of over

50 guns from 1996-1997. ["Note from the Comptroller on School Safety: Four-year Statewide Incident Statistics." www.cpa.state.tx.us/tspr/safety.html]

School-Related Gang Violence Increased in Texas Under Bush. The number of school-related incidents of gang violence increased during Bush's time as governor from a low of 5,736 in 1994-1995 to a high of 8,959 in 1996-1997. ["Note from the Comptroller on School Safety: Four-year Statewide Incident Statistics." www.cpa.state.tx.us/tspr/safety.html]

Assaults Against Teachers and Staff Increased in 1997-1998 in Texas. The number of assaults against teachers and staff in Texas increased from the 1996-1997 school year in 1997-1998. In 1997-1998, there were 4,369 assaults against teachers and staff in Texas schools, while in 1996-1997 there were 3,927 assaults. ["Note from the Comptroller on School Safety: Four-year Statewide Incident Statistics." www.cpa.state.tx.us/tspr/safety.html]

Under Bush, More than 200,000 Assaults on Students and 18,000 Attacks on Teachers in Texas Schools. According to 1999 Texas Education Agency reports, during the previous four academic years, there were about 200,000 assaults against students and 18,000 assaults against teachers in the past four academic years. The TEA also reported about 31,000 weapons confiscated in Texas schools during the same period. [[Austin American-Statesman](#), 5/21/99]

Texas Leads the Country in Student Expulsions for Gun Violations. In 1997-1998, Texas expelled 424 students for violating the Gun-Free Schools Act, more than any other state in the country. Almost half of those expelled students were in elementary or junior high school. These offenses included 285 violations for carrying handguns, 44 violations for carrying rifles, and 95 violations for other types of firearms. Texas had more handgun violations under this Act than any other state from 1997-1998. [Department of Education, "Gun-Free Schools Act - 1997-98 Report," 8/99]

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BUSH HAS SUPPORTED MEASURES THAT ENDANGER KIDS

Bush Signed NRA-backed Concealed Gun Bill. In 1995, Bush signed an NRA-backed bill to allow private citizens to carry concealed handguns, ending a 125 year ban on concealed weapons in Texas. "Texas will be a better place because of this law," he said. The Texas Police Chiefs Association lobbied against the bill; the head of the group, Police Chief Kenneth Yarbrough, said, "This has no long-term meaningful value... and it has great potential to make things worse." Texas law enforcement officials are required to approve a permit for anyone who passes a background check and attends 10 hours of classroom training, unlike other states where police are given discretion in determining who should be granted a permit. Bush also signed a bill permitting licensed residents from other states to carry concealed weapon, even if non-Texans haven't had similar safety training courses as those required by the Texas law. [[Dallas Morning News](#), 8/27/95, 5/11/95, 12/23/97, 5/27/99, [New York Times](#), 5/28/95, "Carrying Concealed Weapons: Questions and Answers," www.handguncontrol.org/gunlaw, [Houston Chronicle](#), 5/30/97, [LA Times](#), 5/3/99]

Bush Made It Harder to Prosecute People Bringing Guns to School Sporting Events. Under Bush's 1997 amendment to his 1995 law, a person with a concealed weapons permit cannot be prosecuted for illegally bringing a gun to a school sporting event unless that school posts a sign

stating that guns are not allowed. *"We've had a tough enough battle, unsuccessfully, in just trying to preserve our right to say you cannot bring concealed weapons into schools and parks,"* said Ron Kirk, Mayor of Dallas [DMN, 5/27/99; San Antonio Exp-News, 1/10/96, 2/24/97, HB2909 text, AA-Statesman, 5/28/97, 12/10/97]

More than 2,000 Concealed Weapons Permit Holders Arrested in 1998. In 1998, 2,080 Texans with a concealed weapon permit were arrested by the police in Texas, including 15 for attempted murder. Felony and misdemeanor charges against concealed weapons permit holders increased 54 percent in one year -- from 431 in 1996 to 666 in 1997 [Houston Chronicle, 3/23/99, Greensboro News & Record, 11/29/98]

Bush Failed to Lead on Mandatory State Checks for Gun Show Purchases. Shortly after the Littleton, CO school shootings and just hours after the Texas legislature killed a bill mandating criminal background checks for purchasers of handguns at gun shows, Bush announced his support for such background checks. However, State Rep. Debra Danburg (D-Houston), House sponsor of the background checks bill, "laughed when a reporter asked if the governor had made any effort to advance her legislation. She said she learned of Bush's interest only when she read about his comments 'after the vote to kill the bill occurred in committee,'" according to the Houston Chronicle. The chairman of the House Public Safety Committee, State Rep. Bob Turner (D-Coleman) -- who voted against the bill -- said, "To this moment, the governor has never talked to me about the bill. . . He (Bush) never called me. His staff here who work with us in the House every day, all day have never visited with me at all about the bill." [Houston Chronicle, 4/27/99]

Bush Claimed to Support Federal Law for Background Checks at Gun Show, But Opposed Lautenberg Amendment Closing Loopholes. Bush claimed to support mandating gun show background checks, but he opposed the first two federal amendments to do just that. The first amendment, sponsored by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), was defeated, 51-47, with nearly all Republicans opposed, including Bush. The second Lautenberg amendment passed 51-50 after Vice President Gore cast the final vote. Making a reference to the Vice President's tie-breaking vote to pass the measure, Bush spokeswoman Karen Hughes claimed that "if George W. Bush had been president," his vice president would not have broken the tie to pass the mandatory background checks. Instead, Bush supported an amendment by GOP Sen. Larry Craig, written with the help of the NRA, that included numerous loopholes and concessions to the group [Boston Globe, 5/18/99, Baltimore Sun, 5/21/99, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 5/22/99, Dallas Morning News, 5/27/99]

Bush Supported NRA-Backed House Bill to Weaken Current Law. Not only did Bush fight closing the gun show loophole measures in the Senate, he backed NRA-supported House legislation that would have weakened status quo gun safety laws. The bill would have made it more difficult to conduct background checks at gun shows. The FBI estimates that 17,000 criminals who were denied guns under current law would have access to them if the House bill had passed. Now Bush says he supports an NRA-backed instant background check instead of the five-day waiting period contained in the Brady law. [Washington Post, 6/22/99, New York Times, 6/21/99, Handgun Control Inc. press release, 6/18/99, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 12/23/98]

Bush Opposed Mandatory Child Safety Locks. Bush opposes mandatory gun safety locks -- instead he thinks the locks should still be voluntary [Christian Science Monitor, 5/13/99]

Bush Signed NRA-Backed Bill Giving Gun Manufacturers Special Rights. In 1999, Bush signed legislation -- called the "gun lobby's top priority" -- that gives gun makers special protection from being held liable for the design and marketing of their products. Bush refused to offer support for an amendment to allow suits if a city received public support. Bush signed the ban even though not one city in Texas has filed a lawsuit against a gun manufacturer. In fact, Dallas Mayor Ron Kirk said Dallas had not filed a suit because he was concerned that gun lobby-influenced Austin would not approve of the lawsuit [San Antonio Express-News, 5/19/99; AP, 5/19/99; LA Times, 5/3/99, 5/23/99; Handgun Control Inc. Press Release, 5/18/99. Dallas Morning News, 5/27/99, New York Times, 6/20/99]



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Nov. 1, 1999, 8:28PM

Gun-control group, Bush differ over ad on fall of juvenile crime

By CLAY ROBISON

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AUSTIN -- George W. Bush, in a presidential campaign television ad, claims to have cut juvenile crime 38 percent in Texas since he has been governor, although the actual reduction in juvenile arrests has been only about 3 percent.

The rate of juveniles arrested for violent crimes alone has dropped 38 percent during the Bush administration, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Criminal Justice Policy Council.

But Bush's TV spot, one of four that began airing last week in the key nominating states of Iowa and New Hampshire, says flatly that the Republican front-runner "cut juvenile crime 38 percent," implying that all categories of juvenile offenses had been markedly reduced.

Budgetary claims made in the same ad were attacked last week by the campaign of Republican rival Steve Forbes.

The discrepancy in juvenile crime figures was pointed out by Texans Against Gun Violence, a gun-control group that was angered last spring when Bush did not try to win legislative approval of a bill that would have required criminal background checks of people purchasing firearms from non-licensed sellers at gun shows.

In the wake of the fatal high school shootings in Littleton, Colo., Bush said he supported the bill, but did nothing to try to get it passed before it was killed by a House committee.

The gun-control group said figures in the campaign commercial were "questionable."

According to crime statistics compiled by the DPS, the number of juveniles arrested for all types of crimes, violent and nonviolent, in Texas totaled 178,677 in 1994, the year before Bush took office.

Juvenile arrests increased to 182,405 in 1995 and 186,103 in 1996, Bush's first two years in office, before dropping to

the Dead

- Gun-control group, Bush differ over ad on fall of juvenile crime
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- Judge refuses to move murder trial from Montgomery County
- State changes provider of hepatitis treatment
- Molester serving 40 years gets 20 more added to sentence
- High court rejects Texas harassment case
- Ex-HFD clerk pleads guilty in bribery case
- Judge to decide admissibility of expert's report in Oregon suit
- Trucker's attorney starts appeals process, seeks new trial
- Suspect in '96 slaying extradited from Canada
- Teen sentenced to 60 years for role in fatal burglary
- Woman's body found; man turns himself in
- Services scheduled today for Latino activist Garcia
- Developer Schnitzer falls to cancer
- State briefs

1996, Bush's first two years in office, before dropping to 181,633 in 1997 and 173,905 in 1998.

The overall reduction from 1994 to 1998 was almost 3 percent.

Bush made juvenile crime one of his top priorities during his 1994 campaign, when Texas was suffering through a rash of violence perpetrated by teen-age offenders.

During Bush's first year in office, the Legislature enacted laws to crack down on juvenile crime, including one measure that lowered to 14 the age at which most violent juveniles can be tried as adults.

Bush spokesman Scott McClellan said the ad's claim was based on a juvenile arrest rate for violent crimes developed by the Criminal Justice Policy Council from DPS statistics. Violent crimes include murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault.

According to the Bush campaign, juvenile arrests for those crimes dropped from 7,220 in 1994 to 4,649 in 1998. The rate of violent-crime arrests dropped from 364.7 per 100,000 juveniles in 1994 to 224.2 per 100,000 juveniles in 1998, a 38 percent decrease.

McClellan said the TV ad was not misleading. "The reference is to violent juvenile crime, which was dramatically increased prior to Bush's administration and has been reduced under his leadership," he said.

"We would hope this group (Texans Against Gun Violence) would commend Governor Bush for his efforts to reduce juvenile crime."

Last week, Ken Blackwell, Forbes' national chairman, said the same TV ad, which says that Bush has reduced the growth of state spending in Texas to its lowest level in 40 years, was misleading.

Blackwell said a 35 percent increase in the Texas budget under Bush was greater than a 21 percent increase in federal spending under President Clinton.

But the Bush campaign defended the budgetary claim. The governor's office contends the budgetary growth under Bush has been only 2.7 percent, when adjusted for inflation, population growth and extra education funds that the state transferred to local school districts for property tax relief.

AP v5020 rp 3exec Bush-Education, Bjt,630

11-02 8:04a

Bush offers prescription for safer schools, character training
EDS: Will be UPDATED after speech at noon event; speech delivery
expected about 12:45 p.m. EST.

By WILL LESTER

Associated Press Writer

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) - Allowing teachers to reasonably enforce discipline and providing more character education for students would improve safety at America's schools, Gov. George W. Bush said today.

"When children and teen-agers go to school afraid of being bullied or beaten or worse, it is the ultimate betrayal of adult responsibility," Bush said in a draft of a speech to be given today in Gorham, N.H.

He said states and districts should have to provide children the option of transferring out of schools that remain unsafe. Under his program, Bush said, "No parent in America - no matter their income - would be forced to send their children to a school where violence reigns."

The Texas governor was in New Hampshire to deliver his third major speech on education at a time that he needs to defend his front-runner status for the Republican presidential nomination and raise his profile in the state that holds the nation's first presidential primary Feb. 1.

Sen. John McCain of Arizona has been gaining ground on Bush in New Hampshire, with recent polls showing McCain with the support of roughly 25 percent and Bush with support in the low 40s.

In recent weeks, Bush skipped two candidate forums in New Hampshire because of schedule conflicts. But a close call when a truck-trailer overturned near his jogging path in Austin, Texas Monday didn't keep him away this time. Bush suffered minor injuries to his right leg and hip.

In his education safety plan, Bush proposed a law that would protect school officials from federal lawsuits when trying to enforce discipline reasonably.

"The real problem comes not when children challenge the rules, but when adults don't defend the rules," he said.

"Many schools, intimidated by the threat of lawsuits, have watered down their standards of behavior," he said. "In many cases, adults are in authority, but not in control."

In earlier education speeches, Bush called for making schools more accountable for poor performance and for giving parents more information on school performance and then offering them alternatives such as charter schools.

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"The federal government must be humble enough to stay out of the day-to-day operation of local schools," he said. "It must be wise enough to give states and school districts more authority and freedom. And it must be strong enough to require proven performance in return."

Bush's emphasis on character education, abstinence education and "zero tolerance" for disruptive students echo themes that have been prominent in the governor's efforts to reform schools in Texas.

The school safety proposals come after a series of school shootings, including the April massacre of 12 students and a teacher at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo. Bush said some of these problems arise from muddled school policies that result in an atmosphere of confusion.

"At the extreme, in the case of a very few children - lawless, loveless and lonely - this confusion can harden into self-destruction or evil, suicide or violence," Bush said. "They find no elevating ideals - from parents or church or school - to counter the chaos in their souls."

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- barring any juvenile guilty of a serious gun offense from ever owning a gun.

- tripling the funding for character education in schools.

- increasing abstinence education in schools to the level of attention given to contraception.

- allowing voluntary expressions of religious faith in schools, including reading Bibles, saying grace before meals and wearing religious symbols like the cross and the Star of David.

"Public schools that forbid these forms of religious expression are confused," Bush said. "But more than that, they are rejecting some of the best and finest influences on young lives."

And he said the president should offer one of the most important moral examples for the nation's young people.

"It is the most sobering part of a decision to run for president," Bush said. "And it is a charge I plan to keep."

[George&Bush]