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[Latino Educational Excellence]

2013-0371-S

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### RESTRICTION CODES

#### Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

#### Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
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- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

## **DRAFT FOR INTERNAL WHITE HOUSE USE ONLY**

### **National Agenda for Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans**

*\*\*Throughout the agenda there are references to activities that CBO's and the private sector will undertake. The Initiative and WH outreach will engage leaders in both these fields to secure specific commitments for action and investment leading up to the conference. \*\**

Goal: The overall goal of the National Agenda is to promote excellence in education for Hispanic Americans by focusing attention and resources of the public and private sector and varying stakeholders to ensure educational equity for Hispanic Americans. Hispanic students are the fastest growing cohort of American students yet Hispanic students are also less likely to have effective preschool experiences, successful K-12 experiences, and graduate from college than non-Hispanic white students.

The Agenda covers pre-kindergarten, elementary and secondary education, and higher education. However, the agenda is not purely a federal undertaking. It recognizes that Washington cannot solve the challenges alone and that communities and the private sector also have a key role to play. The goal of the conference is to set goals and initiate positive steps to ensure that Hispanic children receive a high quality education and the same opportunities for life success that many Americans take for granted. The agenda and the conference will be a vehicle to highlight initiatives that the President and Vice President have undertaken toward this end and federal programs that address these issues; however, strong private sector and community based organization involvement is essential to bolster the likelihood of the conference and agenda translating into positive activity on the ground. There are 3 elementary and secondary education goals, one pre-k goal, and one higher education goal. *The three elementary and secondary goals are discussed below.*

Theme: *Educating ALL of America: Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.* This theme cuts across all five goals and provides an overarching message that the various policy initiatives support.

#### **Pre-K Goal: To be provided by the Office of the First Lady**

*Under discussion.*

#### **Reduce the dropout rate gap for Hispanic students.**

Background: According to the Census Bureau, during the 1996-97 school year, 3.6 percent of non-Hispanic whites, and 9.5 percent of Hispanics aged 15-24 dropped out of school.<sup>i</sup> According to the most recent Department of Education statistics available, the status dropout rate for Hispanic students is 25.3 percent while the rate for non-Hispanic white students is 7.6 percent. For Hispanic students born outside of the 50 states and Washington, DC, the status dropout rate is 39 percent.<sup>ii</sup> High school completion statistics paint an equally dismal picture, while 90.5 percent of eligible non-Hispanic whites had completed high school in 1997, only 66.7 percent of Hispanics had.<sup>iii</sup> Essentially, while dropout rates are still a problem for all students, by any measure the Hispanic dropout rate is at crisis proportions. In addition, many researchers consider dropout rates to be an underreported statistic and question the reliability of these numbers so the problem may be worse than these statistics indicate.

Goal: Eliminate the gap in the dropout between Hispanic students and non-Hispanic students by 2005.

Strategy: The federal government, the private sector, and community-based organizations all have a role to play in reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. The federal government will help prepare Hispanic students for school success by increasing access for Hispanic students to Head Start, Title I, and after-school programs. Both of these programs bolster literacy and research shows that reading difficulties are a key indicator for dropping out.<sup>iv</sup> The federal government will also expand access for Hispanics to mentoring activities such as the Gear-UP program and the TRIO programs and help ensure *access to test-preparation services to help Hispanic students on the SAT and ACT test. In addition, through a focus on smaller schools, charter schools, and reforming the American high school, the federal government will ensure that there are high quality options available to meet the varying needs of adolescent students. [pending budget proposals]*

The private sector will pledge to increase dropout prevention activities by partnering with schools and school districts to provide mentoring experiences for Latino youth. *Companies should make firm commitments of time and resources as part of participation in the conference. The Initiative can track commitments after the conference.*

Community-based organizations will work with schools to ensure that students identified as at-risk of dropping out are receiving interventions to encourage them to stay in school. *The Initiative will disseminate best practices.*

Conference Strands:

- Successful Models
- Expectations
- Academic Preparation
- Other factors (economics, language)

**Eliminate the achievement gap for Hispanic students**

Background: On the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the SAT, and other standardized tests there is an achievement gap between Hispanic students and white, non-Hispanic students. For example on the 1996 NAEP mathematics test for 9-year-olds, non-Hispanic white students averaged 237 (6 points above the average of 231) while Hispanic students averaged 215, 16 points below the average and 22 points below their non-Hispanic white peers. 13-year-old non-Hispanic white students averaged 281, 7 points above the average while Hispanic students averaged 256, 25 points below their white peers and 18 points below average. 17-year-old non-Hispanic white students showed a similar disparity scoring 292, 15 points below average and 21 points below their white counterparts.

The chart below illustrates the NAEP score disparity in more detail:

NAEP Test (1996)	Average Score	Non-Hispanic White Average	Hispanic Average	Hispanic v. Average Score	Non-Hispanic White v. Hispanic	Non-Hispanic White v. Average
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<b>9-year-old Reading</b>	212.4	219.9	194.1	(18.3)	(25.8)	7.5
<b>13-year-old Reading</b>	259.1	267	239.9	(19.2)	(27.1)	7.9
<b>17-year-old Reading</b>	286.9	294	264.7	(22.2)	(29.3)	7.1
<b>9-year-old Math</b>	231	237	215	(16)	(22)	6
<b>13-year-old Math</b>	274	281	256	(18)	(25)	7
<b>17-year-old Math</b>	307	313	292	(15)	(21)	6
<b>9-year-old Science</b>	230	239	207	(23)	(32)	9
<b>13-year-old Science</b>	256	266	232	(24)	(34)	10
<b>17-year-old Science</b>	296	307	269	(27)	(38)	11
<b>9-year-old Writing</b>	207	216	191	(16)	(25)	9
<b>13-year-old Writing</b>	264	271	246	(18)	(25)	7
<b>17-year-old Writing</b>	283	289	269	(14)	(20)	6

While all the score gaps are serious, it is worth noting that the gap actually grows for students in reading and math as they progress through school.

On the SAT the score gap is equally problematic with an average verbal score for Hispanic students of 466 compared to 526 for non-Hispanic white students (60 points) and a gap of 486 to 526 (40 points) in math.<sup>v</sup> State assessments and other standardized tests indicate similar disparities.

Goal: Eliminate the achievement gap for Hispanic students on state assessments within the next decade.

Strategy: The federal government will *expand access to rigorous academic courses for all students including Hispanic students and expand access to test preparation services.* [pending budget proposals] At the state level, rigorous coursework is the best preparation for high performance on

assessments measuring state standards. According to the Education Trust, only 1 in 4 American students overall takes Algebra in the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade and only 1 in 5 Hispanic students have this opportunity.<sup>vi</sup>

The private sector can play a key role here by supporting state reform efforts and ensuring that states are taking the necessary steps to make a rigorous curriculum that supports state standards in place at schools serving high concentrations of Hispanic students.

In addition, the private sector should expand access for Latino students to private test preparation services and partner with schools and school districts to provide tutoring and mentoring services. Community-based organizations will play a role as facilitators of public-private partnerships and should build on programs such as Gear-Up to ensure that all students are aware of their options for post-secondary education and the steps they must take to realize these options. *The Initiative will coordinate these commitments and disseminate best practices from CBO's.*

While NAEP provides a good gauge of educational attainment on a longitudinal basis, it is a poor test by which to set national goals. Because the NAEP test is not aligned to state standards and curriculum it does not necessarily reflect a states reform efforts. Likewise, the SAT is a poor measure of overall educational progress as well because the test is not valid for that purpose, doesn't measure a random group of students, and is controversial. While helping students on the SAT should be part of the strategy for college attainment and the achievement gap, in the absence of national indicators, the goal laid out at the conference should be to eliminate score disparities on state assessments within 10 years. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization bill that the House passed this fall established a 10 year deadline for moving all demographic subsets of students to the "proficient" level on state assessments. Our goal would dovetail with this target.

#### Conference Strands:

- Good Assessment Practice for all students and LEP students in particular
- Expectations
- Teacher Preparation/Teacher skills issues

### **Ensure that Hispanic Students Achieve English Language Proficiency**

#### Background:

Goal: *[Within 3 years of entering public school] or [before graduating from High School.] [I was concerned that it would be too contentious or politically problematic; however, after discussions with Sarita it is clear that there is interest in pursuing this as a goal. However, I want to get a better feel for where the community is on this issue through Brian's outreach meetings before proceeding too much further on this issue.]*

Strategy: Fluency in the English language is essential for academic and employment success in this country. Through its investment in Title I, bilingual education, Head Start, and other programs targeted at literacy the federal government will ensure that all Hispanic students are competent in English by *[see goal]*. English proficiency is a key indicator for academic and employment success.

The private sector will commit to increasing awareness among Hispanic elementary and secondary students of the economic advantages of English proficiency as well as the advantages of multilingual skills in the job market. *The Initiative will coordinate these pledges.*

*Secretary Riley has spoken out on the importance of "English plus 1" for all students in the global economy. This could be a good link for us vis a vis some of the sensitivities around this issue.*

**Higher Education Goal to be provided by NEC**

*Under discussion.*

**Notes:**



Kendra L. Brooks  
02/01/2000 12:54:15 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Anna Richter/OPD/EOP@EOP, Bethany Little/OPD/EOP@EOP, Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject:

We don't have time to wait and see how things play out and then slowly try to regain control; too much will have been confirmed and the risk of putting the groups out is much higher than if we lay down the law right now. Maria was extremely clear about the fact that we are planning a White House conference; the White House sets the agenda and is the host. There were no objections at the time or since (in an outright manner). Because this was the initial agreement, we are not willing to change course. If there is a White House conference then it has to mean White House control.

We have two options:

1. We can host a substantive conference in which we have ultimate control of everything, but can work closely with the groups so that they are bought in and actively involved.
2. The groups can do whatever they want to do in their own conference "off-campus", with a White House strategy session either before or after the conference.

**White House National Meeting for Latino Educational Excellence**  
**DRAFT - Timeline - DRAFT**

**Early January**

• **Outreach to External Groups**

- **Meeting with Education Stakeholders** January (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week)  
Location: White House  
Stakeholder participants: John Guerra (AT&T), Delia Pompa (NABE), Guillermo Linares (Commissioner, NY), Arturo Vargas (NALEO).  
*Scriven + Hines*
- **Meeting with Latino Organizations** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Location: White House  
Organization participants: NCLR, LULAC, NALEO, HACU, MALDEF, MANA, NPRC, PRLDF, Latino Civil Rights Task Force, Hispanic National Bar Association, SW Voter, American GI Forum, Nat. Assoc. of Bilingual Education, Nat. Assoc. of Migrant Education, National HEP/CAMP Association  
*Brian B.*
- **Meeting with Education Organizations** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Location: White House  
Organization participants: National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, American Association of School Administrators, Council of Chief State School Officers, National School Boards Association, National PTA, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, Council of Great City Schools, National Association of Bilingual Education Association for Career and Technical Education (Voc Ed), Council for Opportunity in Education (TRIO), American Council on Education, American Association of Community Colleges, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, National Coalition for Literacy, National Association of College Admissions Counseling  
*Lowder + Andy*
- **Meeting with Business/Philanthropist** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Location: White House  
Organization participants: Coca-Cola Company, US West, US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, US Mexico Chamber of Commerce  
*Jamison + Feb*  
*Professional Orgs.*
- **Meeting with Business/Philanthropist** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Location: White House  
Organization participants: Coca-Cola Company, US West, US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, US Mexico Chamber of Commerce  
*Brian + Jay Dim*
- **Meeting/Conference Call with Congressional Offices** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Location: TBD  
Participants:  
*M. L. + M. G.*
- **Conference Call with Statewide/Local Electeds** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Location: TBD  
Participants: Statewide and local electeds from AZ, CA, FL, IL, NM, NJ, NV, NY, PA, TX, PR  
*M. C. + J. M.*
- **Conference Call with Cabinet Members** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Location: TBD  
Participants: Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff and Communications Directors from Cabinet members offices  
*B. J. + Sean D. Shaw*

- Midway  
Review*
- **Conference Call with Latino Community Leaders** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Location: TBD  
Participants: Community Leaders from AZ, CA, FL, IL, NM, NJ, NV, NY, MA, PA, TX, PR

- Submit*
- **Conference Call with Excelencia Conference Planning Committees** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Location: TBD  
Participants: Leaders from the Excelencia Conference Planning Committees

- **Conference Proposal and Agenda** January (4th Week) *mid-Feb.*
  - Develop Conference Proposal and Agenda, submit proposal for decisions on goals, format, date, location, outcomes, participants, issues, paper, etc.
  - Develop message with Communications office and submit scheduling requests.

## February

- Coordinate substantive planning with NEC, DPC, OMB and Education, and begin planning logistics.
- **Buy-in from External Groups**
  - Secure buy-in, via conference calls, from External Groups, and other White House offices, Congress, Constituency Groups/Organizations/Community Leaders, State and Local Elected officials and Cabinet Members.

## March- April

- Extend invitations to all participants.
- Pull in Press Office to develop and implement press strategy.
- Finalize plans.

## April

- Conference date 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week in month.

**Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans**  
**December 15, 1999**  
**9:30 am – Ward Room**

**1. Annual Plan Required by Executive Order 12900**

FY98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report complete, submitted to POTUS, and handed out to agencies at IDC meeting. <i>OMB, ED</i></li> <li>• Plans for further distribution. <i>Initiative</i></li> </ul>
FY99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline of December 20, 1999 set at IDC meeting. <i>Initiative, OMB</i></li> <li>• Resistance from agencies: requests for extensions through February 2000. <i>Initiative</i></li> </ul>

*Inter Departmental Council - folks in each agency trying to implement Ex O. doc*

**2. Initiative Matters**

Commission Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter from Commission to Secretary Riley. <i>Initiative</i> <i>staff report to commissioners</i></li> <li>• Proposed end-of-year status report from Initiative to Commission. <i>Initiative</i></li> </ul>
Inter-Departmental Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next meeting set for January 18, 2000. <i>OMB, Initiative, DPC</i></li> <li>• Invite R. Yzaguirre? <i>OMB, Initiative</i></li> </ul>

**3. Communications with Outside Groups**

Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to R. Yzaguirre letter. <i>ED, DPC, OMB</i></li> </ul>
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raul's request for meeting with President, Vice President. <i>COS</i></li> <li>• Need for new meeting with NCLR and other groups? <i>COS</i></li> </ul>

**4. Regional/Topic Workplan**

Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status of current proposed 7 city/topic workplan. <i>OMB, DPC, Initiative</i></li> </ul>
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-meeting with top-performing agencies for securing buy-in for workplan? <i>OMB, COS</i></li> <li>• Meeting with Kevin Thurm from HHS. <i>COS</i></li> </ul>

**5. Hispanic Education National Meeting**

*- AT+T 4-7<sup>th</sup>*

Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed January 20, 1999, meeting with John Guerra et. al. <i>Initiative</i></li> </ul>
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft workplan. <i>DPC</i></li> <li>• Draft outreach plan. <i>OPL</i></li> </ul>

**6. HEAP**

Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for internal Title 1 meeting. <i>ED, COS</i></li> </ul>
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DRAFT

Dear Mr. Yzaguirre:

As promised by President Clinton in his October 8<sup>th</sup> letter, we are writing to update you on the implementation of the Hispanic Education Action Plan (HEAP) and recent progress with the Executive Order 12900 Annual Performance Plans. This letter is to discuss the steps the Administration has taken, and plans to take, to ensure the successful implementation of these two central components of our overall strategy for improving educational opportunities and excellence for Latinos. As such, we continue, with your support, to pursue the resources necessary to positively effect change in the lives of the (X million) Latino students in this nation.

Before getting into the specifics of HEAP implementation, we would like first to update you on the status of the Executive Order 12900 Annual Performance Plans. As you may know, each of the 27 agencies submitted their FY 1998 reports to the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans last October. Overall, we found that the reports demonstrated several improvements over FY 1995 submissions. For example, the Departments of Energy and Health and Human Services have developed department-wide initiatives with short and long-term strategies to ensure Hispanics participate and benefit from the agencies' education and employment programs. Likewise, several agencies have demonstrated a tremendous commitment to improving the educational outcomes of Latinos through creative and innovative approaches of implementing the Executive Order.

While a difficult task, the process of collecting annual plans has increased each Federal agency's awareness of its responsibility to better meet the educational needs of Latinos. However, because we know more can be done to advance and expand agency efforts, we remain committed to ensuring the agency plans and efforts continue to improve in the upcoming years. The White House Initiative and OMB have already begun efforts to improve the focus of the FY 2000 Annual Performance Plans and continue to meet with the Inter-Departmental Council to refine this exercise to achieve the best possible outcomes.

*[Insert interagency support for the Excelencia conference series and other interagency efforts. (Sarita)]*

Even before HEAP was launched, the Department of Education successfully expanded Latino participation in several education programs over the last few years. For example, changes in the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as well as expanded adult education programs and improved student financial aid resources, have provided for increased access to quality education for Hispanic students, particularly those with limited English proficiency.

For the first time, the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 clearly articulated the responsibility of Title I schools not only to serve students whose first language was not English, but also to provide them with necessary supports to ensure that they achieve to the same high academic standards expected of all children. As you know, this requires grantees to include LEP students in assessment and accountability systems. In addition, the number of Hispanic students

served by Title I has increased by 72 percent since 1994, comprising approximately 30 percent of the approximately 3.3 million students served by this \$8 billion program.

Similarly, the 1996-1997 program year reports of adult participation in State-administered adult education programs report Hispanic enrollment at nearly 1.6 million, an increase of more than 50 percent since 1988.

On the student aid front, the Department has made significant improvements to its outreach and delivery systems, including providing a Spanish language version of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as well as bilingual toll-free customer service and support lines. In 1997, a record high 65.5% of Hispanic high school graduates enrolled in college, with 45 percent of Hispanic college students receiving Federal student financial aid. Department studies suggest that Hispanic recipients of Pell Grants are more likely to attain a degree than those who do not receive such support.

Most recently, the Department of Education focused Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) outreach and technical assistance on ensuring that the program, designed to help young students in high-poverty communities complete high school and be academically prepared to attend college, sufficiently serves minority students. For the first GEAR UP competition, held in 1999, the Department conducted an aggressive outreach strategy to encourage institutions of higher education, including Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), and school systems in local communities with large Latino populations, to apply for GEAR UP awards. This strategy included holding outreach and technical assistance sessions in communities with large Hispanic populations, and selecting high quality reviewers who understand approaches to reducing the Latino dropout rate in and increasing Hispanic college participation. In August, President Clinton announced the award of the first GEAR UP grants, including 164 partnership grants and 21 state grants. This initial group of GEAR UP grantees will help more than a quarter of a million disadvantaged young people prepare for and go on to college. More than 31 partnerships involving HSIs were funded, involving \$20 million (or nearly 27 percent) of the \$75 million for partnership funding.

Likewise, the Head Start program has taken significant steps to increase access for the Latino community. To name a few, Head Start has increased by 50 percent the number of points awarded to expansion grant applicants who emphasize outreach to under-served populations, such as seasonal farm workers, recent immigrant families, and non-English speaking groups. Also, Head Start has increased its efforts to work with and monitor programs to ensure full utilization of community assessments to better target outreach, recruitment and enrollment of under-served populations. Head Start expects to become even more informed about serving LEP children through the Research Conference on Early Childhood Bilingual Language and Literacy Development in San Antonio next February.

However, despite these and other examples, we agree with you that there is still much to be done to improve the impact of HEAP and other Federal education programs in effectively targeting and reaching Latino students. To ensure HEAP implementation, we have assigned Barbara Chow, Associate Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and Michael Cohen, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, to lead this effort. In addition, we

have been engaging the expertise of both educators and members of the Latino community in identifying and planning additional steps to be taken. Your staff has been a particularly valuable resource in this effort.

Over the next several months we will further expand these efforts to improve Latino participation in Federal education programs and ensure that such programs effectively serve these students and their unique needs. For example, we will build on our experience with GEAR UP to expand efforts to increase Latino participation in after school activities through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program. The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) will focus on strengthening the enforcement of provisions in current Title I law that require states to hold schools and local school districts accountable for the academic performance of Latino and LEP students. OESE and the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA) will also continue to identify and disseminate information to schools served by Title I, Title VII, and other federal education programs to implement models of effective practices for helping Latino students learn to read and meet academic challenging standards in other academic subjects. Similarly, we will be working with our higher education programs to track and improve their effectiveness in serving Latino students, as well as adult education programs to ensure access to meaningful learning opportunities. These steps are beginning to pay off. The attached documents include updated implementation strategies for all of the programs in the Hispanic Education Action Plan and the steps we will take in the coming months.

As mentioned previously, we look forward to working with you and your staff, as well as the larger community, as we continue on this significant path.

Sincerely,

Jacob J. Lew  
Director, Office of Management and Budget

Richard W. Riley  
Secretary of Education

# NCLR

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

Raul Yzaguirre, President

September 21, 1999  
(Delivered by hand)

Hon. Bill Clinton  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you on an urgent matter that demands your immediate attention. You have noted the Administration's success in conceiving and then winning increased funding from Congress for the Hispanic Education Action Plan (HEAP), and deservedly so. NCLR has supported HEAP vigorously, both in its planning stages within the Administration and in our lobbying efforts with the Congress. In addition, we have given the Administration substantial credit for this first-ever, major programmatic federal education initiative targeted to the Hispanic community. We recognize that, on symbolic grounds alone, the HEAP is an important, precedent-setting, groundbreaking initiative, and we very much appreciate the personal attention you and the Vice President have given to its conception and implementation.

Having said that, we are obligated to call to your attention several serious and long-standing problems which threaten to turn the HEAP into a complete sham. Permit me to give you some background. Latinos have long been under-served by federal education programs (see attachment 1). The theory behind HEAP - to provide major increases in funding to programs for which Latinos students are disproportionately *eligible* - makes sense as a strategy only to the extent that Hispanic children are *actually served* by such programs. Thus, HEAP makes sense only if the problem of underrepresentation is addressed. The Executive Order signed by President Bush in 1990 and that you re-issued designed in part to address the underrepresentation issue. It established a structural mechanism to monitor and encourage progress toward improving the responsiveness of federal education programs to the Hispanic community.

Thus, our support for the HEAP was conditioned on "off-budget" improvements in program implementation that would make such programs, as well as other important programs like Head Start, more responsive to our community. We believed, inaccurately as it turns out, that the combination of the White House Initiative overseeing the Executive Order and a special inter-departmental team overseeing HEAP implementation together would produce the kinds of programmatic and policy changes needed to increase Hispanic access to HEAP and related programs.

Marina E. Bono  
we need to get on  
this -

TK  
COPY

National Office  
1111 19th Street, N.W., Suite 1010  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: (202) 785-1670  
Fax: (202) 776-1792



We have participated in numerous discussions with, and have provided specific recommendations to Administration officials to address the chronic denial of access of Hispanic students from federal education programs (see attachment 2). We had confidence in the commitment and competence of the very able public servants involved in these efforts, and expected by now to see some real, substantive changes.

Unfortunately, two related sets of documents have led us to conclude that, in the absence of your immediate personal intervention, these efforts will result in failure. First, we have reviewed an initial draft of the Department of Education's HEAP implementation plan. While the plan lists numerous ongoing actions that relate to Hispanics, it does not include a single, substantive program or policy change that will materially improve Latino access to and participation in the Department's programs. While we have not seen a counterpart document related to Head Start, we have reason to believe that no important developments have taken place with respect to that program either.

Second, we have reviewed a preliminary draft of the FY 1998 Annual Performance Report on Implementing Executive Order #12900. As the draft report states, in pertinent part:

The majority of the reporting agencies have not adequately monitored and addressed Hispanic participation in educational and employment related programs since 1995, ... Agency reports show a gross underrepresentation of Hispanic American participation in programs. This deficiency is increased because most reports do not provide either specific strategies to gauge Hispanic participation or design plans that address program effectiveness.

I would add that many of the agency reports seemed designed deliberately to obfuscate rather than enlighten.

We believe that three major problems underlie the failure of both the Bush and Clinton Administrations to reverse the chronic, gross underrepresentation of Latinos in federal education programs. First, all of us have underestimated the intransigence of the federal bureaucracy, a few political appointees and other entrenched interests who have resisted change consistently and energetically. Second, the existing Executive Order has failed to be the kind of effective accountability mechanism that we had hoped it would be, in part because too many people involved, including the White House, simply have never made a serious commitment to making it work.

Third, however, I must take some personal responsibility for failing to bring greater public attention to the scope and persistence of this problem. I had hoped that by working quietly with the many able Administration officials of good will, together we would be able to reverse this situation. It is now clear to me that this has not worked.

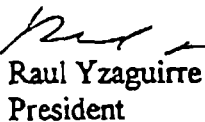
Unless we are able to come up with a solution very quickly, I must say that I face some difficult questions. As it now stands, HEAP borders on fraud. It purports to target

resources to Hispanics, but in fact many of the programs it funds actually under-serve Latino children. How can I, in good conscience, continue to ask public officials and leaders in my own community to continue to support increased appropriations for programs which deny equal opportunity to Hispanics? With respect to the Executive Order, since my resignation as Commission Chair in 1996, I have kept my commitment to the you, Secretary Riley, and other members of the Commission to refrain from publicly criticizing the initiative, and I have instructed my staff to cooperate fully with its work. In light of recent developments, don't I have an obligation to declare the effort a failure and call for its abolition?

I request immediate personal intervention by you and/or the Vice President to see if we might be able to develop an effective response to the problem, and ask for a meeting with you and/or the Vice President within the next 10 days to discuss the issue. Please have your staff contact me or my scheduling assistant Helen Coronado at (202) 776-1739 to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.

Thank you for your personal attention to this issue.

Sincerely,



Raul Yzaguirre  
President

cc: Vice President Al Gore

*Yzaguirre in  
APD  
9/17/99  
cleared by Echaveste, Ibarra,  
Chen (for his/office)  
Bethany White / DPC  
Brian Kinch / NCC*

*Copied  
Echaveste  
Reed  
Podesta  
Ibarra  
Lew  
Spierling*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Mr. Raul Yzaguirre  
President  
National Council of La Raza  
Suite 1000  
1111 19th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Raul:

Thank you for your letter about the Hispanic Education Action Plan (HEAP) and the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. Your letter raises serious questions, and I have asked Secretary Riley and OMB Director Jack Lew to address them.

The White House Initiative and HEAP are important components of our work to strengthen education for Hispanic children, and I firmly believe that these efforts will have a significant and lasting impact on our nation if we work together to ensure their success. I want to assure you that my Administration is deeply committed to providing a world-class education to every child in our nation and that improving opportunities for Hispanic children remains an important part of this endeavor.

Thanks, again, for your candid assessment. I have directed Maria Echaveste, my Deputy Chief of Staff, to work with you and keep me apprised of our progress. Best wishes.

Sincerely,

*RM*

*your letter raised some  
disturbing questions  
& I'll get on it.*

## DRAFT

### National Agenda for Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

*\*\*Throughout the agenda there are references to activities that CBO's and the private sector will undertake. The Initiative and WH outreach will engage leaders in both these fields to secure specific commitments for action and investment leading up to the conference.\*\**

Goal: The overall goal of the National Agenda is to promote excellence in education for Hispanic Americans by focusing attention and resources of the public and private sector and varying stakeholders to ensure educational equity for Hispanic Americans. Hispanic students are the fastest growing cohort of American students yet Hispanic students are also less likely to have effective preschool experiences, successful K-12 experiences, and graduate from college than non-Hispanic white students.

The Agenda covers pre-kindergarten, elementary and secondary education, and higher education. However, the agenda is not purely a federal undertaking. It recognizes that Washington cannot solve the challenges alone and that communities and the private sector also have a key role to play. The goal of the conference is to set goals and initiate positive steps to ensure that Hispanic children receive a high quality education and the same opportunities for life success that many Americans take for granted. The agenda and the conference will be a vehicle to highlight initiatives that the President and Vice President have undertaken toward this end and federal programs that address these issues; however, strong private sector and community based organization involvement is essential to bolster the likelihood of the conference and agenda translating into positive activity on the ground. There are 3 elementary and secondary education goals, one pre-k goal, and one higher education goal. *The three elementary and secondary goals are discussed below.*

Theme: *Educating ALL of America: Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.* This theme cuts across all five goals and provides an overarching message that the various policy initiatives support.

#### **Pre-K Goal: To be provided by the Office of the First Lady**

*Under discussion.*

#### **Reduce the dropout rate gap for Hispanic students.**

Background: According to the Census Bureau, during the 1996-97 school year, 3.6 percent of non-Hispanic whites, and 9.5 percent of Hispanics aged 15-24 dropped out of school.<sup>i</sup> According to the most recent Department of Education statistics available, the status dropout rate for Hispanic students is 25.3 percent while the rate for non-Hispanic white students is 7.6 percent. For Hispanic students born outside of the 50 states and Washington, DC, the status dropout rate is 39 percent.<sup>ii</sup> High school completion statistics

paint an equally dismal picture, while 90.5 percent of eligible non-Hispanic whites had completed high school in 1997, only 66.7 percent of Hispanics had.<sup>iii</sup> Essentially, while dropout rates are still a problem for all students, by any measure the Hispanic dropout rate is at crisis proportions. In addition, many researchers consider dropout rates to be an underreported statistic and question the reliability of these numbers so the problem may be worse than these statistics indicate.

Goal: Eliminate the gap in the dropout between Hispanic students and non-Hispanic students by 2005.

Strategy: The federal government, the private sector, and community-based organizations all have a role to play in reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. The federal government will help prepare Hispanic students for school success by increasing access for Hispanic students to Head Start, Title I, and after-school programs. Both of these programs bolster literacy and research shows that reading difficulties are a key indicator for dropping out.<sup>iv</sup> The federal government will also expand access for Hispanics to mentoring activities such as the Gear-UP program and the TRIO programs and help ensure *access to test-preparation services to help Hispanic students on the SAT and ACT test. In addition, through a focus on smaller schools, charter schools, and reforming the American high school, the federal government will ensure that there are high quality options available to meet the varying needs of adolescent students. [pending budget proposals]*

The private sector will pledge to increase dropout prevention activities by partnering with schools and school districts to provide mentoring experiences for Latino youth. *Companies should make firm commitments of time and resources as part of participation in the conference. The Initiative can track commitments after the conference.'*

Community-based organizations will work with schools to ensure that students identified as at-risk of dropping out are receiving interventions to encourage them to stay in school. *The Initiative will disseminate best practices.*

Conference Strands:

- Successful Models
- Expectations
- Academic Preparation
- Other factors (economics, language)

**Eliminate the achievement gap for Hispanic students**

Background: On the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the SAT, and other standardized tests there is an achievement gap between Hispanic students and white, non-Hispanic students. For example on the 1996 NAEP mathematics test for 9-year-olds, non-Hispanic white students averaged 237 (6 points above the average of 231) while

Hispanic students averaged 215, 16 points below the average and 22 points below their non-Hispanic white peers. 13-year-old non-Hispanic white students averaged 281, 7 points above the average while Hispanic students averaged 256, 25 points below their white peers and 18 points below average. 17-year-old non-Hispanic white students showed a similar disparity scoring 292, 15 points below average and 21 points below their white counterparts.

The chart below illustrates the NAEP score disparity in more detail:

NAEP Test (1996)	Average Score	Non-Hispanic White Average	Hispanic Average	Hispanic v. Average Score	Non-Hispanic White v. Hispanic	Non-Hispanic White v. Average
9-year-old Reading	212.4	219.9	194.1	(18.3)	(25.8)	7.5
13-year-old Reading	259.1	267	239.9	(19.2)	(27.1)	7.9
17-year-old Reading	286.9	294	264.7	(22.2)	(29.3)	7.1
9-year-old Math	231	237	215	(16)	(22)	6
13-year-old Math	274	281	256	(18)	(25)	7
17-year-old Math	307	313	292	(15)	(21)	6
9-year-old Science	230	239	207	(23)	(32)	9
13-year-old Science	256	266	232	(24)	(34)	10
17-year-old Science	296	307	269	(27)	(38)	11
9-year-old Writing	207	216	191	(16)	(25)	9
13-year-old Writing	264	271	246	(18)	(25)	7
17-year-old Writing	283	289	269	(14)	(20)	6

While all the score gaps are serious, it is worth noting that the gap actually grows for students in reading and math as they progress through school.

On the SAT the score gap is equally problematic with an average verbal score for Hispanic students of 466 compared to 526 for non-Hispanic white students (60 points) and a gap of 486 to 526 (40 points) in math.<sup>v</sup> State assessments and other standardized tests indicate similar disparities.

Goal: Eliminate the achievement gap for Hispanic students on state assessments within the next decade.

Strategy: The federal government will *expand access to rigorous academic courses for all students including Hispanic students and expand access to test preparation services. [pending budget proposals]* At the state level, rigorous coursework is the best preparation for high performance on assessments measuring state standards. According to the Education Trust, only 1 in 4 American students overall takes Algebra in the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade and only 1 in 5 Hispanic students have this opportunity.<sup>vi</sup>

The private sector can play a key role here by supporting state reform efforts and ensuring that states are taking the necessary steps to make a rigorous curriculum that supports state standards in place at schools serving high concentrations of Hispanic students.

In addition, the private sector should expand access for Latino students to private test preparation services and partner with schools and school districts to provide tutoring and mentoring services. Community-based organizations will play a role as facilitators of public-private partnerships and should build on programs such as Gear-Up to ensure that all students are aware of their options for post-secondary education and the steps they must take to realize these options. *The Initiative will coordinate these commitments and disseminate best practices from CBO's.*

While NAEP provides a good gauge of educational attainment on a longitudinal basis, it is a poor test by which to set national goals. Because the NAEP test is not aligned to state standards and curriculum it does not necessarily reflect a states reform efforts. Likewise, the SAT is a poor measure of overall educational progress as well because the test is not valid for that purpose, doesn't measure a random group of students, and is controversial. While helping students on the SAT should be part of the strategy for college attainment and the achievement gap, in the absence of national indicators, the goal laid out at the conference should be to eliminate score disparities on state assessments within 10 years. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization bill that the House passed this fall established a 10 year deadline for moving all demographic subsets of students to the "proficient" level on state assessments. Our goal would dovetail with this target.

## Conference Strands:

- Good Assessment Practice for all students and LEP students in particular
- Expectations
- Teacher Preparation/Teacher skills issues

### **Ensure that Hispanic Students Achieve English Language Proficiency**

#### Background:

Goal: *[Within 3 years of entering public school] or [before graduating from High School.] [I was concerned that it would be too contentious or politically problematic; however, after discussions with Sarita it is clear that there is interest in pursuing this as a goal. However, I want to get a better feel for where the community is on this issue through Brian's outreach meetings before proceeding too much further on this issue.]*

Strategy: Fluency in the English language is essential for academic and employment success in this country. Through its investment in Title I, bilingual education, Head Start, and other programs targeted at literacy the federal government will ensure that all Hispanic students are competent in English by [*see goal*]. English proficiency is a key indicator for academic and employment success.

The private sector will commit to increasing awareness among Hispanic elementary and secondary students of the economic advantages of English proficiency as well as the advantages of multilingual skills in the job market. *The Initiative will coordinate these pledges.*

*Secretary Riley has spoken out on the importance of "English plus 1" for all students in the global economy. This could be a good link for us vis a vis some of the sensitivities around this issue.*

### **Higher Education Goal to be provided by NEC**

*Under discussion.*

#### **Notes:**

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<sup>i</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureaus of the Census, *Current Population Survey*, October, 1997.

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997.

<sup>iii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>iv</sup> National Research Council, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, 1998. 21.

<sup>v</sup> College Entrance Examination Board, *National Report on College Bound Seniors*, 1997.

<sup>vi</sup> Education Trust, *Education Watch: The Education Trust 1998 State and National Data Book*, 1998.

**White House National Meeting for Latino Educational Excellence**  
**DRAFT - Timeline - DRAFT**

**Early January**

• **Outreach to External Groups**

- **Meeting with Education Stakeholders** January (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week)  
Location: White House  
Stakeholder participants: John Guerra (AT&T), Delia Pompa (NABE), Guillermo Linares (Commissioner, NY), Arturo Vargas (NALEO).
  
- **Meeting with Latino Organizations** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Location: White House  
Organization participants: NCLR, LULAC, NALEO, HACU, MALDEF, MANA, NPRC, PRLDF, Latino Civil Rights Task Force, Hispanic National Bar Association, SW Voter, American GI Forum, Nat. Assoc. of Bilingual Education, Nat. Assoc. of Migrant Education, National HEP/CAMP Association
  
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- **Meeting with Business/Philanthropist** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Location: White House  
Organization participants: Coca-Cola Company, US West, US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, US Mexico Chamber of Commerce
  
- **Meeting/Conference Call with Congressional Offices** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Location: TBD  
Participants:
  
- **Conference Call with Statewide/Local Electeds** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
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- **Conference Call with Latino Community Leaders** January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
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- **Conference Call with Excelencia Conference Planning Committees**  
Location: TBD January (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)  
Participants: Leaders from the Excelencia Conference Planning Committees

- **Conference Proposal and Agenda** January (4th Week)

- Develop Conference Proposal and Agenda, submit proposal for decisions on goals, format, date, location, outcomes, participants, issues, paper, etc.
- Develop message with Communications office and submit scheduling requests.

## **February**

- Coordinate substantive planning with NEC, DPC, OMB and Education, and begin planning logistics.
- **Buy-in from External Groups**
  - Secure buy-in, via conference calls, from External Groups, and other White House offices, Congress, Constituency Groups/Organizations/Community Leaders, State and Local Elected officials and Cabinet Members.

## **March- April**

- Extend invitations to all participants.
- Pull in Press Office to develop and implement press strategy.
- Finalize plans.

## **April**

- Conference date 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week in month.

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# Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

## Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
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### COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records  
Domestic Policy Council  
Bethany Little  
OA/Box Number: 18524

### FOLDER TITLE:

[Latino Educational Excellence]

2013-0371-S  
ms661

### RESTRICTION CODES

#### Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

#### Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]



John C. Guerra, Jr.  
Corporate Affairs  
Vice President

5501 LBJ Freeway  
Dallas, TX 75240  
Phone (972)778-2419  
Fax (972)778-2775

September 15, 1999

Latino Education Excellence Stakeholders

Thank you for participating in the review session in New Jersey. It was an honor and a pleasure to host a group comprised of leaders who demonstrate such caring and commitment to Latino youth.

I know that we are in the thick of Hispanic Heritage month and most of us will have opportunities to visit with our constituents in various forums. This, as we agreed, is an opportune time to share our vision for significant measurable improvement in Latino educational achievement in the new millennium. It is also the time to begin solidifying the community around this vision and associated work activities with an eye toward a national convening of stakeholders in Spring 2000.

To that end, I have attached a summary of what we discussed to share with our constituents. I have visited with my peers and each agrees that the timing is perfect to call for measurable accomplishments which allow for Latinos in high school to "raise the score by 004" and for college to "get them all in by 2010".

As do each of you, I too believe that this is a national issue not just a Hispanic issue and that it is critical that we as a community coalesce to end the education crisis. I look forward to our next meeting with more stakeholders. Please call if I can help with key meetings.

Sincerely,

John C. Guerra, Jr.  
Corporate Affairs Vice President

Attachment



John C. Guerra, Jr.  
Corporate Affairs  
Vice President

5501 LBJ Freeway  
Dallas, TX 75240  
Phone (972)778-2419  
Fax (972)778-2775

**DATE:** September 15, 1999  
**TO:** Latino Education Excellence Stakeholders  
**FROM:** John C. Guerra, Jr.  
Vice President Corporate Affairs  
**RE:** Education Targets 21<sup>st</sup> Century Meeting Summary

During the follow-up meeting after the White House convening on Latino Education Issues, there was a census that we have a unique opportunity to implement break-through strategies to improve the overall education achievement of Hispanics in the United States. There was general agreement that:

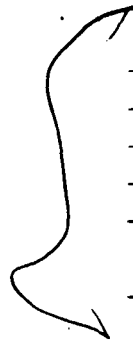
- We (all in the community) own the problem.
- Small incremental improvements will not outpace the current dropout rate.
- The Latino education crisis is a microcosm of a national crisis
- We must have zero tolerance for dropouts
- We must see a sense of urgency to resolve the problem
- The community must agree on an overarching vision
- Education includes all and is a continual process from pre-school through adulthood.
- Graduation means proficiency in content areas at all grade levels.

Within this context and with an awareness that through iterative meeting with subject matter experts more tactical details will be created, the following was established as the goal:

- All appropriate and eligible Latinos graduate from high school by 2004.
- All appropriate and eligible Latinos have access to college by 2010.
- Critical milestones be established and reviewed.

Under this overachieving vision, there were a number of possible areas of focus discussed. The specific suggestions could be grouped as follows:

*How to make this happen? Expectations implementation*



- Increase the number of high quality teachers
- Establish and maintain high quality curricula
- Ensure general access to current technology
- Ensure access to finances for centering education
- Involve parents and other key influencers in the education experience
- Creating environment of hope through positive image in media

Each area would be further detailed during the next few weeks, as we meet with other stakeholders. The key is identifying solutions, which are "scaleable" and can be implemented rapidly in large numbers of communities.

Targeted dates established were:

September 99	Update the White House commission Gain constituency support
October 99	Build a vision
November 99	Review status at the Chicago Conference (Nov 5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> )
December 99	Review status at the Miami Conference (Dec 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> )
Spring 2000	Convene a national meeting no later than May <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Unveil the plan nationally</li><li>- Review the commission's 7-year history</li></ul>
September 2000	Final commission meeting

We have set an aggressive but doable set of targets, which require each of us to work with our fellow constituents, maintain a sense of urgency and demand performance while giving support. Without success there is no long-term participation in the American dream by all Americans.

Please let us know how we can help.

**Higher Standards, Higher Pay:** This initiative would award grants to high-poverty urban and rural school districts to help them attract and retain high-quality teachers and principals through better pay and higher standards. These districts, in partnerships with local businesses and teacher's unions, would develop a plan to raise teacher standards and provide professional development and intensive support - including mentoring -- to help all teachers and principals succeed. Participating districts [and these partnerships] would agree to adopt fair but faster ways to identify, improve, and when necessary remove low-performing teachers [and require rigorous peer evaluations to identify potential master teachers, provide advice and extra help to all teachers, and identify those few who should be placed into a program to improve or when necessary remove low-performing teachers]. District plans would also include strategies to reward good teaching and recruit talented new teachers. Under this proposal, teachers in participating school districts would receive up to a \$5,000 salary increase and an additional \$5,000 salary increase (assuming a 50% state or local match) would be provided to master teachers reaching an advanced professional standard -- for example, those who get advanced certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards [or those who pass a rigorous peer evaluation demonstrating high-quality teaching.] Al Gore believes that teachers should be treated like professionals, paid like professionals, and held to high professional standards. No teaching contract or license should provide a lifetime job guarantee, but we should give all our teachers the support and training needed to succeed.

**Q: In May, Gore said that "the granting of a teaching license should be followed by rigorous but fair performance evaluations. And every five years, those evaluations should be used to determine whether a license is renewed." He didn't mention that today. Is he backing off from this challenge?**

A: No. Al Gore believes that teachers should be treated like professionals, paid like professionals and held to high professional standards. Today, Gore proposed a new initiative to provide higher standards and higher pay for teachers in high-poverty school districts that take aggressive steps to improve teacher quality and treat teachers like professionals. This includes providing support for all teachers, but adopting fair but faster ways to identify, improve, and when necessary remove low-performing or burned-out teachers. [The plan would also require teachers in participating school to undergo rigorous peer evaluations used to identify potential master teachers, give advice and extra help to all teachers, and identify those few teachers that should be placed into a program to improve or remove those who are low-performing.]

In May, Gore called for another step -- to be taken at the state level, not the local level -- to require that peer evaluations be used in determining whether a license should be renewed every five years. Wisconsin is likely to soon approve exactly the kind of reform Gore mentioned -- requiring teachers to demonstrate to teams of peers and others that they have developed and followed a professional development plan to help them reach state standards in order to get their license renewed every five years.

But Gore's focus today was on a specific new initiative focused on changes that should take place in high-poverty school districts -- rather than statewide reforms -- to raise pay and standards for teachers in communities that will have the most urgent need for qualified teachers over the next several years.

**TALKING POINTS BY VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE**  
**PEARL-COHN COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL, NASHVILLE**  
**Thursday, December 16, 1999**

I've just had a chance to walk around Pearl-Cohn, and see your wonderful new business communications program – which is essentially a magnet school within a school. To me, this is a model of the change we've got to have all across the country.

I'm running for President because I want to lead the fight for revolutionary improvements in all our public schools.

I've been in this fight for nearly two decades now. When the first Reagan-Bush budget cut student loans and school lunches, I fought against it. And when the Gingrich Republicans tried to shut down the Department of Education, I fought back – and we won that fight.

Today, we know that education is more important than ever before. [THREE REASONS...]

But this is still a big political debate. Too many Republicans want to cut education, to pay for big, budget-busting, special interest tax schemes. Others want to walk away from the challenge, and pass the buck to states and local school districts. I have a very different view.

When students are crammed into classrooms like sardines in a can – when school buildings are so old, they can't even be wired to the Internet – we need national leadership.

When some students can move up to the next grade just by keeping their seats warm; when some teachers didn't even study the subjects they teach – we need to invest in education, not cut it to ribbons.

If the people of this country entrust me with the Presidency, I make this pledge: I'll shake up the status quo, to make our children's test scores the best in the world.

I'll devote a major portion of the surplus -- \$115 billion -- to bring revolutionary change to our public schools.

I'll invest more in our schools – but I'll also demand more in return. Today, I'm releasing new details of my plan, and I want to talk about some of the specifics with you:

1. We need smaller classes and smaller schools – like the business communications program here at Pearl-Cohn -- which have been proven to have lower drop-out rates, better attendance, and fewer discipline problems.

*is it smaller?*

2. We have to insist on higher standards and accountability. That means urging states to raise the compulsory school age to 18, challenging states to put in place a high school exit exam, and doing more to prevent students from dropping out. -- especially Hispanic?

3. We have to improve teacher quality and treat teachers like the professionals they are. That's why I'm proposing a new 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teachers Corps, to attract a new generation of teachers to the schools that need them most. I'll help schools pay teachers more, in return for higher standards. Every new teacher should pass a rigorous test before they set foot in the classroom. And for current teachers, we need rigorous peer reviews, and fast but fair ways to remove those who aren't up to the job. ?

4. We need an all-out crusade to turn around failing schools -- which includes a <sup>federal</sup> dramatic expansion of after-school programs for those stuck in failing schools, and <sup>tax support</sup> ~~credits~~ to help rebuild and modernize thousands of schools across America. I also want to triple the number of alternative "Charter" schools -- to give parents more choice in their children's public schools. That will apply the pressure that will improve all schools.

There's going to be a big fight about these issues in next year's election. The Republican front-runner, Governor Bush, who is here in Tennessee right now, has a tax scheme that would squander the entire surplus, send us back into deficit, and force deep cuts in education.

That's just the beginning: he says that if a public school is not making the grade, its federal funds for disadvantaged students should simply be divided up and given away.

His alternative -- vouchers for private school -- is unworkable. Not only would it drain funds away from schools that need them most; Governor Bush would give a child in a failing school about \$1,500 a year -- less than half the average tuition at a private school. Anyone who thinks the Bush plan will work needs some basic math education.

I've looked at the Bush education plan, and it gives us a brand new definition of the "three R's": reckless, radical, and retrograde.

Then there's his record in Texas: three out of four schools in the state need to improve or repair a building. The state ranks 45th out of all 50 states in SAT scores. According to one recent survey, 40 percent of Texas's students were unprepared when they started college. Texas's teachers and families are working very hard. But they need real leadership. And we can't afford to let the Bush approach hurt states across the country.

I'm here because I don't believe in pulling the rug out from under public education. We've got to learn from what you're doing here at Pearl-Cohn, and build on that success -- all across this nation. Now I want to hear from you...