4-28-99

Innovation Comes to Chicago Public Schools

By JULIA VITULLO-MARTIN

Educating poor public school children seems an intractable problem in most big U.S. cities. But the Chicago public school system—once among the worst in the country—has set itself on a promising path.

Combining hands-on management from City Hall, back-to-basics teaching methods and tough disciplinary policies, Chicago has had three years of rising test scores in every category and every grade level. Truancy is down. And parents are responding. Following 13 years of decline, enrollment has climbed 30,000 to 427,000 over the past three years.

Mayor Richard M. Daley is central to Chicago's success. In 1995 the Illinois Legislature gave him sweeping managerial control over the schools, their unions and their $3 billion-plus budget. In no other big city does the mayor have so much authority over education.

Some of Mr. Daley's aides and many of his enemies thought the schools were so hopeless he was bound to fail. But he seized on the opportunity to make radical changes. First, he took management of the schools away from professional educators and gave it to trusted aides from City Hall. Former chief of staff Gery Chico became president of the board and former budget director Paul Vallas chief executive officer. Responsibility begins and ends with the mayor, says Mr. Vallas—and every city agency knows it. "We don't have problems with cops working in schools, or getting drug houses [near schools] closed, or having rapid-response teams assigned," he says. "Nor do we have a board circumventing the CEO."

Second, even as Mayor Daley made peace with the teachers union, he dismissed the 17 unions in charge of school repairs. He authorized the central board and individual schools to contract with private firms.

Third, he balanced the budget, eliminating a $1.3 billion deficit, and cut 13% of the central administrative staff without laying off a single classroom teacher.

But as Mr. Vallas has said repeatedly, balancing the budget is easy; improving things in the classroom is the real challenge. The triumvirate stress high standards and discipline.

Chicago has become the only big-city school system to end "social promotion," the practice of sending students to the next grade whether or not they are performing at grade level. Mr. Vallas says that when the Daley team took over in 1995, they found that 9,700 of 1994's 27,000 high school graduates were reading at the *sixth-grade* level or below. Starting with eighth-grade students in 1996, the system required that students score above a cutoff on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills to be promoted. Those who scored low had to go to summer school; those who still didn't pass had to repeat the grade. In 1997 the third and the sixth grades likewise became "promotional gates."

To help close the academic deficit, Chicago has expanded after-school and summer-school programs. The schools are open and working into the evening year-round. Some 40% of the students attend the extended school-day program called Lighthouse, which offers evening academic and recreational programs as well as dinner. About 40% attend summer school. "A 185-day year is just not enough," says Mr. Vallas.

Richard M. Daley

Is it working? Of the 7,756 eighth-graders held back in June 1998, 61% were promoted after summer school, and another 10% made it after an additional semester of help. And removing failing students has a beneficial effect on the classroom. "We've seen important changes in the culture of low-performing high schools, particularly among freshmen and sophomores," says Alfred G. Hess, director of the Center for Urban School Policy at Northwestern University. "Because the kids who did not make it through the gates are not present, you don't have anyone saying it's dumb to work hard and get good grades."

Under the new regime, Chicago schools also have far less tolerance for misbehavior. A student can be exiled to an alternative school for bringing a weapon to school or for being absent for more than 20 days. A student can also be expelled for committing a crime even while not at school. "If you're dangerous on Saturday, you'll be dangerous on Monday," says Mr. Vallas.

Administrators and teachers are also held accountable. No administrator except the inspector general has a contract guaranteeing employment. Principals no longer have tenure; Mr. Vallas removed 36 principals last year and estimates that he will remove another five or six this year. Although teachers have tenure and some state job protections, any good principal can move an ineffective teacher out of the system within a year, says Mr. Vallas. The system used to get rid of two or three bad teachers a year, he says; this year, it will dismiss 50 to 60.

Unlike most public-school heads, Mr. Vallas isn't afraid of private educational institutions. "We don't limit ourselves to just one way," he says. "On any given day we pay tuition for 2,000 pupils enrolled at corporate training academies, colleges and private institutes. We buy honor space in 13 universities, including the University of Chicago and Northwestern, for our best students." And unlike many superintendents, Mr. Vallas supports charter schools. Under state legislation, Chicago is allowed 15 charter schools. It has 14 in operation; Mr. Vallas closed one for poor performance.

Mr. Vallas, who went to a parochial school in a working-class neighborhood, has urged the Archdiocese of Chicago, whose own schools suffer from declining enrollment, to apply for a charter. "They can propose as many schools—we'll call them campuses—as they like under one charter," he says. "Our city is slowly losing the people and their knowledge and abilities as they close their schools. We'd rather not have the city lose that kind of resource."

Because the schools had been so bad, rising test scores do not mean Chicago students are now where they should be. Just 35% of elementary school students and 29% of high school students test at or above the national average in reading. Despite many successes and innovations, the struggle has just begun.

Ms. Vitullo-Martin edited "Breaking Away: The Future of Cities" (Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1996).

~~KK~~ Blue

is this constitutional?
A way out of the voucher
debate?

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 1999

RK

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cc: HRC

MEMORANDUM TO BRUCE REED

FROM: Jon Schnur
Bethany Little

OK w/changes. Thanks - BR

Bruce asked to hold,

DATE: June 21, 1999

SUBJECT: Charter Schools and Religion

Some time ago, you asked about guidance for the involvement of religious organizations in charter schools. Attached is some draft guidance from the Department of Education. Jon and I are reviewing it, but given your interest we thought you might also want the opportunity to comment.

Andy R.

Additional Charter School Guidance:

May a public charter school be religious in nature or be affiliated with a religious organization?

Charter schools that receive federal start-up funds must be nonsectarian in their programs, admission policies, employment practices and all other operations, and cannot ~~must not~~ be affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution. The charter school's curriculum must be completely secular and no religious instruction ~~of any kind~~ may be provided ~~by the charter school~~. In addition, the charter school may not have ~~any~~ formal organizational ties with a religious organization. However, there are a number of ways in which religious organizations may partner with charter schools, and members of those organizations may be involved in charter schools.

What are some examples of ways religious organizations and their members may partner with, or be involved in, charter schools?

A faith leader may participate in designing, organizing or operating a charter school in his or her individual capacity—as a member of the community, not as a representative of his or her religious organization. ~~The Department recommends that diverse segments of the local community be included in the initial organization and operation of a charter school, because a charter school that is organized or operated exclusively or primarily by members of one religious organization or group may give rise to questions about the independence and nonsectarian nature of the school.~~

NO — this is guidance, not advice

Likewise, faith leaders or members of religious organizations may work or volunteer in a charter school, as long as the staff and volunteers of the charter school are selected and hired on the basis of secular criteria and not because of religious belief or affiliation with a religious organization.

Finally, like other public schools, charter schools may enter into partnerships with community groups for secular purposes, such as tutoring or recreational activities. Religious groups may be partners for these types of activities, as long as charter schools select partners without regard to their religious affiliation, ensure that no public funds are used for religious purposes and do not engage in or encourage religious activity.

May charter schools use the facilities of a religious organization?

A charter school may use the facilities of a religious organization to the same extent that other public schools may use these facilities. Generally, this means that a charter school may lease space from a religious organization as long as the charter school remains nonsectarian in all its programs and operations, and is not affiliated with the religious organization. A charter school should select space based on its logistical and educational needs, not because the space is located in or near a religious school or institution, or because officials of the charter school are connected to a particular religious organization. ~~The Department strongly recommends that any space used by a charter school for~~

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~~instructional purposes be free of religious symbols and under the full control of the charter school during school hours.~~

May charter schools conduct outreach activities in churches or through religious organizations?

A charter school's outreach and recruitment activities should be designed to reach all segments of the parent community. Thus, a charter school may conduct outreach or recruitment activities in churches or through religious organizations as part of a broad-based and balanced effort to inform the parent community about the charter school and recruit a diverse student body. In order to ensure that recruitment efforts reach all members of the community, these activities should not be conducted exclusively in or through religious organizations.

Is religious expression allowed in charter schools?

Religious expression is allowed in charter schools to the same extent as in other public schools. The Secretary has issued Religious Expression in Public Schools (at www.ed.gov/speeches/08-1995/religion.html), guidelines that address many of the issues facing public schools (including charter schools) with respect to religion, including student prayer and religious discussion, teaching values, teaching about religion and student religious clubs. Although charter schools are not singled out in the Secretary's guidelines, as public schools they are subject to the responsibilities and limitations outlined in the guidelines. These guidelines state "two basic and equally important obligations imposed on public school officials by the First Amendment.

- First, schools may not forbid students acting on their own from expressing their personal religious views or beliefs solely because they are of a religious nature."
- Second, "schools may not endorse religious activity or doctrine, nor may they coerce participation in religious activity. Among other things . . . school administrators and teachers may not organize or encourage prayer exercises in the classroom."

As stated in the Secretary's guidelines, students have the same right to engage in individual or group prayer and religious discussion during the school day as they do to engage in other comparable activity. For example, "students may read their Bibles or other scriptures, say grace before meals, and pray before tests to the same extent they may engage in comparable nondisruptive activities." In informal settings such as cafeterias and hallways, students "may pray and discuss their religious views with each other, subject to the same rules of order as apply to other student activities and speech." In addition, students may "participate in before or after school events with religious content, such as 'see you at the flag pole' gatherings, on the same terms as they may participate in other noncurriculum activities on school premises."

The Secretary's guidelines also state that "[t]he right to engage in voluntary prayer or religious discussion free from discrimination does not include the right to have a captive audience listen or to compel other students to participate. Teachers and school administrators should ensure that no student is in any way coerced to participate in religious activity" and "[t]eachers and school administrators, when acting in those capacities . . . are prohibited . . . from soliciting or encouraging religious activity, and from participating in such activity with students."

Charter schools are encouraged to consult the Secretary's guidelines when questions arise concerning religious expression and to ensure that teachers, administrators, students and parents are fully informed about the contents of the guidelines.

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DRAFT

MEMORANDUM

FROM: National Association for Bilingual Education
National Association for Migrant Education
National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials
National Council of La Raza
National HEP/CAMP Association

TO: Maria Echaveste, Deputy White House Chief of Staff
Mike Cohen, Special Assistant to the President for Education Policy
Barbara Chow, Associate Director, Office of Management and Budget
Sarita Brown, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

DATE: October 29, 1999

SUBJ: Hispanic Education Action Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to present specific recommendations on implementing the Administration's Hispanic Education Action Plan. We are committed to ensuring that Hispanic children benefit from federal programs designed to improve the educational status of the most disadvantaged students. We expect that these recommendations will be properly executed to achieve this end.

I. Title I

Administration: Ensure that schools are being held accountable for Latino student performance and inclusion of LEP students in state accountability systems by enforcing current Title I requirements. Action steps:

- Issue final guidance on Title I Standards, Assessment, and Accountability Requirements - October 1999.
- Issue final guidance on Including LEP students in Assessment and Accountability Systems - October 1999.
- Issue LEP "Toolkit" - December 1999.
- Complete analysis on the status of state assessment policies for LEP students and produce state profiles - Draft November 1999, final January 2000.
- Conduct workshops for states on complying with title I requirements. Three scheduled

for October – December 1999.

Administration: Provide Title I schools serving Hispanic students with information on best practices. Action steps:

- Produce Hispanic Education Idea Book – Draft November 1999, final January 2000.
- Conduct intensive workshops on best practices for teaching reading to LEP students – three scheduled for October – December 1999, at IASA regional conferences.
- Produce practical research summaries (written materials, videos) on teaching reading to LEP students – several products to be developed by December 1999.
- Support additional research (joint OERI/NICHD) on teaching reading to young children whose first language is Spanish – proposals from field due November 1999.
- Evaluate effectiveness of Title I programs for LEP students – first year data of National Longitudinal Study of Title I collected, first report due March 2000.
- Develop plan for ongoing technical assistance to school districts with large or growing Hispanic populations – December 1, 1999.

During last week's meeting, the Administration proposed to target 10 states to determine how they are serving limited English proficient (LEP) children. Although this would prove helpful, it is important to realize that many states, particularly in the South, have experienced a large increase in the number of Hispanic students attending their schools. It is important to ensure that these states have the capacity and will to provide these children with appropriate education services. In addition, we also recommend taking the following steps:

- **Combine Title I monitoring and technical assistance (TA) with compliance reviews to ensure that LEP students are served**. Coordination of efforts between these two functions to not simply highlight the problems LEAs are having with compliance, but to provide them with concrete steps they must take to be in compliance and the assistance necessary to adequately serve LEP students.

- **Vigorous enforcement of the law and regulations to identify state education agencies and LEAs that are not in compliance, including one or more high profile examples**. The Department should continue its enforcement role. In particular, LEAs not adequately serving LEP students should be highlighted to send a strong message to other similar LEAs. Along with identifying and taking significant corrective action against such school districts, it is important to deal with states that are not following the spirit of the law with respect to LEP students. For example, the Virginia State Education Department refuses to comply with the Title I legislation requiring states to test students in their native language to the extent practicable because their state constitution requires that the government conduct its business only in English.

- **Make sure that there are math/science components to LEP students' learning in Title I**. The dissemination of best practices and research the Department proposes are limited to the teaching of reading. LEP students are being denied access to the full curriculum in many states, school districts, and schools. The Elementary and Secondary Act reauthorization legislation (H.R. 2) that recently passed the House contains built-in barriers for these children to receive anything but English language acquisition services. LEP students should have access to math, science, and other content areas that may be included in state performance standards.

- **Provide TA and disseminate information to new and emerging areas.** LEAs in these areas should receive materials on best practices and intensive TA to help them tailor their Title I services to serve LEP students and avoid noncompliance. The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers (CRACs) and Regional Laboratories (Labs) are currently in the best position to do this. For example, the Intercultural Research and Development Association (IDRA) performs substantive research and dissemination on LEP issues.

- **Create a "How To" Guide on assessment of LEP students.** To accompany the new guidance on assessments, a manual on the proper use of assessments for LEAs/schools should be created (CRACs may have one already).

- **Create an explicit parents' strategy.** ED should create a manual for parents on the rights of LEP students and parents under Title I, including information on standards, assessments, and accountability. In addition, there should be a mechanism to provide parents with information in order to increase their knowledge of and access to programs like TRIO, GEAR UP, and Head Start.

- **Make organizational and infrastructure adjustments.** There should be a unit or division within the Department, with high level staff and adequate resources to oversee Title I implementation, particularly as it pertains to LEP issues, such as effectively including LEP students in assessments and accountability systems. The personnel should have substantial expertise in these areas.

II. Competitive Grants Programs

Administration: Maximize participation of Hispanic youth in initial (GEAR UP) grant awards. Action steps:

- Extensive outreach to Hispanic communities and HSIs, through mailings, application workshops and technical assistance in communities with large Hispanic populations.
- Outreach to Hispanic advocacy groups to identify grant proposal reviewers knowledgeable about Hispanic community.

Administration: To increase the quality and availability of translated materials. Action steps:

- OBEMLA will produce a school reform guide for the parents of LEP children to inform them about standards-based reform and of ways to ensure their children's needs are considered in school improvement efforts.
- Review current publications to ensure the quality of materials.

Administration: Facilitate improved relationships with Hispanic serving community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and parents.

- Coordinate conferences, like the Excelencia en Educacion series, for community leaders, teachers, parents, and others to discuss best practices for involving parents in education.

- Plan the special satellite teleconference for Spring 2000, with downlinks and an available video copy, to alert students and parents in the Hispanic community to issues in and resources for preparing for college, with a focus on financial aid.

Administration: Further develop partnerships with radio and television organizations to extend the outreach efforts. Action steps:

- Work with Univision to maintain its role in the conferences and a national public service announcement (PSA) campaign.
- Continue the participation of media companies like La Opinion newspaper, Radio Unica, and the Telemundo Network through PSA's, radio programs, talk shows, and newspaper supplements directed at Hispanic youth.

Administration: The Mott Foundation is partnering with the Department of Education to provide assistance to local communities seeking 21st Century funding and implementing effective after school programs. In August, Mott agreed to provide $300,000 to help develop and carry out a strategy for increasing Hispanic participation in the program. This strategy will involve:

- Setting a priority in the next grant competition for underserved communities, such as those with high dropout rates, low achievement, and/or high LEP populations.

- Holding at least ## outreach and technical assistance workshops (of a total of 20-30 workshops tentatively planned nationally) targeted to communities with large Hispanic populations. Workshops will be sponsored by organizations identified to be effective in assisting develop after school applications, and by organization with specific, demonstrated capacity to involve the Hispanic community.

- Recruiting at least ## reviewers with particular understanding of the needs of Hispanic youth.

In addition to the items outlined by the Administration, the following steps must be taken to increase Latino participation in these programs:

- **Enhance opportunities for Latino-serving community-based organizations and higher education institutions to compete for grants.** There should be an explicit strategy to look ahead to upcoming grant announcements and identify opportunities to improve Latino participation in these programs, and then substantial, targeted TA, and support. Providing pre- and post-grant award TA is currently part of the GEAR UP process. It should be expanded to other programs.

  - Upcoming announcements should be reviewed now before they are disseminated widely to make changes to how criteria are weighted. As we discussed, it is possible to target Latinos without using race-based language, including such proxies as dropout rates, language-minority status, underrepresentation, and geographic areas with one or more of these characteristics.

  - We agree with the strategy to create a special request for proposal (RFP) to better target TRIO with new money, and recommend that the same be done for GEAR UP and other grant programs.

  - More readers with substantive knowledge of LEP issues should be part of the grant making process. The GEAR UP regulations allow the Department to choose a certain percentage of Hispanic readers. Although that would not necessarily qualify someone for this task, it is clear that race should not be viewed as an impediment to achieving this.

  - In addition, management of grants must be improved. For example, outreach and TA can be provided to Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) to ensure that they use funds to help Hispanic students complete college. Moreover, given that these grants are for "Strengthening" HSIs, the Department should ensure that grantees receive their awards in a timely manner.

- **Use discretionary funds to fund pilot and demonstration sites.** The Department should fund pilot sites for innovative practices in serving LEP students and children at risk of dropping out through TRIO (particularly Upward Bound and Student Support Services, the programs found to be most effective in helping Hispanic students attend and complete college), GEAR UP, 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st Century), and other categorical programs. Funding designated for these programs should be supplemented with other non-specific discretionary money in order to achieve this. We recognize that there has to be a political strategy to go along with this to make it effective, and are willing to work with the Administration to devise one.

  - The number of such sites should be based on a reasonable assessment of what will get us to parity in four or five years with respect to equitable representation in these programs.

  - These sites should be established now, rather than waiting for the next competition cycles.

  - In addition, these sites should receive "priority points" when they participate in future grant competitions.

- **Make adjustments to the 21st Century program**. The growing popularity, including within the Administration, of social promotion policies and standards-based reform call for a substantial and rigorous after school support system. Research shows that Hispanic students are more likely to be retained in grade, and that grade retention often leads to dropping out. Thus, the Administration has a responsibility to ensure that the 21st Century program helps Hispanic children meet high performance and content standards. In order to more effectively serve and reach Latinos, ED should:

  - Ensure that the 21st Century program services are more rigorous and aligned with state academic standards.

  - Undertake an assessment of the extent to which current providers are serving Latino and LEP students.

  - Better target the program by providing priority points to CBOs that serve large numbers of LEP students. The 21st Century *Community* Learning Centers program regulations should be rewritten so that community-based organizations play a significant role in providing services under the program.

  - Work to restore the program's original targeting of low-income areas. The 21st Century centers are considered part of a larger system of standards-based reform. It is clear that economically disadvantaged and LEP students are most likely to require additional help to meet challenging academic standards. Thus, the program must specifically target these children in order to be effective.

III. Head Start

Administration: Procedural Improvements.

- ACF will increase the number of grant application reviewers who have expertise in serving language-minority children so that, as appropriate, each set of proposal review teams includes persons with such expertise.

- The Head Start Bureau will work with its training and technical assistance (T/TA) providers to ensure that they assist grantees who are experiencing demographic changes within their service area in designing their programs, so that grantees can better serve new populations in culturally sensitive programs. In FY 2000, ACF will identify at least ten communities where the unmet need of emerging populations is most dramatic. ACF will then work closely with existing and potential grantees and leaders in these communities to implement various outreach and T/TA strategies designed to improve representation of underrepresented children, and where appropriate, facilitate the participation in Head Start of local organizations representing these groups.

Administration: Improving Targeting of Existing Funding.

- ACF recently issued an Information Memorandum that reiterates Head Start's policy to assure all eligible families within a grantee's service area are given fair consideration for enrollment in the Head Start program. Grantees have been reminded that 45 CFR Part 1305.3 requires them to conduct community assessments at least once every three years. This assessment provides data on "the demographic make up of Head Start children and families, including their estimated number, geographic location and ethnic composition." This information is then used by each Head Start grantee to decide in which part of its service area it will recruit.

- Head Start is initiating an effort, with contractor assistance, to collect demographic data at the county level which can be used to make judgements about how well grantees are doing in enrolling families that reflect the overall make-up of their community. Once this data collection is complete, Head Start will focus on working with grantees that seem to be having the most difficulty serving all the populations of their communities.

- ACF is institutionalizing a process of outreach and community needs assessment, including the needs of underserved populations, as grant terminations or relinquishments occur.

- Grantees that are not using community assessment data properly or adhering to Head Start regulations regarding the selection and recruitment of ch8ildren will be found "out-of-compliance" and will be required to implement a corrective action plan. Head Start staff will closely monitor these grantees to ensure that they are in compliance within one year.

- Head Start will issue a report by the end of FY 2000 detailing its efforts and accomplishments in extending access to underrepresented populations.

Administration: Aggressive Targeting of Discretionary funding.

- ACF will include new language in the FY 2000 expansion announcement that puts additional emphasis on reaching underserved populations, and will evaluate the effectiveness of giving greater weight to outreach underserved population when scoring expansion grant applications.

- An applicant's failure to use the community needs assessment data or adhere to Head Start regulations will be considered in making expansion grant decisions.

- Applicants will be rated on, among other things, the degree to which they have identified new and underrepresented populations, and their strategy for serving these groups. The points awarded in this area increased by 50% in FY 1999 and now represent close to a third of the total points.

- This year's Head Start expansion effort is making up to $5 million available this summer to increase enrolment of migrant and seasonal farmworker families by up to 1,000 children. The President's budget includes a $23 million increase for Migrant Head Start in FY 2000, which in addition to providing approximately $13 million for cost-of living and quality improvement increases, would provide $10 million to serve as many as 2000 additional migrant and seasonal farmworker children.

We are greatly encouraged that the plan includes making the degree to which current providers are serving LEP kids proportionately based on the mandated demographic assessments part of the ***OSPRI*** process. In addition to the actions outlined above, HHS should:

Fund programs with the potential to serve LEP students. HHS should fund new sites in regions that have experienced a substantial growth in their LEP population. Particular attention should be devoted to funding such sites in regions that may have existing Head Start sites, but no prior experience in serving LEP children.[i] This objective can be achieved within a pilot project or research and development context.

- The Head Start Bureau should disseminate information about serving LEP children, and coordinate research on the development of LEP students, through a national clearinghouse.
- The Head Start Bureau should institute a centralized body, based in Washington D.C. and staffed by the Department of Heath and Human Services, to provide technical assistance to sites that serve LEP students. This body should coordinate a national effort to reach out to those Head Start grantees most in need of assistance regarding the service of LEP students.

- The Head Start program has been appropriated $200 million over a five-year period to institute the goal of professional development across the field of Head Start grantees.[ii] A career ladder program should be incorporated into this initiative, in order to ensure that a significant number of Head Start instructors receive bilingual certification through the accreditation program.

- The Head Start program should adopt a goal, apart from the aforementioned initiative, of increasing the number of bilingually trained instructors in the field through the use of discretionary funds.

We agree to work with existing and prospective providers serving large numbers of Latino and LEP students to use HHS money to leverage private foundation money to help start up new sites.

IV. Mechanisms for HEAP Implementation and Accountability

We recognize the need to work collaboratively in order to achieve full implementation of the aforementioned elements related to HEAP. Related to this goal, there should be a long-term mechanism for monitoring and accountability, which may include issuing a new Executive Order. In the interim, we recommend the adoption of the following functions to ensure full and successful implementation:

Operationalize HEAP Implementation Through the Department of Education. As per previous recommendations from the Department, there should be someone at the Department of Education responsible solely for HEAP implementation, and that would report directly to Mike Cohen and Secretary Riley. This individual would be well versed in the technical aspects of respective HEAP programs, and able to institutionalize a process of monitoring and accountability directed at achieving specific program objectives. This role would encompass the important function of monitoring, and would include the following:

- **Ensuring accountability through progress reports**. This individual would be charged with the preliminary steps of ensuring internal accountability, which include the development of workplans and timelines for accomplishing the objectives of HEAP implementation, as well as the collection of relevant data related to these objectives. This individual would also issue interim progress reports on actions that we agree should take place in respective programs, with particular attention to "high-intensity" agency programs such as TRIO, GEAR UP, and Title I.

Adopt a Definitive Function for the White House Initiative[iii] on HEAP Implementation. The White House Initiative should fulfill an integral reporting role that completes another phase of accountability for HEAP implementation. Adequate staff and resources should be devoted to the White House Initiative by the Administration to perform the following function:

- **Ensuring accountability through public reporting**. Once the Department of Education has issued progress reports, these reports would be analyzed, distilled, and made widely available by the White House Initiative. This includes highlighting them at public events, and posting them on the Initiative's, and the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services websites.

Adopt a high profile, well-articulated public political strategy for HEAP implementation. As a final step to ensuring real progress in Latino educational achievement through HEAP, the Clinton Administration and Department of Education should jointly adopt an ambitious and well-orchestrated political strategy that accomplishes the following:

- Make the case that helping Latino and LEP children is in the national interest.
- Make it clear to other stake holders that this is priority.
- Make it clear to career employees and political appointees that it is priority.
- Make sure that the message is repeated often and at every opportunity for public consumption.

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[i] The Council of Chief State School Officers has found that LEP student populations are growing fastest in many regions that have no prior experience in serving such students. These regions include the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington.

[ii] According to the objective of the Bureau's initiative, 50% of all instructors in Head Start programs will hold an Associates Degree from an accredited instiution of higher education by 2004.

[iii] The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

 DRAFT #1 - NOT FOR DISSEMINATION

FIRST IN THE WORLD IN LITERACY?
A BLUEPRINT FOR MAKING THE UNITED STATES THE MOST LITERATE NATION

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To be added after the rest of the paper has been written.

II. INTRODUCTION

As the 21st Century begins, strong literacy skills are more important to success than ever before in our nation's history. We find ourselves living in a knowledge society -- one built on a foundation of technology, information, and communications. With this historic change, a high level of proficiency in the basic skills of reading, writing, and math is necessary, but not sufficient for adult success. Other essential skills for full participation in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of our country include speaking, listening, and applying technology. In the emerging knowledge society, all Americans need a strong foundation of basic skills to succeed in their adult roles of workers, parents, and citizens.

Unfortunately, 40 million adult Americans lack a sufficient level of basic skills necessary to support their children's education, find and keep a decent job, and fully participate in the civic life of their communities and the nation. While there are many excellent local, state, and national efforts to improve the basic skills of adults, we lack the national will and a plan to provide high quality education services to all adults who seek to improve their skills. In 1989, the nation's governors and the President made a commitment to bring all Americans to a literacy level adequate to meet the demands of work, community, and family by 2000. Since that time, we have made a difference in the lives of many individual students, but have not made significant progress in improving our nation's literacy rate. The cost of low literacy to individuals, families, businesses, and the nation has increased.

This document makes the case for a true national commitment to improving the skills of those at a low literacy level. More importantly, it lays out an action agenda that involves all sectors of American life -- individuals, businesses, organized labor, foundations, government, civic organizations, and educational institutions -- in this commitment. It challenges all Americans to meet a challenge to be the first in the world in literacy. Currently, the United States lags behind other industrialized nations in terms of the literacy skills of adults. If we became first in the world in literacy, the impact would be enormous. It would contribute to improving the educational readiness of young children, the job prospects of many of our poorest citizens, the health of American families, and the safety of our communities.

The United States can and must meet this challenge.

III. THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF LITERACY

The changes taking place will only accelerate in the next century. New information, ideas, discoveries, products, and problems confront us every day, and these changes are coming more quickly every year. They require all adults to continue learning not just during their school years, but throughout their lives. This lifetime learning will take place on the job, at home, and in both traditional formal ways and new, informal ways, some of which have yet to be invented. Strong basic skills will be even more critical to success. Adults who do not possess high levels of these skills will find it difficult to keep up with the new demand for continuous learning. If we want all adults in the United States to have an opportunity to reach their full potential as workers, parents, and citizens, then all must have access to an education that provides a strong foundation for further learning.

As former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich says,

"Nowhere has the impact of education, or lack of it, been felt more acutely than in the homes of America's working families. Skills have always made a difference in income, but today that difference is enormous...Americans whose skills are out of date, or out of sync with the economy, risk falling farther behind. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, about half of the new jobs that will be generated over he next decade will require some post-high school education, and many will require advanced technological skills. Left unchecked, the widening disparities in income and opportunity can undermine the coherence of our society. A society too sharply divided between winners and losers cannot win the global competition of the 21st century."

Most of us now work in a global marketplace characterized by intense competition and increasing interdependence among nations. A high school diploma no longer guarantees a good job. At least two years of post-secondary education or its equivalent in vocational training is quickly becoming the minimum qualification for U.S. jobs that pay a living wage and provide basic benefits. Strong basic skills are essential for success in post-secondary school training and education, and they are also essential for workers to take advantage of the rapid pace of change and growing complexity of the global economy.

Only a generation ago, adults with relatively low basic skills could earn a decent living and have a good life if they were willing to work hard. This is no longer the case. Since 1980, the wage difference between adults without a high school diploma, with a high school diploma, and with some postsecondary education has steadily grown wider. This trend helps explain why the income differential between the top 20 percent and the bottom 20 percent is currently at a historic high.

Insert chart 1.

These changes are also affecting our roles as parents and family members. Education reform is raising the bar for our children. Improvements in schools will help children meet these new demands, but children will also need the support of educated parents to meet the challenges before them. Parents have to be proactive in preparing their children to learn. The reality of managing everyday life, even for those who are not caring for children, has also become more complex. Navigating the Internet, dealing effectively with insurance policies, securing and handling health information and benefits, managing personal finances and credit, and planning for retirement now require well-developed skills, as well as basic knowledge about such matters.

We have known for some time that the educational attainment of a parent is one of the best predictors of a child's school achievement. In describing the essential role parents play in children's literacy, behavioral and cognitive scientist Thomas Sticht writes, "Due to the intergenerational transfer of cognitive skills, including language and literacy, an investment in the literacy education of adults provides "double duty dollars." It improves the educational level of adults and simultaneously improves the educability and school success of the adults' children."

Insert chart 2.

The rights and responsibilities of citizenship in our communities, states, and nation are now more complicated. As local communities become part of an interdependent world, every citizen must be prepared to play a role in maintaining and improving the quality of life. Every citizen needs to understand such things as the scientific facts that underlie the threats to our environment, the possible effects of changes in welfare, education, and other economic and social policies, and living in a multicultural society.

The U.S. lags behind other industrialized democracies in levels of political participation and voting. Literacy is linked to these important civic behaviors. Only 55 percent of those at the lowest levels of literacy (NALS Level1) voted in a recent state or federal election. In contrast, 89 percent of those at the highest level of literacy (NALS Level 5) voted in a recent state or federal election.

All adults must truly mean all adults. We need to be sure that barriers to accessing skills are eliminated. Barriers such as cost and access based on disability needs must be incorporated into the planning and development of the new learning tools so that we don't create "have's and have not's" based on disability.

If we do not invest in education now, we will become a nation with two populations – one with an education sufficient to compete in the global economy, help their children succeed in school, and play an active role in their communities, and one whose lack of education leaves them and their families beyond the reach of opportunity. We must make a firm commitment to build an effective third system of education that will meet the needs unanswered by the K-12 and higher education systems. Through quality education for both children and adults, we can create a 21st century society in which all Americans can be successful.

IV. CHALLENGES TO THE NATION, ECONOMY, FAMILIES, AND INDIVIDUALS

What is the size and nature of the problem?

The number of educationally disadvantaged adults is growing. Youth dropped out of high school at the rate of about 11 percent in 1998, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. This rate has remained relatively steady for 10 years. The rate is higher for Hispanics (25 percent), African Americans (13 percent), and people with disabilities (38 percent). In addition, in 1990, there were about 25.5 million U.S. adults age 18 and older who spoke a language other than English at home. Many of these non-English speakers are new immigrants, with x new immigrants arriving in 1998. *Break these numbers down to show adults who are in an age group who as a result of these two streams either do not have a HS degree or have difficulty speaking English.*

Given these statistics, it is not surprising that the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) found that 21-23 percent -- or 44 million -- of the 191 million American adults function at the lowest of five literacy levels. This includes non-native English speakers. Although many Level 1 adults could perform many tasks involving simple texts and documents, all adults scoring at Level 1 displayed difficulty using certain reading, writing, and computational skills considered necessary for functioning in everyday life.

The following chart details activities most adults at Level 1 usually can and cannot perform successfully:

SKILLS OF ADULTS AT LEVEL 1

CAN USUALLY PERFORM	CANNOT USUALLY PERFORM
Sign one's name	Locate eligibility from a table of employee benefits
Identify a country in a short article	Locate an intersection on a street map
Locate one piece of information in a sports article	Locate two pieces of information in a sports article
Locate the expiration date information on a	Identify and enter background information

driver's license	on a social security card application
Total a bank deposit	Calculate total costs of purchase from an order form

Add stat on education level and literacy?

The NALS also discovered that another group of American adults, between 45 and 50 million, fell in the second NALS level and could greatly benefit from additional basic skills education. These individuals were able to perform more complex operations, such as comparing, contrasting, or integrating pieces of information or distinguishing relevant from irrelevant facts. But few among these millions of adults could demonstrate the skills that are essential for the 21st century, such as ..... Only adults who scored in the top three levels of NALS -- less than half of the U.S. population -- can be counted as having a strong foundation in basic skills.

The national breakdown of literacy levels is as follows:

Add chart 3.

The NALS identified people with disabilities as having especially low levels of literacy, finding that 68-90 percent of people with disabilities scored at Levels 1 and 2, depending on the particular disability. For instance, 60 percent of adults with learning disabilities (LD) scored at Level 1, and 20 percent scored at Level 2.

V. CURRENT RESPONSE TO THE LITERACY NEED: NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL

While many adults successfully improve their skills each year in programs funded with federal, state and private funds, millions more do not. The United States lacks a comprehensive national system that guarantees a quality learning opportunity to all adults who want and need to improve their skills. A diverse array of providers helps only a fraction of adults with literacy needs, and the number of adults with literacy needs far outweighs our national capacity to help them.

Only 8 percent of adults with low skills enroll in federal and state supported adult education and literacy programs.[1] Nationally, this totals about 4 million adults annually. They are served by a variety of providers, as follows:

[1] Percentages are based on programs that receive some federal some, and includes most -- but not all -- adult education and literacy programs nationwide. Data is not available for programs that do not receive any federal funds.

Provider	Participation Rate (in percent)
Local education agencies	60
Community colleges	15
Community-based programs	14
Public and private nonprofits	7
Correctional facilities	4

Make into pie chart

In addition, many adults are served by programs that are funded by local government and private sources. Libraries are increasingly the provider of these services, with about half the nation's 15,000 public libraries supporting literacy in some way, often by providing volunteers and students with a free, convenient, safe location for tutoring and additional learning resources.

Add info on other sources of basic skills instruction to provide a more complete picture. Need data on investment of business *(Alice)*, labor unions *(Christy)*, postsecondary education remedial programs *(Mary)*, family literacy, and non-federally-funded programs.

Adult education and literacy providers offer three primary types of services. Adult Basic Education (ABE) provides instruction to adults with low literacy skills. Adult Secondary Education (ASE) provides instruction that leads to a high school certificate. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provides instruction in speaking, reading, and writing English. Of the almost 4,000,000 adults served in 1998, 1.5 million were in ABE services, 1 million were in ASE services, and 1.5 million were in ESOL services. It is estimated that 30-80 percent of the population of adults with low-level literacy skills has some form of learning disability.

Who enrolls in literacy programs?

Adult education and literacy providers serve a diverse group of students with a variety of needs. Participants are generally age 16 or older and include out-of-school youth who lack diplomas, adults who lack sufficient mastery of basic skills, and individuals who lack basic English skills. The working poor, immigrants, dropouts from special education programs, and welfare recipients are frequent participants in adult education and literacy programs. In 1996, 37 percent of individuals enrolled in adult education and literacy programs were ages 16-24. Another 47 percent were ages 25-44. Eleven percent were ages 45-59, and 5 percent were age 60 and older.

Insert chart 4.

Enrollment in adult education programs has grown consistently over the past three decades. In the mid-70's, enrollment approached 2 million adults. By the mid-80's, enrollment had reached approximately 2.8 million adults. By the mid-1990's, the number had grown to 4 million. As the skill level needed for economic success continues to increase, enrollment in adult education and literacy programs is likely to increase as well. Between 1986 and 1996, enrollment increased by 31 percent, and this trend is expected to continue.

Thirty-eight percent of adult education and literacy students were Hispanic; 32 percent, white; 17 percent black; 12 percent Asian/Pacific Islander; and one percent American Indian.

Insert chart 5.

Federal, state, and local agencies combined serve approximately 1.8 million ESOL adults -- nearly half the total participation in adult education programs. The demand for ESOL services considerably exceeds the supply, resulting in long waiting lists, particularly in urban areas. Like ABE and ASE students, ESOL students are by no means a homogeneous group. Their various reasons for attending ESOL classes include the following: obtaining or keeping a job, earning a GED, assisting their children with homework, gaining entry into postsecondary education, and becoming licensed in the professions they practiced before immigrating to the United States.

Of the 4 million adults participating in literacy programs in 1999:

- 331,511 earned a high school diploma or GED
- 224,872 beginner ESOL students improved their English skills enough to advance to intermediate ESOL classes
- 206,982 got a job or received a promotion
- 175,255 moved on to more advanced education or training
- 33,095 left welfare

Insert chart 6.

Of the three million not included in these figures, some made similar gains, but left programs before they could be counted. Others left before gains were made. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Education an estimated 50 percent of enrollees, leave the program before achieving significant skill gains.

How much do we invest in adult education services?

While the total public and private investment in literacy has risen substantially over the past 30 years, amounts are meager in relation to the need. Federal funding for adult education and literacy began in 1966, with an investment of $20 million, or $53 per year per enrollee. By 1998, federal funding had grown to $345 million, or $82 per enrollee annually. Despite this increase, federal funds have dropped by about 75 percent per enrollee over the past three decades when adjusted for inflation. This loss has been largely offset by an increase in state and local funds (which include in-kind support). In 1966, state and local funding totaled about $10 million, or $26 per enrollee; by 1998, this had reached $958 million or $228 per enrollee. *(Christy is checking on this.)* Most states, however, invest little or no money in adult basic education. In fact, five states account for 75 percent of state dollar investments.

(Insert bar graph - Christy.)

The following chart shows the funding levels contained in the President's FY2000 budget, currently under consideration in Congress, as compared to recent years.

	PROPOSED FUTURE FUNDING			ACTUAL FUNDING			
Literacy Programs	**FY00 Senate**	**FY00 House**	**FY00 President**	**FY 99**	**FY98**	**FY97**	**FY96**
			(In millions of	***dollars)***			
Grants to States	468	365	468	365	345	340	247
Reading Excellence Act	**260**	**200**	**286**	**260**	-	-	-
Even Start	145	150	145	135	124	102	102
National Programs/ESL	**14**	**7**	**101**	**14**	**5**	**5**	**2.6**
Nat'l. Institute for Literacy	6[2]	6	6	6	5.5	4.5	4.9
Prison Literacy	**5**	**0**	**0**	**4.7**	**4.7**	**4.7**	**4.7**
TOTAL	**898**	**728**	**1,006**	**784.7**	**484.2**	**456**	**361.2**

Add information on funding from other sources -- federal and non-federal -- even if estimates.

VI. CALL TO ACTION

In 1989, the nation's Governors set a series of ambitious education goals for the United States. One goal was that we achieve universal literacy by the Year 2000. That goal remains -- and will always remain -- elusive. Rather than working toward an unattainable goal, the U.S. needs to set a realistic goal for literacy -- a goal that is ambitious but, with hard work, attainable. The authors suggest the following goal:

GOAL: The United States will be the most literate nation in the world.

[2] This number does not include the Reading Excellence Act's allocation to the NIFL for dissemination activities.

This goal could be measured through the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), which adapted the NALS survey to Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

In 1997, the IALS showed that some other countries have a larger percentage of adults at Level 3 and above than the United States. In other words, the United States had a higher percentage at NALS Levels 1 and 2 -- the lowest levels, which indicate significant literacy needs. *(Alice - Describe what level 3 means in real life terms.)*

Using the performance of Sweden as an indication of how well we could do, the United States could feasibly set a goal of 70 percent of our population scoring at Level 3 and above. This would be a significant increase. In 1997, 45 percent of the American population scored at Level 3 or better.

A follow-up to NALS, the NAALS, will be conducted in 2000, with the results released in 2002. We strongly recommend that follow up surveys be conducted regularly so we can measure progress towards becoming the most literate nation on earth. Rather than conducting surveys every 10 years, we recommend assessing the progress of adults as often as we assess it for children: every four years. We also recommend making the NAAL more compatible (get details from Andy) with the IALS.

Achieving this goal will take decades of hard work. The following actions, which are categorized under several major trends expected to continue in coming years, will move our nation towards achieving this vision.

Trends relating to literacy, adult education and the workforce

TREND: WITH IMMIGRATION AT AN ALL TIME HIGH, THE NUMBER OF NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS IS INCREASING.

An estimated 14 million adults who have not achieved English language fluency. This population is growing, since approximately 600,000 new immigrants arrive each year. Though some are not literate in their native languages, other immigrants have attained high levels of education--including advanced professional degrees--in their own countries. Whatever the level of education, an inability to read, write, or speak English presents a strong barrier to full participation in modern American life. The adult education and literacy system includes ESOL services, but capacity is well below the need.

Reasons for attending ESOL classes include the following: obtaining or keeping a job, earning a GED, assisting their children with homework, gaining entry into postsecondary education, and becoming licensed in the professions they practiced before immigrating to the United States.

Immigrants are more likely to be poor and to remain poor longer than in the past. Most (63 percent) of the gap in the poverty rate for immigrant adults -- versus native-born households -- is due to lower education levels of immigrants, according to the Center for Immigration Statistics (CIS). A new CIS report says that high poverty rates among persons in immigrant households is partly explained by the high proportion with few years of schooling. Of adults in immigrant households in poverty, 58 percent lacked a high school education in 1997. In the 1990's the growth of immigrant-related poverty accounts for 75 percent of the increase in the poor population in the United States. From 1979-1997, the number of poor households headed by immigrants jumped to 123 percent. In the same period, the portion of immigrants living in poverty climbed from 15.5 percent to 21.8 percent -- while 12 percent of native born Americans lived in poverty over the past 120 years.

Federal, state, and local agencies combined serve approximately 1.8 million ESOL adults -- nearly half the total participation in adult education programs -- but well below the number of adults needing and wanting these services. In the last five years, enrollment for ESOL classes has jumped from 1.2 million in 1994 to nearly 2 million in 1998. The increased demand for ESOL classes has resulted in long waiting list in many parts of the country. For example, Los Angeles has a waiting list of 50,000 adults for ESOL classes. Chicago's programs are filled to capacity as soon as they open their doors. New York state has resorted to a lottery system to select from individuals who wish to learn English.

Recommendations:

- Every person must have an equal opportunity to learn English.
- Identify and address cultural barriers to learning English.
- Improve services to underserved populations.
  Research is needed to identify underserved populations (e.g. ethnic minorities, immigrants, those with disabilities), why they are not being served, and how services could be changed to better help them, including how to address cultural barriers.

TREND: AS A RESULT OF THE STEADY HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE, THE NUMBER OF EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED ADULTS IS INCREASING.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the high school dropout rate has remained relatively steady for the past 10 years, hovering at approximately 11 percent annually. The high school dropout rate is higher for Hispanics (25 percent), African Americans (13 percent), and people with disabilities (38 percent), which contributes to the disadvantages faced by minority populations in our country.

Recommendations:

- Americans must have universal access to a high school credential throughout their lifetime.

TREND: THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE NEEDED IN ORDER TO SUCCEED IN THE WORKFORCE ARE CONSTANTLY CHANGING/EVOLVING.

Labor is scarce and will continue this way through the first half of the 21st century. Seven years from now, the US Labor Department estimates there will be about 145 million jobs and only a 148 million-person workforce. With such a tight job market, and unemployment at a record low, many employers are attempting to identify the types of skills will be needed for the workforce of the future.

The cause of this labor shortage is not just the result of more people retiring than are entering the workforce. In fact, many employers consider the primary cause of the labor shortage to be skills mismatch, whereby job seekers do not have the skills necessary to match the prospective employers requirements.

We need to identify critical work-based skills and develop a comprehensive strategy for teaching these skills to potential employees. This can be achieved through collaboration between adult education programs and employer/union organizations.

But in order for people to succeed, they must realize that the end of one particular training program does not mean the end of learning. All members of society must be open to the idea that their education and training never ends -- that it is a continuous, life-long process.

Until recently, many literacy programs have seen the GED as the ultimate goal of their work and of their students' aspirations. It has become increasingly clear that a GED alone is not enough; acquiring the GED, in many cases, has only a small impact on income and job opportunities. Only 10 percent of enrollees achieve a GED. More and more programs now view the GED as a credential that will open doors for students who want and need additional education or training. In addition, few programs offer accommodations for adults with disabilities. Fewer than one percent of those taking the GED receive accommodations.

To ensure that most students make the transition from adult education to community college or skill, programs need to develop or link with "transitional education" programs that help adults achieve success. These programs will require collaboration with local education and training programs, such as those offered by community colleges, welfare-to-work, and job training programs. At the moment, six states are offering skill certification programs, with another 20 or so showing an interest. West Virginia, for instance, has developed a set of skill certificates to recognize attainment of skills and competencies that help adult learners to be more employable or promotable. More basic skill certification systems that document the skills employers want must also be developed.

Recommendations:

- All adult education and literacy students should have a clear pathway to further academic and vocational training and improved employment.
- Develop a clearer, more strategic focus on work-based skills attainment and the workplace as a learning place.
- Encourage all members of society to be continuous learners.

TREND: ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY ARE INCREASING ACCESS TO AND AVAILABILITY OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AMERICANS.

Technology has the potential to reduce the isolation experienced by many adult literacy providers and students. It increases access to high-quality materials and emerging research, facilitates communication between staff and students within and among programs, streamlines administrative and reporting processes, and serves as a delivery vehicle for innovative instructional and staff development approaches. Limited funding prevents many programs from purchasing adequate technology and providing on-going staff training. Programs and their students need access to this new technology and more software that has proven effective with adults. In addition, much of the new software does not accommodate adults with disabilities.

By 2006, almost half of American workers will be employed by industries that are either Information Technology (IT) producers or intensive users of IT. The emerging digital economy is raising the demand for highly-paid, core IT workers, creating new IT-related occupations, changing the skill requirements for many non-IT jobs, and raising the minimum skills requirements for many other jobs. In 1997, IT-producing industries added 350,000 jobs, a one-year increase of 7.7 percent as compared to average employment growth of about 3 percent. (Source: The Emerging Digital Economy II).

Recommendations:

- Develop and promote distance learning programs for adult learners.
- Expand "e-rate" and other efforts to get technology into classrooms to adult education.
- Disseminate information on effective uses of software.
- Fund basic R&D on software with tax incentives.
- Partner with businesses to provide equipment, software, and training.

TREND: PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR IMPROVING THE LITERACY SKILLS OF OUR SOCIETY IS GROWING.

Awareness of and support for literacy as a social issue has increased among both the public and policymakers, but much more support is needed. The recent increase in adult learner advocacy -- including the creation of VALUE (Voices of Adult Learners United for Education) -- holds potential for making a substantial difference in this area. Another emerging positive trend among programs is to add learners to the Boards and other decision-making positions. The government and the public both need a better and deeper understanding of this issue. One-stops, conferences, networking, directories, and the Internet can all help.

In most communities, a variety of adult learning programs are available -- including community and faith-based literacy programs, local education agency school-sponsored adult education programs, community college classes, library literacy programs, one-stop centers, workplace programs, welfare-to-work programs, and vocational rehabilitation programs. Because the information about services is often not coordinated, adults seeking information may not have the information they need to enroll in the program best suited to their needs. Communities must make every effort to provide clear information available on the kinds of programs available, location, time, cost (if any), etc. Competition among providers for limited resources often leads to lack of coordination among providers. This must change.

Recommendations:

- Promote awareness, understanding and support for literacy from all Americans -- including policymakers, business leaders, and the general public.
- Establish or encourage internships with policymakers -- or shadow or mentor events.
- Develop clear information to guide the public to adult education and literacy programs.

TREND: THE LITERACY FIELD HAS MORE AND BETTER INFORMATION THAN EVER BEFORE ABOUT WHAT WORKS.

Few full time jobs are available for adult education and literacy instructors, and those that are available offer low pay and few (if any) benefits. The overwhelming majority of instructional staff (87 percent) is part-time, often volunteer, and this contributes to a high rate of staff turnover. Increasing the proportion of full-time instructors is essential to improving capacity and quality. Full-time jobs will only have an impact if the people who take them are well trained. Adult educators receive only a fraction of the training that is regularly provided to K-12 professionals. Currently there is no pay incentive for instructors to get certification. In fact, most part-time (and some full-time) instructors sacrifice a day's pay to participate in in-service training. Improved and expanded training of teachers, administrators, and volunteers is essential to improving the quality of instruction. In addition, more colleges and universities should offer research-based degree programs in adult literacy instruction. In 1999, only xx colleges and universities nationwide offer Master's degrees in adult education and literacy.

Increase the federal investment in professional development (currently $250,000 per year) and amend the Workforce Investment Act to promote training systems development and larger expenditures by state and local programs.

Adult educator certification is a way to get beyond the minimal requirement that instructors have K-12 certificates. The national PRO-NET project is in the process of field-testing teacher competencies, with plans to identify administrator competencies as well. Their work could steer the course for some professional certifications in the future.

(Mention President's budget request specifics on this?)

No consensus exists as to what programs are trying to achieve. Recent efforts to identify standards for basic education -- such as the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and Equipped for the Future (EFF) -- have made progress in expanding the vision for the field and providing guidance on the specific skills and knowledge that adults need to be successful in the 21st Century. Once a common vision is agreed upon, curriculum that supports the learning of those skills and knowledge can be developed along with measures of progress and assessment. At this point we have none of these. *(Need to add a much more thorough explanation of EFF and SCANS.)*

Very little research has been done on how to teach this population effectively. There is a great deal of research on teaching children, which is used by some until they have research on teaching adults. The research on children, however, is not well disseminated. Because of scant funding for research, there is little capacity in the form of trained researchers. Without better research, the development of innovative teaching approaches will be limited. Explore how the military provides basic education and training to its members. Can we learn anything?

Most adults come to literacy programs with additional needs beyond education. They may need child care or transportation in order to attend classes, or they may have health problems that create barriers to learning. Programs must have better connections to the many auxiliary services their students may need. Partner with local agencies to provide referrals.

Recommendations:

- Adequately train and compensate providers.
- Develop curriculum and assessment tools that assist teachers in better serving students.
- Connect literacy providers -- including education, training, higher education, job training -- to meet student goals.
- Support basic and applied R&D -- need knowledge to drive quality.

TREND: The investment in literacy is growing, but remains far below the level necessary to address the overwhelming need.

Add details.

Recommendations:

- The federal government should increase adult education and family literacy state grants to $1 billion annually by 2005.
- Every state should contribute at least x percent of state dollars to match its federal allotment.
- The private sector, organized labor, foundations, should…

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Appendix A
HISPANIC SERVING INSTITUTIONS

State	Name of Institution	State	Name of Institution
AZ	ARIZONA INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY	NM	ALBUQUERQUE TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE
AZ	ARIZONA INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY	NM	COLLEGE OF SANTA FE
AZ	ARIZONA WESTERN COLLEGE	NM	EASTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY-ROSWELL CAMPUS
AZ	CENTRAL ARIZONA COLLEGE	NM	LUNA VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE
AZ	COCHISE COLLEGE	NM	NEW MEXICO HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY
AZ	ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE	NM	NEW MEXICO JUNIOR COLLEGE
AZ	PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE	NM	NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY-CARLSBAD
AZ	SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE	NM	NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY-DOÑA ANA
	N=8	NM	NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY-GRANTS
CA	ALLAN HANCOCK COLLEGE	NM	NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY-MAIN CAMPUS
CA	BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE	NM	NORTHERN NEW MEXICO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CA	CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-BAKERSFIELD	NM	SANTA FE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CA	CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-DOMINGUEZ HILLS	NM	UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-LOS ALAMOS CAMPUS
CA	CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-FRESNO	NM	UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-MAIN CAMPUS
CA	CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-LOS ANGELES	NM	UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-TAOS EDUCATION CENTER
CA	CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-MONTERREY BAY	NM	UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-VALENCIA COUNTY BRANCH
CA*	CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-NORTHRIDGE	NM	WESTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY
CA	CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-SAN BERNARDINO		N=17
CA*	CAÑADA COLLEGE	NY	BORICUA COLLEGE
CA	CERRITOS COLLEGE	NY	MERCY COLLEGE
CA	CHAFFEY COLLEGE	NY	COLLEGE OF AERONAUTICS
CA	CITRUS COLLEGE	NY	CUNY BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CA	COLLEGE OF THE DESERT	NY	CUNY BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CA	COLLEGE OF THE SEQUOIAS	NY	CUNY CITY COLLEGE
CA	COMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE	NY	CUNY HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CA**	D-Q UNIVERSITY	NY	CUNY JOHN JAY COLLEGE CRIMINAL JUSTICE
CA	DON BOSCO TECHNICAL INSTITUTE	NY	CUNY LA GUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CA	EAST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE	NY	CUNY LEHMAN COLLEGE
CA	EL CAMINO COLLEGE	NY	CUNY NEW YORK CITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE
CA	FRESNO CITY COLLEGE		N=11
CA	FULLERTON COLLEGE		
CA	GAVILAN COLLEGE	PR	AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO- BAYAMON
CA	HARTNELL COLLEGE	PR	AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO-MANATI
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CA	LOS ANGELES CITY COLLEGE	PR	COLEGIO UNIVERSITARIO DEL ESTE
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CA	LOS ANGELES MISSION COLLEGE	PR	HUMACAO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CA	LOS ANGELES TRADE-TECHNICAL COLLEGE	PR	INTER AMERICAN UNIV OF PUERTO RICO-AGUADILLA
CA	LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE	PR	INTER AMERICAN UNIV OF PUERTO RICO-ARECIBO
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CA	OXNARD COLLEGE	PR	INTER AMERICAN UNIV OF PUERTO RICO-GUAYAMA
CA**	PALO VERDE COLLEGE	PR	INTER AMERICAN UNIV OF PUERTO RICO-METRO
CA	PASADENA CITY COLLEGE	PR	INTER AMERICAN UNIV OF PUERTO RICO-PONCE
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CA	REEDLEY COLLEGE	PR	PONTIFICAL CATHOLIC UNIV OF PUERTO RICO-ARECIBO
CA	RIO HONDO COLLEGE	PR	PONTIFICAL CATHOLIC UNIV OF PUERTO RICO-GUAYAMA

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CLOSING TH OPPORTUNITY GAP: ENDING THE NATION'S HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUT PROBLEM

Al Gore has long supported efforts to strengthen our schools, set high standards for students and teachers, and make higher education more affordable and accessible. With the Vice President's leadership, this Administration has made the first two years of college universally available through Hope Scholarships and expanded college opportunity with increased Pell Grants, Lifetime Learning Tax Credits, Education IRAs, and Work Study. The Administration has also made college more affordable by cutting fees and interest rates on loans. The Vice President has also fought to improve the quality of our public schools through higher academic standards, smaller classes, modern school buildings, expanded after-school programs, and early learning opportunities for preschoolers.

Keeping Our Children in School and Raising the Compulsory School Age to Eighteen

As the next President, Al Gore would build upon this record of success and would lead revolutionary progress in education to help close the opportunity gap. One key component of this agenda will be a nationwide effort to tackle one of the most urgent challenges in education – ending the high-school drop-out problem and making sure that all young people stay in school.

Al Gore would challenge every state to raise their compulsory school age to 18 and would provide matching grants to help states adopt aggressive, proven strategies to prevent students from dropping out of school and to help them succeed and graduate. To be eligible for these grants, states would also have to develop plans for holding school districts and schools accountable for reducing the drop-out rate and increasing high school graduation rates and student achievement. Funding could be used to ensure that every student is prepared to succeed in school once the new requirement is phased-in through such strategies as: individualized attention from teachers and other adults at school; mentorship programs; strategies to involve families in their children's education; and personalized alternative schools with flexible hours to accommodate students who must work part-time. Exceptions to the 18-year requirement would include early graduation, a family emergency, or an alternative education program approved by the parents and the school principal

Ending The Drop-Out Problem will Lead to Higher Incomes And A Brighter Future For Our Children

There is a strong relationship between the level of education completed and income level. In 1996, the median annual earnings of young adults ages 25–34 who had not completed high school were substantially lower than those of their counterparts who had completed high school (31 and 36 percent lower for males and females, respectively). Young adults who had completed a bachelor's degree or higher earned substantially more than those who had earned no more than a high school diploma or GED (54 and 88 percent more for males and females, respectively).

Recent academic evidence suggests that effective drop-out prevention strategies and compulsory schooling laws increase education attainment among students and can have a positive impact on future earnings. One study, by Alan Krueger of Princeton University and Joshua Angrist of MIT, found that an extra year of education obtained in response to compulsory schooling has a substantial payoff: about 8 percent higher future earnings each year.

All fifty states have some form of compulsory school age requirement ranging from ages 16 to 18. Eleven states require students to remain in school until the age of 18.

Association for Career and Technical Education
ACTE

STATE DIRECTORS
VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION

FY 2001 FUNDING REQUEST
VOCATIONAL, CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Today, students need a combination of sound academic and technical skills to compete in the workforce. Vocational, career and technical education is working to meet this need for our nation's secondary and postsecondary students. To support these efforts in FY 2001. Members of the Association for Career and Technical Education (formerly the American Vocational Association) and the National Association for State Directors of Vocational-Technical Education Corporation strongly urge Congress and the Administration to provide:

AT LEAST $250 MILLION INCREASE FOR THE PERKINS ACT

AT LEAST A $400 INCREASE IN THE PELL GRANT MAXIMUM

JUSTIFICATION:

□ **CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION: A CORNERSTONE OF AMERICAN EDUCATION**

Vocational, career and technical education is an integral part of American education that helps students achieve their career and education goals by:

- providing students with the balance of academic and technical skills needed to succeed in today's dynamic workplace and to pursue postsecondary education by presenting academic concepts in a contextual manner;
- helping students prepare to pursue postsecondary education and high skill, high wage careers in areas such as computer technology, automotive services and health care;
- helping approximately 61 percent of vocational, career and technical education graduates continue their education at the postsecondary level;
- working with business and industry leaders to develop new curricula, provide teacher externships and create internship opportunities for students.

□ **NEW PERKINS ACT: A CHALLENGE FROM THE CONGRESS**

Congress passed the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, challenging vocational, career and technical education to meet higher accountability measures and further improve programs. To meet this challenge, programs must provide students with access to the high quality vocational, career and technical education that will prepare them for postsecondary education and the highly competitive and technological workplace of the 21st century.

► **FUNDING PRIORITY: INCREASE FUNDING FOR PERKINS ACT**

In recent years, funding for the Perkins Act has barely kept pace with inflation. With America's commitment to vocational, career and technical education renewed through the new Perkins Act, NOW is the time to make the financial commitment that our nation's career and technical education students deserve.

TAKE ACTION NOW!

Vocational, career and technical education stands ready to meet the challenges of the future, but your help is critical to ensure that students have access to these vital programs. To continue preparing America's students for the high-skill careers of the future, Congress must provide **at least $250 million increase for Fiscal Year 2001** for the Perkins Act and **at least a $400 increase in the Pell Grant maximum award.**

For additional information, please contact Nancy O'Brien, ACTE's Asst. Exec. Dir. for Government Relations, at 703/683-3111, ext. 311.

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Subject: Hope & Lifetime Learning Outreach

Below is an outline of our on-going efforts to get the words out on the Hope & Lifetime Learning tax credits.
We should have a copy of the poster that could be held up during the event or you could feature the tax form. I also attached a couple of recent articles that might be of interest and our families guide to the tax credits and the copy from our web site.

1. Produced posters and brochures on the credits (expected to be ready first week of Feb.) for dissemination to public libraries, college and university student financial aid officers, and Members of Congress.

2. A Video News Release, including a clip of Secretary Riley, was distributed by satellite nationwide.

3. Information is highlighted on the Department of Education web site. (The Department's web site received 320,000 hits last month). Information was also disseminated to the Department's list serve.

4. Information is highlighted on the Department's radio feed service.

5. Information is highlighted on the first page of the Student Guide to Financial Aid, which is a very popular publication sent to high schools, colleges, universities, and libraries.

6. Information was disseminated to the over 4000 members of the Department's Partnership for Family Involvement in Education.

7. Information is made available through our 1-800-USA-Learn hotline and 1-800-4FEDAID. (1-800-4FEDAID receives more than 3 million calls annually).

8. A press release was nationally released on December 30, 1998.

9. Information is being emailed to college and university papers nationwide.

10. References to the credits are routinely highlighted in remarks by Secretary Riley, Acting Deputy Mike Smith, and other Education officials.

11. There is reference to the credits on the top of the 1999-2000 FAFSA form.

12. A letter was issued from the Secretary to college presidents requesting that they make sure students receive the full benefits of the credits (asking them not to increase administrative fees or tuition in order to offset their potential added costs of processing reporting information).

13. Information was provided at the Lifelong Learning Summit in January.

HOPE and Lifetime Learning tax credits helping make college and continuing education more affordable

The 1998 tax year marks the first year that parents who are sending their children to college or adults who want to continue their education may take advantage of the "HOPE Scholarship" tax credit or Lifetime Learning tax credit. When fully phased in, 13.1 million students are expected to benefit -- 5.9 million under the "HOPE Scholarship" tax credit, and 7.2 million under the Lifetime Learning tax credit. For both Hope and Lifetime Learning benefits, taxpayers must submit IRS Form 8863 with their federal tax return. More information is available through the IRS Help Line at 1-800-829-1040, in IRS publication 970, or at the Treasury Department's website at www.irs.ustreas.gov.

HOPE Tax Credits

Who qualifies: A Hope tax credit can be claimed for two years for each student in a family who is enrolled in higher education at least half-time in an eligible educational institution and who has not yet completed his or her first two years of study. Students financing their own education and who are not claimed as dependents on their parents' tax form, or adults who claim students as dependents, can declare a tax credit for tuition expenses and required fees.

How much is the tax credit worth?: Taxpayers will receive a 100% tax credit for the first $1,000 of tuition and required fees and a 50% credit on the second $1,000. Payments made between January 1, 1998, and December 31, 1998, qualify for the 1998 tax year. Total possible maximum benefit *per student* is there fore $1,500, and there is no limit to the number of students who can qualify. The credit is deducted directly from the amount of federal income tax you owe. Qualified expenses include tuition and required fees, less any grants and scholarships that are received tax-free. Room, board, books, and supplies are not covered.

Lifetime Learning Tax Credits

Who qualifies: It is available to vocational, college, graduate, and professional-school students, and adults who want to upgrade their job skills or acquire new ones or pursue another course of study. It is even available for a student taking just one course as long as it is job-related. *There is no limit on the number of years a student may claim the Lifetime Learning tax credit.*

How much is the tax credit worth?: For the 1998 tax year, tax filers can claim a Lifetime Learning credit up to $1,000 -- 20 percent of the first $5,000 paid in qualified tuition and fees on or after July 1, 1998. A taxpayer can claim only one Lifetime Learning credit per year for the total amount of qualified tuition and fees of those students in the family for whom no Hope credit is claimed. Taxpayers cannot claim both Hope and Lifetime Learning tax credits for the same student in the same tax year, even if the student is a sophomore at the beginning of the tax year and a junior in the second half of the tax year. But families will be able to claim the Lifetime Learning tax credit for some members of their family and the Hope for others who qualify in the same year. As with Hope, qualified expenses include tuition and required fees, less any grants and scholarships that are received tax-free. Room, board, books, and supplies are not covered.

Income Requirements for Both the Hope and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits

Single tax files with up to $40,000 of adjusted gross income qualify for full benefits. The credit is gradually reduced for taxpayers who have between $40,000-$50,000 in adjusted gross income, and is not available to those with over $50,000. Joint tax filers with up to $80,000 of adjusted gross income also qualify for full benefits. The credit is gradually reduced for joint filers who have between $80,000-$100,000 of adjusted gross income, and is not available for those with adjusted gross incomes over $100,000.

HOPE and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits for Higher Education Available for the 1998 Tax Year

Save Money on College and Job Training Costs!

HOPE Tax Credit

Amount:	100% tax credit for first $1,000 and 50% for second $1,000 on tuition and required fees paid between Jan. 1, 1998 and Dec. 31, 1998 for each eligible student.
Enrollment Requirements:	Enrolled at least half-time in a degree or certificate program at an eligible school and has not yet completed first two years of study.
Income Requirements:	Single tax filers with up to $40,000 adjusted gross income and joint filers with up to $80,000 of adjusted gross income qualify for full benefits. Above these levels, the credit is gradually phased out so that so that single and joint taxpayers with adjusted gross incomes over $50,000 and $100,000, respectively, are not eligible.

Lifetime Learning Tax Credit

Amount:	20% tax credit for first $5,000 of tuition and required fees paid by a family on or after July 1, 1998.
Enrollment Requirements:	Enrolled in at least one course, even if it is not for academic credit, at eligible vocational, college, graduate, or professional schools. There is no limit on the number of years a student may claim the Lifetime Learning credit.
Income Requirements:	Same as with Hope tax credit.

Call the IRS Help Line at 1-800-829-1040 for more information.

FAMILIES' GUIDE TO THE TAX CUTS FOR EDUCATION

Many new tax benefits for adults who want to return to school and for parents who are sending or planning to send their children to college are now available. These tax cuts effectively make the first two years of college universally available, and they will give many more working Americans the financial means to go back to school if they want to choose a new career or upgrade their skills. When fully phased in, 13.1 million students are expected to benefit -- 5.9 million under the "HOPE Scholarship" tax credit and 7.2 million under the Lifetime Learning tax credit.

- **Up to a $1,500 "HOPE Scholarship" tax credit for students starting college**

The "HOPE Scholarship" tax credit helps make the first two years of college or vocational school universally available. Students will receive a 100% tax credit for the first $1,000 of tuition and required fees and a 50% credit on the second $1,000. This credit is available for tuition and required fees less grants, scholarships, and other tax-free educational assistance and will be available for payments made after December 31, 1997, for college enrollment after that date. A high school senior going into his or her freshman year of college in September 1998, for example, could be eligible for as much as a $1,500 HOPE tax credit.

This credit is phased out for joint filers who have between $80,000 and $100,000 of adjusted gross income and for single filers who have between $40,000 and $50,000 of adjusted gross income. The credit can be claimed in two years for students who are in their first two years of college or vocational school and who are enrolled on at least a half-time basis in a degree or certificate program for any portion of the year. The taxpayer can claim a credit for his or her own tuition expense or for the expenses of his or her spouse or dependent children.

A married couple with an adjusted gross income of $60,000 has two children in college at least half-time, one at a community college with a tuition of $2,000 and the other a sophomore at a private college with tuition of $11,000. Using the HOPE Scholarship tax credit, this couple would have their taxes cut by as much as $3,000.

- **The Lifetime Learning tax credit**

This tax credit is targeted to adults who want to go back to school, change careers, or take a course or two to upgrade their skills and to undergraduate college, graduate and professional degree students. A family will receive a 20% tax credit for the first $5,000 of tuition and required fees paid each year through 2002 and for the first $10,000 thereafter. Just like the "HOPE Scholarship" tax credit, the Lifetime Learning tax credit is available for tuition and required fees less grants, scholarships, and other tax-free educational assistance; families may claim the credit for amounts paid on or after July 1, 1998, for college or vocational school enrollment beginning on or after July 1, 1998. This credit is even available for individuals taking a single course, whether or not the course is taken for academic credit, as long as it is related to his or her job. There is no limit on the number of years a student can claim the Lifetime Learning credit. The maximum credit is determined on a per-taxpayer (family) basis, regardless of the number of post-secondary students in the family and is phased out at the same income levels as the "HOPE Scholarship" tax credit. Families will be able to claim the Lifetime Learning tax credit for some members of their family and the "HOPE Scholarship" tax credit for others who qualify in the same year.

A homemaker, whose family has an adjusted gross income of $70,000, wants to attend a graduate teacher training program at a public university ($3,500 tuition) after being out of college for 20 years. Using the Lifetime Learning credit, his or her family's income taxes would be cut by as much as $700.

A married couple has an adjusted gross income of $32,000. The husband who is working as an automobile mechanic decides to go back to a local technical college to take some computer classes in the hope of getting a better job. He will pay a tuition of $1,200. Using the Lifetime Learning credit, this family would have their taxes cut by as much as $240.

- **Parents and grandparents can create education IRAs and make penalty-free withdrawals from other IRAs**

Taxpayers may also withdraw funds from an IRA, without penalty, for their own higher education expenses or those of their spouse, child, or even grandchild. In addition, for each child under age 18, families may deposit $500 per year into an Education IRA in the child's name. Earnings in the Education IRA will accumulate tax-free, and no taxes will be due upon withdrawal if the money is used to pay for post-secondary tuition and required fees (less grants, scholarships, and other tax-free educational assistance), books, equipment, and eligible room and board expenses. Once the child reaches age 30, his or her Education IRA must be closed or transferred to a younger member of the family.

A taxpayer's ability to contribute to an Education IRA is phased out when the taxpayer is a joint filer with an adjusted gross income between $150,000 and $160,000 or a single filer with an adjusted gross income between $95,000 and $110,000. There are a few restrictions. A student, for example, who receives the tax-free distributions from an Education IRA may not, in the same year, benefit from the "HOPE Scholarship" or Lifetime Learning tax credits.

- **Greater flexibility for families saving in qualified State tuition plans**

When a family uses a qualified State-sponsored tuition plan to save for college, no tax is due in connection with the plan until the time of withdrawal, as a result of a law passed last year. The recent change in law allows families to use these plans to save not only for tuition but also for certain room and board expenses for students who attend on at least a half-time basis. Tuition and required fees paid with withdrawals from a qualified State tuition plan are eligible for the "HOPE Scholarship" tax credit and Lifetime Learning tax credit. These benefits were available beginning January 1, 1998.

- **Paying back student loans at a lower cost**

For many college graduates, one of their first financial obligations is to repay their student loans, which average about $13,500 per student. The new student loan interest deduction will reduce the burden of the repayment obligation by allowing students or their families to take a tax deduction for interest paid in the first 60 months of repayment on student loans. The deduction is available even if an individual does not itemize other deductions.

The maximum deduction is $1,000 in 1998, $1,500 in 1999, $2,000 in 2000, and $2,500 in 2001 and beyond. It is phased out for joint filers with adjusted gross income between $60,000 and $75,000 and single filers with adjusted gross income between $40,000 and $55,000. The deduction is available for all educational loans, including loans made to students, parents, guaranteed student loans, and loans from private lenders, made before August of 1997 when the new student loan interest deduction became law but only to the extent that the loan is within the first 60 months of repayment.

A senior graduates from college and finds a job paying $25,000 a year (and has no other income). The student has a total student debt of $12,000 and is in the 15% federal income tax bracket. The monthly payment for this student's loans is $148. The total amount of payments for the first year is $1,776, over half of which is interest ($960) which can be deducted under the new law. The student's maximum tax benefit can be calculated by multiplying $960 by 15%: for a tax savings of $144.

- **Going to school while you work**

The recent tax law extends Section 127 of the tax code for three years. Section 127 allows workers to exclude up to $5,250 of employer-provided education benefits from their income. The assistance must be for undergraduate courses beginning prior to June 1, 2000. This provision will enable many Americans to pursue their goals of lifelong learning.

- **Community service loan forgiveness**

This provision excludes from income student loan amounts forgiven by non-profit, tax-exempt charitable or educational institutions for borrowers who take community-service jobs that address unmet community needs. For example, a recent graduate who takes a low-paying job in a rural school will not owe any additional income tax if in recognition of this service her college or another charity forgives a loan it made to her to help pay her college costs. This provision applies to loans forgiven after August 5, 1997.

The balanced budget bills signed in 1997 by President Clinton includes many other provisions that will help all of the young people in America grow and learn and help families navigate through these changing times. The new tax law includes a provision to encourage computer donations to schools. The balanced budget agreement of 1997 protects and advances President Clinton's top domestic priorities, such as the expansion of Head Start and an increase in the maximum Pell grant for college to $3,000. All of these benefits and tax cuts have one goal: to give parents the support they need to give their children a first class education and hope for the future.

For information on additional student aid programs that will help meet the costs of college and lifelong learning for you, your children and grandchildren, please call 1-800-4FED-AID. For information on the importance of getting ready for college early, especially middle school students, call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

(This is an informational guide produced by the Department of Education; for detailed tax information and instruction please consult your IRS tax forms and publications to see if you qualify.) January 1999

.Chronicle of Higher Education
January 25, 1999 Category: Trade

2 New Tax Credits Create Costly Tasks for College Officials

Required paperwork and confused students leave many campuses feeling overwhelmed

By SARA HEBEL

For higher education, the challenge is seen as a 1999 version of the Year 2000 computer bug. One college lobbyist compares the possible tumult to "throwing a live grenade" into campus offices nationwide. At best, most college officials expect widespread confusion and a deluge of phone calls from students and parents this tax season.

Tax Credits for Higher Education

The source of the anxiety: two major federal income-tax breaks, the Hope Credit and the Lifetime Learning Credit, that will be available in 1999 for the first time to millions of Americans who pay college expenses. As a result, colleges are scrambling to handle a first of their own: By February 1, postsecondary institutions must send a tax form to students who paid for academic courses for credit in 1998.

"The burden imposed by the Hope and Lifetime Learning tax credits far exceeds any federally imposed burden that we have encountered previously," Stanley O. Ikenberry, president of the American Council on Education, wrote this month to Treasury Secretary Robert E. Rubin.

Over the next year, college associations and higher-education officials plan to urge the Clinton Administration and Congress to simplify and clarify the role that institutions play in administering the tax credits. The Hope Credit, for freshmen and sophomores, is worth as much as $1,500 per year, while the Lifetime Learning Credit provides up to $1,000 per year for part-time students, full-time juniors and seniors, and graduate students.

For the next three months, though, officials from the largest private research universities to the smallest public colleges will juggle complying with tax rules while providing financial data so students and families may take advantage of the breaks.

"I am very concerned this will be an underutilized benefit," said Nancy C. Coolidge, who handles government relations on student-aid issues for the University of California system office.

She and other college administrators, as well as students and lobbyists, said helping people apply for these credits would prove disruptive and expensive for postsecondary institutions for several reasons:

* Federal officials waited too long to tell colleges what data they are required to send to students and to the Internal Revenue Service, and are still developing final rules on those requirements and on which fees are eligible for the credits.

* Many schools need to develop new ways of assembling and dispersing tax-related information.

* Colleges now do not collect some data that they are required to report.

* The new 1098-T federal tax form that colleges must send out may confuse students because it relays only minimal information -- a student's name, address, Social Security number, and status as a half-time student and a graduate student.

* Students and parents with questions are likely to call the colleges, since the tax forms came from them, even though they are not equipped to act as tax advisers.

Broadly put, obtaining information is the source of the trouble. Even though the tax credits were created in 1997, some college officials and students are just now becoming aware of their existence and the need for everyone to act this year.

"It really is very bad," said Leo L. Kornfeld, managing director of a tax-credit-reporting service at Computer Data Systems Inc., in Rockville, Md. "The government just hasn't done a very good job" of getting the word out about the tax credits, he adds.

Mr. Kornfeld, a former special assistant to the Secretary of Education for direct loans who now handles Hope and Lifetime Learning requirements for scores of colleges, including the University of California, said he had spoken this month with administrators from community colleges and prestigious private universities who "still are waking up to the fact that they have to do something" to comply with federal law on the credits.

Institutions have been hiring outside contractors this month in a last-ditch effort to get the tax forms out to students on schedule. Such "outsourcing" operations have emerged over the past year to offer colleges a range of tax-credit assistance, including generating required and supplemental mailings to students and creating telephone-hotline centers and World-Wide Web sites to answer students' questions and provide data.

But even those services may not provide sure-fire solutions. One college lobbyist, who asked not to be named, said institutions that had signed contracts months ago risk receiving less service, as the consultants -- who are working in new territory to begin with -- respond to a last-minute crush of new customers.

Most of all, college officials foresee big problems stemming from the likely confusion of students once they receive their tax forms.

"What nobody is prepared for is the volume of calls that is just going to pour in," said Barmak Nassirian, associate executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

What's more, the calls will come at one of the busiest times of the year for colleges, as they recruit new students and send out financial-aid packages.

Mr. Kornfeld estimated that 50 per cent of students who received a tax-information package with supplemental data would ask questions of the college or on a consultant's hotline. For institutions that send out only the required minimal data, the proportion will jump to about 75 per cent, he said.

Even colleges and universities that send out detailed supplemental data, such as lists of student payments that qualify for the credits, expect to be bombarded with inquiries.

"We are trying to give students as much information as we can without overwhelming them," said Bernice A. Lindke, the director of financial aid at Eastern Michigan University, where officials are steering students to an I.R.S. Web site and to an outside consultant's 800 number, and sending out an information sheet about the credits.

No matter what's done, Ms. Lindke added, "You know that people are going to call."

Several student leaders, who consider themselves among the most well-informed about issues on their campuses, said recently that they had not heard much, if anything, about the Hope and Lifetime tax credits.

"Oh, you mean the 'Lifetime' thing?" Steve K. Man, the sergeant at arms of the University of Chicago's student government, said upon being asked if he had heard of the new tax credits.

"I have seen it in a couple places, but I have to say the average student doesn't know much about it," Mr. Man said. Even though the university sent a letter to students about the tax credits last fall, "there hasn't been much talk about it," he added.

Helena M. Coello, vice-president of the student government at Miami-Dade Community College, said she took pride in taking fellow students "by the hand" to the student-aid office. She just learned of the tax credits this month, however. Ms. Coello said she assumed that many of her peers didn't know about the credits, saying that many students from middle-income families do not look into financial benefits, such as the tax credits, that are geared toward them.

"A lot of them are unaware. They think they are not eligible for any financial aid at all," Ms. Coello said. "But I tell them, 'You don't have to be poor, living in a hut, to get financial aid.'"

At Eastern Michigan, many undergraduate students "don't know and probably don't care" about the new tax breaks, said Bryce T. Hoffman, editor of the college newspaper, Eastern Echo, which has run articles about the benefits. He said he did not blame the university for the lack of knowledge.

"People should take responsibility for their own financial well-being," Mr. Hoffman said. "That shouldn't be the school's responsibility."

While many administrators said they would do their best to tell students how they may benefit from the new tax credits, they want to provide information yet avoid acting like tax consultants. And then there's the cost issue: Colleges are expected to spend about $119-million to comply with the tax law, or about 5 per cent of the estimated amount of education-credit benefits that people will receive, according to a survey by the National Association of College and University Business Officers. The average cost per tax form will be about $3.50, the survey found.

Washtenaw Community College has already spent about $8,000 to comply with the tax-credit law, according to Robin L. Wagner, the financial-systems analyst there. The anticipated questions and spinoff requests are "going to cost us just as much," she added.

Instead of jumping through the tax-credit-requirement hoops, Ms. Wagner said it would be more efficient if "we could just give eight people a $1,000 grant."

For colleges expecting few of their students to benefit from the credits, the costs of complying seem even more burdensome.

"The institutional reporting requirements are exorbitant compared to the amount our students will receive," said Jan M. Paulson, director of management-information systems at the California Community Colleges system, which has 2.2 million students on 106 campuses.

Because the system's tuition rates are so low -- only $12 per academic credit -- "the value of the tax credit is very, very low," said Linda B. Michalowski, director of federal relations for the system. Only about one-third of the system's students will probably be eligible for a federal tax credit. And those who could claim the Hope credit would receive no more than $144 per year because of the low expenses.

The cost for each college to mail required forms to students, most of whom will be ineligible for benefits, will total about $100,000, Ms. Paulson said.

"Once the students receive the form, it will cause them to question whether they might be eligible," causing more work and confusion, she added.

In spite of the likelihood of a migraine or two, some college officials feel good about their preparation for dealing with the tax credits.

Those who were the most upbeat said their campuses were including supplemental educational-expense data in their tax-form mailings; training college employees to respond to questions; and trying to publicize the tax credits ahead of time to students.

"We are looking for a smooth process," said Ms. Lindke of Eastern Michigan.

For college officials not feeling so prepared, Mr. Nassirian of the college-registrars' group advised immediately printing addenda to the required tax form, outlining tuition and fees that students have paid; training employees to answer anticipated questions; securing more phone lines or lining up a hotline; and telling students, if nothing else, the basics about eligibility standards.

"At the very least, schools ought to attempt to perform as much pre-emptive triage as they can," Mr. Nassirian said. "That's the best we can do at this late hour."

Tax Credits for Higher Education

The Hope Credit

Maximum credit amount: $1,500 per student per tax year.

Eligible expenses: Qualified tuition and fees* paid in 1998 for academic coursework started between January 1, 1998, and March 31, 1999.

How to calculate credit amount: Take 100 per cent of the first $1,000 paid in eligible tuition and fees, and add 50 per cent of the next $1,000 paid.

Who is eligible:

Students who have not completed their first two years of postsecondary education as of December 31, 1997; Students who are enrolled in a program that leads to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; Students who are taking at least one-half of the normal full-time workload for their course of study for at least one academic period beginning in 1998; Students who have not been convicted of a felony for possessing or distributing a controlled substance; and Students who have not claimed the Lifetime Learning Credit as well.

The Lifetime Learning Credit

Maximum credit amount: $1,000 per tax return per tax year (regardless of number of students applying for the credit).

Eligible expenses: Qualified tuition and fees* paid between July 1 and December 31, 1998, for academic periods beginning between July 1, 1998, and March 31, 1999.

How to calculate credit amount: Take 20 per cent of the first $5,000 paid in eligible tuition and fees.

Who is eligible: Any student of any age taking any number of postsecondary classes to improve or acquire job skills. The student may not claim the Hope Credit as well.

Eligibility rules

A student (or person claiming a student as a dependent) cannot claim either credit if:

Someone else claims the student as a dependent. The taxpayer is married but filing separately from his or her spouse. The taxpayer's adjusted gross income is $100,000 or more if married and filing jointly, or is $50,000 or more if the taxpayer is single, the head of a household, or a qualifying widow or widower. (The full tax credit begins to phase out if the student's adjusted gross income is $80,000 or more if the taxpayer is married and filing jointly, or $40,000 or more if the taxpayer is single, the head of a household, or a qualifying widow or widower.)

* Expenses that generally do not qualify for either credit: room and board, insurance, transportation, or other personal, living, or family expenses; books or equipment; courses or education involving sports, games, or hobbies, unless those are part of a student's degree program.

SOURCE: INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

.Chronicle of Higher Education-Academe Today
January 7, 1999 Category: Trade

Government Issues Proposed Guidelines for Claiming New College Tax Credits

By SARA HEBEL
Washington
The Treasury Department on Wednesday issued proposed regulations to guide individuals who will be claiming two major tax credits for college expenses that are available for the first time this year.

These proposed guidelines for the Hope Scholarship and the Lifetime Learning tax credits, enacted in 1997, will be binding, so taxpayers may rely on them until final regulations are published. The guidelines define terms such as "academic period," stipulate which student fees may be offset by the credits, and outline methods for determining how many years of postsecondary study a student has completed.

The interim rules do not tell institutions how to handle new reporting requirements that they must follow as the new credits take effect. Colleges and universities are still awaiting separate, final regulations to help direct them, according to Jacqueline E. King, director of federal policy and analysis for the American Council on Education.

The Hope Scholarship tax credit, which is worth as much as $1,500 each year, will be available to college freshmen and sophomores in April 1999 when they file their 1998 tax returns. The credit will provide 100 per cent of the first $1,000 a student spends on tuition and fees and 50 per cent of the next $1,000 spent.

The Lifetime Learning credit allows a tax credit worth 20 per cent of the first $5,000 of college costs incurred by part-time students, full-time undergraduates in their third or fourth year and graduate students.

Under the guidelines, third-party payments made on behalf of a student will be treated, for the purposes of determining eligibility for the tax credits, as "out of pocket" payments made by students to the university.

In addition, the proposed regulations indicate that scholarships and fellowship grants generally will be excluded from income calculations for tax purposes -- thereby reducing some lower-income recipients' eligibility for the tax credits while increasing eligibility for some higher-income students.

In general, the new proposed regulations for these credits are similar to the guidance the Internal Revenue Service already has provided in earlier pronouncements, according to Barmak Nassirian, associate executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

The Treasury Department also announced that it would hold a public hearing on the guidelines if one were requested. The department said that people outside of the Washington, D.C., area who wished to testify in that hearing could request that the Internal Revenue Service allow them to participate via videoconference. The I.R.S. must receive videoconference requests by March 8, and all written comments on the proposals must be received by the agency by April 6.

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USA TODAY

Life

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1997

Colleges not prepared to serve older learners

By Mary Beth Marklein
USA TODAY

U.S. higher education is not prepared to meet the needs of adult learners, a fast-growing population on many college campuses today, a report released Sunday says.

Adults 25 and older make up 44% of today's 14.2 million college students, says the report by the Commission for a Nation of Lifelong Learners.

In addition, 75% of workers will need retraining within the decade, the report says, yet they face many barriers, including inflexible class schedules, poor instruction practices, lack of support services and little financial aid.

The commission was created in 1995 with a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, Mich.

It is made up of representatives of higher education, as well as business and labor leaders, governors and heads of charitable groups.

Its report says the educational gap "between the 'haves' and 'have nots' remains wide."

About 5% of adults with low education levels participate in continuing education, compared with 15% of high school graduates, 35% of college graduates and 50% of adults with master's degrees.

"No longer can any sector of America ... believe that learning is the responsibility of others," says commission chair Morton Bahr, president of the Communications Workers of America.

Suggesting some breaks

The commission made a number of recommendations, some to be discussed at a conference this week in Washington. Among them:

- ▶ Offer individual learning accounts, modeled after IRAs.
- ▶ Establish tax incentives to encourage developments in technology to deliver alternative forms of education.
- ▶ Make permanent an IRS exemption for tuition assistance programs.
- ▶ Create a "learner passport" that tracks college credits, noncredit certificates, apprenticeships, internships and prior learning.
- ▶ Expand and improve programs at community colleges.
- ▶ Offer worker sabbaticals.

The White House Briefing Room

November 18, 1997

VICE PRESIDENT GORE ANNOUNCES NEW ADMINISTRATION STEPS ON LIFELONG LEARNING

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Vice President

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE   Contact: (202) 456-7035
Tuesday, November 18, 1997

VICE PRESIDENT GORE ANNOUNCES
NEW ADMINISTRATION STEPS ON LIFELONG LEARNING

WASHINGTON -- In a speech to a large conference on lifelong learning today (11/18), Vice President Gore highlighted the Administration's record and announced several new steps to promote lifelong learning for all Americans.

"These new steps will ensure that every American worker can keep learning -- and earning -- for a lifetime," Vice President Gore said. "In this new economy, working Americans can look forward to the promise of a better life -- but only if we give everyone the tools they need to succeed."

The Vice President also praised the work of the Commission for a Nation of Lifelong Learners, an independent commission comprised of leaders from labor, business, higher education, philanthropy, and state government.

Citing the commissioh's finding that 75 percent of those currently in the workforce will need significant retraining over the next decade, Vice President Gore announced that:

A major summit on lifelong learning will be convened next year by the Clinton Administration. This summit will bring together leaders from business, labor, higher education and elsewhere to discuss how to better support lifelong learning for their employees, union members, and students. Vice President Gore pledged his personal participation in the summit, as did the commission's chairman, Morton Bahr.

An executive memorandum will be sent from President Clinton asking federal agencies to support the effective use of technology to promote lifelong learning. The memorandum will ask agencies to make better use of technology in training their own employees. It will also ask the National Economic Council to lead a government wide effort to explore how federal programs and initiatives could better support the use of technologies for lifelong learning nationwide.

The Department of Labor is launching "America's career kit" -- a series of four Internet-based tools to help workers find good jobs and the right education and training. This electronic career kit incorporates two existing Department of Labor websites, and it will include two new ones. The new websites are "America's Learning Exchange" providing on-line information about education and training opportunities nationwide and "America's Career Infonet" providing such helpful information for job-seekers as information on wages, projections of job growth by sector and region, and an extensive on-line library of resources ranging from job search tips to relocation guides. The e xisting websites are "America's JobBank" listing over 750,000 job vacancies each day and a large on-line resume service called America's Talent Bank.

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Journal of Commerce

November 20, 1997, Thursday

SECTION: EDITORIAL/OPINION; Pg. 4A

LENGTH: 564 words

HEADLINE: Education for life

BYLINE: BY MARY DEIBEL

BODY: Even though American workers are more productive than they've been in years, experts say a shortage of workers with needed skills could hamper prosperity on the cusp of the 21st century.

A survey of 4,500 U.S. companies for the National Association of Manufacturers finds that 88 percent of industrial firms have trouble finding qualified workers. A majority say employees come up short when measured on math and writing skills, not to mention the high-tech demands of a cutting- edge workplace.

The good news is that employer-sponsored education and training are on the rise since the association last polled its members in 1991; back then, companies spent less than 0.5 percent of their payrolls on average to train employees. Today, 96 percent train workers, and 47 percent spend at least 2 percent of payroll on educating employees.

To Earnie Deavenport, chairman of Eastman Chemical Co. and the NAM, the new emphasis on workplace training marks a ""sea change" for employers. But even with bosses' commitment on the upswing, he says, ""we simply must do a better job" with employers earmarking 3 percent of payroll for employee education and training.

His recommendations come in advance of a yearlong study by the Commission for a Nation of Lifelong Learners, a partnership of business, labor, government and education leaders that has been studying how the United States can better educate adults.

Commission member Sara Melendez, a Harvard Ph.D. who heads the independent sector clearinghouse for corporate and private philanthropy, recalls spending seven years in night school getting her undergraduate diploma while juggling a baby and a day job.

""People would look at me and at friends who dropped out and say, "You made it; why can't they?' " she says today. ""People forgot then what they forget now: It's hard for workers to educate themselves."

Worker education and employer investment in it have been cited as a reason U.S. productivity, the key to an improved living standard, jumped 4.5 percent the last three months after lying stagnant for almost 20 years.

To help American workers upgrade or retool their skills, the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 includes key incentives for lifelong retraining for current workers. The new law:

* Reinstates tax-free treatment of employer-provided tuition of up to $5, 250 a year for undergraduate or vocational course work.

* Provides a scholarship tax credit of up to $1,500 a year for the first two years of post-secondary education and a lifelong learning credit of up to 20 percent of tuition expenses for any years the scholarship isn't claimed.

* For the first time allows penalty-free withdrawals from tax-sheltered traditional Individual Retirement Accounts for ""qualified higher education expenses" of a taxpayer, the taxpayer's spouse, or their children and grandchildren.

* Lets taxpayers deduct interest on education loans, starting at $1,000 interest in 1998 and rising to $2,500 in 2001 and thereafter.

But experts at the Hudson Institute who authored Workforce 2020 caution that a new entitlement to college education created in the tax code won't work without getting back to basic math and language skills from kindergarten through 12th grade.

""College cannot remedy the deficiencies of primary and secondary schooling, " says Hudson President Leslie Lenkowsky.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: November 20, 1997

THE RECORD - TROY, NY
November 30, 1997 - Page A1
Circulation: 27,218

Study: Adult education must be higher priority

By Liz Falkouski
The Record

ALBANY — America is dropping the ball on adult education, according to a report by the Commission for a Nation of Lifelong Learners.

Results of the report, which was released last week, showed that many adults are not receiving the training and education needed to keep pace with the ever-changing technological advances shaping the global economy.

The report, the culmination of a three-year study of the needs of lifelong learners, found that 75 percent of the current workforce will need retraining in the next decade.

The report also found that lifelong learning must become a national priority.

While many companies and higher education facilities do offer adult learning programs, it is not enough, according to the report.

C. Wayne Williams, the executive director of Regents College in Albany who headed the report, said that he hopes the report raises consciousness to the needs of the workforce.

"If businesses do not realize the importance of their workforce, they will close," Williams said. "All areas of industry and higher education need to be more responsive to the needs of adult learners."

See LEARNING, A6 ▶

Learning: Adult education isn't a high enough priority, study finds

Continued from A1

The report made several recommendations for business, labor, government, education and philanthropy to improve lifelong learning possibilities. Among these were reorganizing the education and training of adults, providing equal access to training opportunities, and providing training and education to all employees — from front-line workers to advanced professionals.

Existing problems hinder the training of workers, including scheduling conflicts, money and family commitments, and the report asked that strategies be implemented to work around these barriers to provide everyone the opportunity to improve their skills or learn a new one.

Supported by a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the commission gathered 18 national figures in education and held four public hearings to address the needs of lifelong learning.

Discussed at the meetings were the changing global economy, educational technology, demographic trends and community and citizenship needs.

Another meeting in Washington, D.C., featured 11 nationally recognized college presidents to talk about their views on the state of adult learning and what colleges and universities can do to remedy the problem.

Attending the national conference in Washington, D.C., was Vice President Al Gore, who announced interest in holding a summit to discuss the needs of lifelong learning.

Gore praised the work of the CNN and outlined plans for asking federal agencies to support lifelong learning through support and technology.

The Regents College was selected to head the report because of its reputation across the country of providing exceptional adult learning possibilities.

According to Williams, many adults come to the college out of fear of losing their job to higher trained individuals, a prominent practice in the age of downsizing.

"Many are looking for new vocational skills," Williams said. "It does not provide job security, but it gives them the ability to find new jobs if others are lost."

The college provides assessment and testing programs to thousands of students each year whose average age is 40 — much higher than the early 20s reported by many colleges and universities.

The Regents College includes a database of over 8,000 courses and recently started using computer-delivered exams to increase the availability of testing to students.

Students at the college can earn degrees in liberal arts, business, technology and nursing. The 26 associate and bachelor programs benefit over 5,000 graduates each year, with over 80 percent from outside of New York state.

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Regents College in Albany and **Empire State College** in Saratoga Springs participated in the presentation of a report on lifelong learning before a four-day conference in Washington, D.C. The executive director of Regents College in Albany, C. Wayne Williams, was the report's project director and facilitated the presentation. The report is the result of two years of deliberation and research by the Commission for a Nation of Lifelong Learners, an effort in which Regents and Empire State participated, and which was underwritten by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Regents College offers examinations for college credit. Empire State College is a State University of New York school noted for non-traditional programs and distance learning.

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Editorial Page

Learning as a fact of life

Regents College helps guide a national agenda for adapting higher education to meet tomorrow's needs

All of a sudden, U.S. productivity is on the rise, and dramatically so. After nearly two decades of little or no growth, recent figures show productivity by workers has jumped by more than 4 percent in a matter of months. Why the sudden turnaround?

One reason is that more workers are going back to college, and more and more savvy employers are sending them there to sharpen the skills needed to compete in today's rapidly changing workplace. Yet there's an irony in this good news. Unless there's a correspondingly dramatic change in the way America views higher education, the chances of workers keeping up with their changing careers will diminish.

It needn't happen and, to its credit, the Clinton administration is taking steps to ensure that lifelong learning will become as much a part of the American experience as a good secondary education is today. Mr. Clinton made lifelong learning a priority in his State of the Union address this year, and next year, Vice President Al Gore will lead a national summit on the topic that will bring together top minds in business, labor, higher education and other fields. All this follows an impressive report issued last month by a national commission — a report that owes much of its insight and influence to Albany's Regents College and its executive director, C. Wayne Williams, who has helped define the standard for lifelong learning.

Regents College has long enabled students to earn degrees outside of the standard four-year campus-based framework. Such flexibility will be even more crucial as the job market continues to shift in the future and workers must find ways to match their educational goals with the demands of their careers. It's estimated that today's younger workers will find themselves changing jobs, by choice or necessity, four or more times during their working years.

Already, there's a visible aging on American campuses, with 44 percent of today's 14.2 million college students 25 or older. These students include a broad spectrum of the American working force — for example, a promising executive sent back to hone cutting-edge skills, or a working mother trying to qualify for a promotion. Or people like Thomas McCormack, the Watervliet fire chief who died suddenly last week while battling a blaze in Troy. A seasoned professional with degrees from two community colleges, he was pursuing a degree at Russell Sage College in public administration.

Next year's summit will explore ways for community, four-year and graduate campuses to adapt to the needs of tomorrow's students in ways that range from tax incentives to tuition assistance and scholarships. The overarching theme, however, will be the need to raise the public's awareness of education as a lifelong pursuit, not just an experience of youth. And in a larger sense, the summit will stand as a realization of what, 25 years ago, was only a vision at Regents College. How fitting that those who saw the future even then are leading the way today.