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But ladies and gentlemen, robust does not mean hefty. Take a look at this unwieldy stack of paper. These are just a few of the federal rules and

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regulations that afflict your school and others. In this stack is the Clinton-Gore Elementary and Secondary Education reauthorization bill. It's more than 600 pages long. I think somebody wasn't listening to the teacher about keeping his work short and to the point.

This would be a joke if our system were working - but it's no joke. This bundle of bureaucracy is a nightmare for every school administrator, teacher, and student trapped in the infrastructure it has created. In the 35 years since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was first passed, the federal government has poured more than \$100 billion dollars into an ever-growing list of programs. And, what do we have to show for it? The vast majority of these programs failed to achieve their stated goals. Per-pupil spending has more than doubled and pupil-teacher ratios have shrunk, but we have achieved no real gains in test scores and our international educational rankings have plunged into the cellar of the industrial world. By almost every reckoning, many of our schools have become less safe, more drug-infested, more troubled - while taking on more and more duties, as one non-educational mandate after another is thrust on them by the Federal Government.

An Ohio survey discovered that local school superintendents and principals are filling out an average of 182 forms a year to meet federal requirements. Across the country, in Arizona, almost half of the employees of the state education department devote their time just to managing federal programs. Writing about the problem, Arizona's crusading state school official, Lisa Graham Keegan, had a succinct solution, "Back off, Washington."

The federal government has become a truly intrusive regulatory presence sapping state authority, local control, and parental responsibility. Every hour spent on complying with regulations is time not spent helping teachers and students. Every dollar spent on overhead is a dollar that does not reach the classroom. These hundreds of pages of regulations and onerous restrictions are burdening states and school districts just when the need for innovation is greatest.

As I've traveled the country this year, I've invited people to join me in a crusade to make history. My Presidency would make the kind of history that would reverberate around the world. And I'm not talking about my gender. I'm talking about making history by applying our values to public policy. I'm talking about restoring our public schools to greatness.

We're Americans. We have brought light to every dark corner of the world. And we have the same power to brighten the deepening shadows in our classrooms - to rocket our education scores back into world leadership - by focusing on the same ideas of freedom, competition and the rights of individuals that have made us the greatest nation on earth.

America's schools will start to improve the day we throw out the tangled, political priorities advocated by this administration and represented in this bill. Our children will learn again when we resolve to put kids and parents first, and the system, second. Most important, the minds of our children will soar when freedom and accountability guide our decisions, and results rather than process become the coin of the realm in American education.

Today, I want to share my philosophy for restoring our public schools to greatness. My ideas and initiatives spring from my experience as a teacher, my three decades of public service and the counsel of visionaries within and outside my Party. I am calling for a fundamental change in federal education policy. I will increase federal dollars to the classroom and reduce federal power, while increasing the power of state and local school districts. And in exchange for flexibility, there will be a performance partnership requiring clearly stated measurable goals in student achievement.

Here at Melrose, you are being asked daily to focus on the three R's - Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic - we, as educators, need to also be focused on our three R's:

*First, return control to states and local school districts – give them the flexibility they need, as long as they take responsibility for tough standards for student achievement;

*Second, restore discipline in the classroom and respect for teachers.

*Third, reinforce parents' control of their child's education – ensure a dynamic mix of excellent schools, guaranteed by the catalyst of freedom in a competitive and accountable environment.

Return, Restore, Reinforce -- simply put, these are my "three R's" for the new millennium. As President, these will be my guiding principles for breaking the stranglehold the federal bureaucracy has over our children's education. Only by implementing these three R's will we ensure that our children are learning the other three R's.

First, let's talk about flexibility. Creative problem solving at the local level is all but impossible. Right now the federal government has 788 different federal education programs. These provide only 7% of the money that we spend on public schools, but they create 50% of the paperwork for teachers and administrators. This is time and money spent getting federal dollars. I want this time and money to be spent getting results -- measurable progress for all our kids.

As we enter the next millennium, it is imperative that we return education freedom and accountability to our states and local school districts. We here in this room know it, our students know it, and the majority of the members of Congress -- who've made education reform a priority -- know it. Parts of my vision are modeled after, and incorporate, much of the "Straight A's" legislation now in Congress.

As President, I will allow states and local school districts to choose how most federal money is spent, as long as they set, measure, and reach goals for student achievement. At last, schools will be responsible for student performance, not paperwork. Some schools may need more computers, some may need better teacher training, and some may need school safety improvements. The role of the federal government will be clear: to complement, not complicate. Federal funds will work to leverage positive change, not suppress it.

Next, I want to enhance the stature of our teachers. Never has it been more important for schools to expect the best from our teachers, to honor their profession, and to reward them well. We are entrusting our nation's future to these dedicated men and women.

I will insist that government listen to classroom teachers. I know from experience how valuable their insights are. Instead of criticizing our teachers, why don't we try consulting them? Who better understands the needs than a heroic 25-year teacher?

When it comes to federal teaching funds, we will keep the commitment to flexibility. Individual states will have the freedom to boost teacher excellence in the ways their communities need most. Some states may want to invest more in teacher mentoring, others in technology training, still others in recruiting science teachers or other specialists. One size does not fit all. With more flexible funding, I will make sure that states use their funds to get our best and brightest into classrooms and to raise the standards for teachers, just as they raise standards for our students.

Teachers should receive pay for performance. Every year, good teachers leave the public schools for jobs in the private sector where merit pay rewards top contributors. It's time to let creative, enthusiastic teachers know that they are a national treasure right where they are-- in our classrooms.

Retaining dedicated teachers is only part of the challenge we face. The growing student population and expected teacher retirements mean that in the decade ahead, the United States will need to recruit an estimated two million NEW teachers. I will encourage states to broaden their uses of

alternative teacher certification. Let's give mid-career professionals, academics, and our best college graduates a clearer path to working and excelling in our public schools.

Next point: Both students and teachers need a climate conducive to learning. Not even the best teachers can get lessons across to students when they have to handle disorder, disobedience and threats. The best way to restore discipline and put our teachers back in charge of their classrooms is to adopt a "zero tolerance" policy for disruptive students.

Dr. Burke knows what it takes to make Melrose a community of learners. I applaud your new discipline policy, Dr. Burke - a discipline code understood by parents, teachers, and students. You don't need hundreds of pages of regulations written by Washington. You need the flexibility to guide this school.

Principals and teachers should have the authority to discipline disruptive students or move them to an alternative school setting. Such students must not be allowed to monopolize the teacher's time and prevent their classmates from learning. And to protect the entire school community and make sure that troubled students get the help they need, we should ensure that students' disciplinary records follow them to every school they attend.

But, we need to go further. Students, parents, teachers, principals, clergy, and law enforcement officials need to come together to figure out what works best in their own community. To keep our kids safe and make our schools drug-free, I support parent-approved locker and backpack searches and drug testing. For drugs and weapons, I say: there will be no place to hide. The lives and bright futures of all students depend on our watchful care, at home and at school.

Finally, I want to empower parents by re-establishing their control. Just as we should clear the way for state and local initiatives, so we should unleash the power of parental involvement and choice. Let's post school-by-school results on the Internet so that parents, aware of what's going on at the school, can be knowledgeable participants in their child's education. And we should allow competition to foster a rich smorgasbord of education choices. Whether it's opportunity scholarships for students in failing schools, or charter schools or home-schooling, we should empower parents to make choices as long as their choices get results.

I will encourage private support for public schools as well as private schools. Many public schools have established foundations that can accept charitable donations. I propose a \$1000 per-year federal tax credit for individuals who give to such educational foundations to help low-income children in grades pre-K to 12. That gift, to a public or private school, could be used for books, scholarships, or other education purposes.

And to help parents pay for a child's school or college education, I would increase the contribution limits for education savings accounts to \$3000 a year. President Clinton vetoed a similar provision last year. Let me be clear - I will fight for these Education Savings Accounts.

Ladies and gentleman, let me sum up: While I am proposing significant change in federal policy -- a shift from paperwork to performance -- all of these initiatives boil down to some simple choices. We can choose to put children first or we can put the system first; we can choose to reinvent public education, or continue to support a deeply flawed system. We can choose to measure up to America's spirit -- a spirit of creativity, independence, and challenge -- or let this heavy stack of regulations and restrictions continue to pull our public schools further down.

I'm throwing down the gauntlet -- to Members of Congress, both parties -- Republicans and Democrats -- and to the Members of this Administration. My challenge is this -- by the time America's students begin their summer

vacation next year, legislation that truly reforms education should be passed and signed into law. Let's not allow American students and teachers to begin another school year under the status quo.

I can assure you this: If this President and the 106th Congress cannot reinvent public education, then President Dole and the 107th Congress will.

There is no time to waste. For more opportunities for children. For greater hope for parents. For a stronger, better America.

Let's seize the moment. I know it can be done – and so do you.

Thank you very much.

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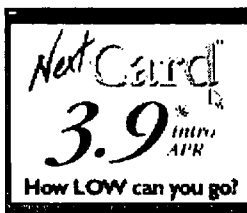
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Dole Outlines Education Plan

Proposal Calls for More Local Freedom, Locker Searches

By Pamela Ferdinand
 Special to The Washington Post
 Thursday, September 23, 1999; Page A16

MELROSE, Mass., Sept. 22—Elizabeth Dole, introducing the first installment of her education agenda at a school where she once taught history, today called for parent-approved locker and backpack searches and drug-testing of students: "For drugs and weapons, I say: There will be no place to hide."

She also proposed that state and local school districts should receive more money from the federal government with fewer strings attached.

"As president, I will allow states and local school districts to choose how most federal money is spent, as long as they set, measure, and reach goals for student achievement. At least schools will be responsible for student performance, not paperwork," she told 150 upper-class students and school officials at Melrose High School in this middle-class suburb north of Boston.

Dole taught at the school as an 11th-grade student teacher for the 1959-60 academic year while earning a master's degree at Harvard University in nearby Cambridge. Wearing a red "We Are Melrose" button on her lapel and trailed by reporters, Dole swung through corridors decorated with Magic Marker welcome signs, chatted with children in a computer lab, and glided into her old classroom where a sixth grade English class was in session. "This was the room," she said. "It's been a few years, but it's wonderful to be back."

Dole drew on her own teaching experience to condemn federal mandates that she said strangle school budgets with bureaucracy and consume time that should be spent teaching. She recalled how she once asked a Buddhist monk in Harvard Square to speak to her class and tracked down a former police officer to compile a lesson plan on the Boston police strike of 1919. "I didn't choose this lesson because it was mandated by the state or by Washington, but because it brought history to life for my students," Dole said.

More than \$118 billion spent on federal education programs over the past 35 years have led to no real gains and plunging educational rankings for American schools, Dole said. She pointed to a stack of papers containing 600 pages of what she called the Clinton-Gore administration's elementary and secondary education reauthorization bill.

"By almost every reckoning, many of our schools have become less

safe, more drug-infested, more troubled--while taking on more and more duties, as one noneducational mandate after another is thrust on them by the federal government," she said.

Dole went on to propose federal tax credits to encourage support for public and private schools and increased tax-free contribution limits on education savings accounts. Citing the growing student population and the need for an estimated 2 million new teachers over the next decade, she called for merit pay for teachers and said states should broaden their recruitment to attract mid-career professionals and others.

Unlike Texas Gov. George W. Bush, Dole did not specify how she would leverage federal dollars against poorly performing schools, but indicated school districts could use federal funding for "opportunity scholarships"--or vouchers--at their discretion and said parents should be able to access school performance statistics via the Internet. Bush has promised to strip federal funding from failing schools and give money to parents to pay for tutors or transfer their children to other public or private schools.

Students here enthusiastically greeted Dole, who was given a key to the city, a book, and a "President Dole 1" football jersey. But not everyone cheered the prospect of backpack and locker searches for weapons and drugs at Melrose, whose new principal has instituted tough discipline measures such as community service time for violations including tardiness.

Said A.J. Graham, a 17-year-old senior: "As a student, you should be able to do what you want to do. It's a violation of our rights."

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