

PHOTOCOPY  
PRESERVATION

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

**October 27, 1999**

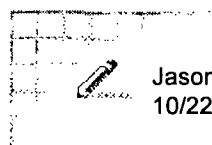
In a speech today to parents, teachers and principals from award-winning elementary schools, President Clinton will underscore the Administration's strategy for improving public education by reducing class size, turning around failing schools and making other targeted investments in our children. Pointing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

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

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

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

- Reneges on the class size reduction initiative that both parties agreed to last fall, and provides no guarantee that the 30,000 teachers hired last year can continue teaching in smaller classes throughout the country. It also provides no funding for the additional 8,000 teachers the President's plan would support this year.
- Fails to hold low-performing schools accountable for results by not funding the President's plan for a \$200 million Title I accountability fund to fix schools identified as failing. The President believes that we must invest more in our schools and demand more from them. The current appropriations bill provides no funding at all for turning around failing schools.
- Underfunds after-school and summer school programs, denying at least 300,000 students access to a safe place to learn during the after school hours when most juvenile crime and drug and alcohol abuse occur.
- Undercuts efforts to improve teacher quality, by shortchanging teacher quality and recruitment programs, and eliminating the successful Troops to Teachers program that enables retired military personnel to teach in high-need areas.
- Underinvests in the GEAR-UP program, denying more than 130,000 disadvantaged young people the help they need to get into college, and underfunds crucial investments in education technology.



Jason H. Schechter  
10/22/99 09:27:55 AM

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To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: Fact Sheet: President Clinton Calls on Congress to invest in National Priorities to Improve our Public Schools

**PRESIDENT CLINTON CALLS ON CONGRESS TO INVEST IN NATIONAL PRIORITIES TO  
IMPROVE OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
October 22, 1999**

Today, in his address to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), President Clinton will call on Congress to fund strategic initiatives in education. Noting that the issue is not only how much we spend on education, but also how *wisely* we spend, the President will call for targeted investments to reduce class size and improve teacher quality, turn around failing schools, expand after-school programs, prepare students for college, and raise standards.

President Clinton will also point out that the Republican appropriations bill shortchanges these goals, and urge Congress to work with him to pass an education spending bill that prepares our children for the 21st Century.

**WORLD-CLASS SCHOOLS BY INVESTING IN SCHOOL REFORM AND ACCOUNTABILITY.**

Speaking to more than 400 top teachers at the annual meeting of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), President Clinton will call on Congress today to invest in proven strategies for school reform. He will remind Republicans what any good teacher already knows: that targeting our education dollars -- on smaller classes, after-school and summer school programs, quality teachers, college preparation, and educational technology -- is the most effective way to achieve results.

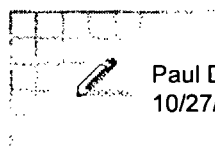
The President will also recognize the special role that "master teachers," like those certified by the NBPTS, can play in turning around our lowest-performing schools. The NBPTS is an independent, nonprofit organization that establishes rigorous standards for teachers. It operates a system of voluntary national certification designed to give teachers clear and objective standards of practice, and to help drive professional development and standards-based reform of teaching in the states.

**REPUBLICAN EDUCATION BILL FAILS TO MEET THESE STANDARDS.** President Clinton is committed to ensuring that the prosperity generated by years of fiscal discipline and the hard work of the American people is invested in their priorities. That is why today the President will pledge again to protect these priorities as the budget process moves forward, and remind Americans that the current Republican Labor/HHS/Education appropriations bill:

- Reneges on the class size reduction initiative that both parties agreed to last fall, and provides no guarantee that 30,000 teachers hired last year can continue teaching in smaller classes throughout the country. It provides no funding for the additional 8,000 teachers the President's plan would support this year.
- Fails to hold low-performing schools accountable for results, by not funding the President's plan for a \$200 million Title I accountability fund to fix schools identified as failing. The current appropriations bill provides no funding at all for turning around failing schools, a strategy that is helping raise student achievement in North Carolina, Texas, and elsewhere.
- Underinvests in after-school and summer school programs, denying at least 300,000 students access to safe and academically enriching opportunities to get extra help to reach high standards.
- Undercuts efforts to improve teacher quality, by shortchanging teacher quality and recruitment programs, and eliminates the successful Troops to Teachers program that enables retired military personnel to teach in high-need areas.
- Underinvests in the GEAR UP program, denying more than 130,000 disadvantaged young people the help they need to get into college, and underfunds crucial investments in education technology.

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Paul D. Glastris  
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To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: latest Blue Ribbon draft

Draft 10/27/99 3:30 p.m.  
Glastris

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON  
REMARKS AT AWARDS CEREMONY  
BLUE RIBBONS SCHOOLS  
WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL  
September 28, 1999**

Acknowledgments: Sec. Riley; Beaufort Elementary Principal Ruth Summerlin;

Before I begin, let me take a few moments to pass on some good news we have received today. **Tk topper on GDP and homeownership numbers.**

The Founding Fathers believed two things that were quite radical at the time. They believed democracy could be made to work, and they believed all citizens could and should be educated. In fact, their faith in democracy rested on their faith that all citizens could learn. “Educate and inform the whole mass of the people,” Thomas Jefferson said, because “an enlightened citizenry is indispensable for the proper functioning of a republic.”

I think Ruth Summerlin’s story demonstrates the wisdom of the Founder’s belief. All students can learn. The 266 schools we honor today prove that. Your schools are located in every region of America, and in every kind of neighborhood. Yet in each of your schools, students are learning—and learning at quite a high level. Every school in America can do what your schools have done. Getting every school in America to follow your path is truly one of the great challenges we face as a nation.

We have already made real progress in education. The idea of standards, which we championed with our Goals 2000 legislation, is now taking root around the country. In 1996, only 14 states had measurable standards for student performance. Today there are 50. That may be one reason why reading and math scores are up nationwide, including in some of our most disadvantaged urban areas.

More and more schools, including Blue Ribbon Schools, are reducing class sizes with

the help of the initiative we began last fall to provide 30,000 of what we hope to be 100,000 new highly trained teachers. Greenwood Elementary in Newport News, VA, a Blue Ribbon winner, hired new teachers this fall, bringing class sizes down in 1st and 2nd grades from 27 children per teacher to 20.

Other Blue Ribbon schools are using the Vice President's E-rate program to connect their classrooms and libraries to the Internet. With the help of the E-rate, 7th graders at Whitebread Elementary school in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma are communicating directly with scientists who are conducting research in Africa, and the students are writing papers based on that research. Every 7th grader should have the opportunity to do challenging and interesting assignments like that.

All this represents impressive progress. But if our goal is to get every school in America to follow the path of our Blue Ribbon schools and attain your level of excellence of our Blue Ribbon schools—and that should be our goal—then we have a great deal more work to do.

That is why the budget debate we're having here in Washington is so important. To many Americans, it may seem like nothing but a lot of numbers and a lot of noise. But beneath all the rhetoric, there is an important debate going on, about values and priorities and the right way to provide all children with a world class education. It's a not just about how much we spend--but about how we spend it.

Last year, we reached an agreement with Congress to begin hiring 100,000 new, highly-trained teachers to lower class sizes in the early grades. Congressional Republicans agreed to it; they went home and campaigned on it; they bragged about what a good, non-bureaucratic program it was. We disbursed the money and schools have gone out and hired new teachers. And now, suddenly, the Republicans in Congress have voted to abandon their commitment. So one of the key things this budget debate is all about is whether we will keep our commitments to help our schools hire 100,000 well-qualified teachers.

This budget debate is also about accountability. When students and teachers and principals and elected officials are held accountable for meeting higher standards—and when they are given the resources they need to meet those standards, from smaller classes to afterschool programs--we have seen real progress. Whole schools can be turned around in relatively short order.

You heard Ruth Summerlin explain how her school was selected by the state, given more resources, and turned itself around in just a few years. This is no isolated incident. Two years ago, North Carolina drew up a list of the state's 15 worst-performing schools, and sent assistance teams to each school. One year later, 14 of them had improved their performance enough to be taken off the list. Last year, I went to one of the poorest neighborhoods in Chicago, near the large Cabrini-Green housing project, to an elementary school with terrible performance. In just two years, they doubled their math scores and tripled their reading scores. A few weeks ago, I visited a school in New Orleans that is just

beginning this same process.

Our budget has \$200 million to help states and school districts all over America identify, turn around or shut down the lowest-performing schools. Yet the Republican budget bill doesn't put a dime into the strategy of turning around low-performing schools.

I honestly do not understand this. We know accountability works—not based on what someone in Washington thinks works, but based on what you proved works at the grassroots level. We know that there are millions of disadvantaged children in this country whose future chances in life could be substantially improved if their schools are turned around, as you've proven they can be. We know that the National Governors Association, made up primarily of Republican governors, supports our \$200 million accountability initiative. Yet the Republican Congress is against it.

Why is the Republican Congress against an accountability measure that we know can turn around failing schools and that they know their own Republican governors favor? Why is the Republican Congress against hiring more good teachers to bring down class sizes when last year they favored it and campaigned on it as if it was their idea?

The Republican Congress knows that many of our nation's schools are falling apart and are so overcrowded that children are being taught in trailers and broom closets. Why are they unwilling to fund our plan to build or fix 6000 schools? The Republican Congress knows we have the largest, most diverse group of student in our schools in history, and that we'll need to hire 2 million new teachers over the next decade. Why are they against funding our Troops to Teachers program, to recruit potentially great teachers from among our nation's 2 million veterans? You'd think Republicans would be for that.

We all agree that public schools are primarily a state and local responsibility. But we also know that they are a national priority. The federal government shouldn't micromanage the schools. In fact, under Sec. Riley, we've scrapped more rules and regulations than all the previous administrations that railed about the federal government put together. But what we have not done is to abandon our responsibility to target our limited resources on what you, at the grassroots level, have shown works: more teachers, higher standards and accountability, and the tools that you need to meet those standards.

So this budget battle is about more than dollars. It's about direction. It's about whether we have the vision and the will to adapt to the demands of this new information age, in a way that honors our oldest values.

For over 200 years, the bedrock American value has been equal opportunity. If we want equal opportunity to be a vital reality in America in the Information Age then we must make sure that every child in America receives a high-quality education. We can make that happen. The Blue Ribbon schools have shown us the way. That's what this education budget debate is all about. And with your support, and the support of the American people, I believe we will prevail.

Thank you and God bless you.

Message Sent To:

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Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP@EOP  
Cathy R. Mays/OPD/EOP@EOP  
Anna Richter/OPD/EOP@EOP  
Eric P. Liu/OPD/EOP@EOP  
Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP@EOP  
Bethany Little/OPD/EOP@EOP  
John B. Buxton/OPD/EOP@EOP  
Karin Kullman/OPD/EOP@EOP