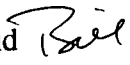


M E M O

TO: Mike Cohen

FROM: Bill Kincaid 

DATE: September 17, 1996

RE: David Osborne Article on Public School Choice in Minnesota

I thought you would be interested in the attached Washington Post Magazine article from this weekend, in which David Osborne reviews Minnesota's experience with public school choice -- and concludes "school choice works."

Osborne says that "roughly 19 percent of Minnesota public school students -- more than 150,000 in all -- attend schools they or their parents chose. Since 1986, the number of alternative schools in Minnesota has tripled from 108 to more than 300. A competitive market has begun to emerge."

The piece goes on to discuss the changes that schools have made in response to competitive pressures. High schools "doubled the number of Advanced Placement courses they offered and tripled the number of students who took them. Almost 40 percent had also hired colleges to teach courses on their campuses." Of those participating in Minnesota's choice program allowing juniors and seniors to take their high school dollars to colleges, 73 percent of students were "very satisfied" with their experience while 95 percent of parents "probably" or "definitely" would encourage their children to participate again.

You might share a copy of this with Bruce Reed. I read his briefing on charter schools out in Fresno and I think we need to stress that charter schools, while exciting, are not the only alternative to vouchers, but one of several different options within public school choice. I am also attaching a page from the briefing package on vouchers that Jon, Jennifer and I assembled which underscores this point. Let me know if you need the rest of the package.

Thanks.

Schools Without Boundaries

By David Osborne

FEW ISSUES IN AMERICAN EDUCATION are more controversial than school choice. Seventeen states have passed public school choice laws, giving students the right to leave their school district and attend another public school. These are *not* voucher programs; with a few exceptions, parents can't take their public dollars to a private school. Instead, public dollars move with a student to the new public school, creating competition between districts.

The theory is simple: Different students learn in different ways, so they need different kinds of schools. Hence students should be able to choose the schools that suit their needs. If we then let public dollars follow children to their new schools, we create consequences for performance. Good schools earn larger budgets; bad schools have to shrink and, in some cases, close.

The logical result should be that principals, teachers and superintendents work harder to improve their schools.

The Minnesota Story: Minnesota has gone the furthest to test this theory. Since 1990, it has allowed:

- Families to leave their districts and take their public dollars with them to another district.
- High school juniors and seniors to take their public dollars to any college in the state and earn both high school and college credit.
- Dropouts and students at risk of dropping out to choose any public school in the state, as well as private alternative schools that contract with public districts.
- Parents, teachers and others to create new independent public schools, called "charter schools."

Overall, roughly 19 percent of Minnesota public school students—more than 150,000 in all—attend schools they or their parents chose. Since 1986, the number of alternative schools in Minnesota has tripled from 108 to more than 300. A competitive market has begun to emerge.

As choice began, academics James Tenbusch and Michael Garey surveyed 126 high school principals. Most said they were making changes to compete: lengthening their hours, adding more counseling and developing new educational programs. If they didn't, they said, they might lose students and money.

In an intensive study of eight districts, the University of Minnesota's Cheryl Lange found that, "Parents are flexing their political muscles by demanding desired programs and services. If the requests are not honored, many threaten to

leave the district. Findings suggest that it doesn't take a large number of families threatening transfer for administrators to take seriously the requests."

As one superintendent told her, "Open enrollment has a lot of impact on us. One of the things it does is that we don't dare, even under budget constraints, we don't dare curtail programs." Cuts come out of administration, not education.

Opponents of public school choice often argue that it will help the brightest, most affluent students, but leave poor students behind in inferior schools, increasing racial segrega-

tion. This hasn't happened in Minnesota, in part because so many specialized, alternative schools have been created for at-risk kids. In addition, the choice legislation says a student can't change districts if it would increase racial segregation, a rule that has kept white students from leaving Minneapolis for suburban districts.

The Bottom Line: Minnesota is just beginning to use statewide tests, so there is no data to indicate whether students are learning more in their schools of choice.

Hard data does exist on one choice program—the one that lets juniors and seniors take their high school dollars to colleges. An evaluation by the state legislature found that 6 percent of all juniors and seniors were taking some college courses (12.5 percent in the Twin Cities). With the exception of those at technical colleges, they had a higher collective grade point average than college freshmen.

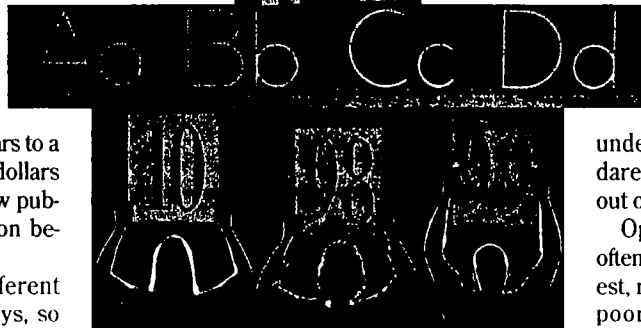
Some 73 percent of these students said they were "very satisfied" with their experience, while 95 percent of parents said they would "probably" or "definitely" encourage their children to participate again.

Spurred by competition, high schools had doubled the number of Advanced Placement courses they offered and tripled the number of students who took them. Almost 40 percent had also hired colleges to teach courses on their campuses.

Ultimately, citizens are the arbiters of any public program's success, and Minnesotans love school choice. By 1994, 86 percent of adults surveyed supported the program. Seventy-one percent said the increased competition would improve the quality of education.

The early returns are in, and they are clear: School choice works. ■

David Osborne, coauthor of Reinventing Government, is a managing partner of the Reinventing Government Network, a consulting firm.



**Says one superintendent:
'One of the things it does is that... even under budget constraints, we don't dare curtail programs.'**

Participation in School Choice and Voucher Programs

September 6, 1996

- **Public school choice.** Approximately 11 percent of all U.S. students in grades 3-12 attend a public school that their families chose, according to a 1993 survey of parents.
- **Magnet schools.** The number of magnet programs has increased dramatically over the past decade -- as of 1991-92, there were approximately 2,400 magnet schools in 230 school districts. These magnet programs enroll 1.2 million students nationwide (about 3 percent of all students enrolled in public schools). Magnet schools are primarily an urban phenomenon, most commonly found in large urban school systems with above-average levels of minority student enrollments. Half of all large urban districts currently offer magnet programs.
- **Charter schools.** Twenty-five states and the District of Columbia have enacted legislation authorizing charter schools. Roughly 250 charter schools were in operation during the 1995-96 school year, serving an estimated 72,000 students (based on an average school size of 287 students in 1994-95 reported by Medler and Nathan (1995)). According to a 1995 GAO report, California has approved the most charter schools, with large numbers of charter schools also operating in Colorado, Massachusetts, and Minnesota.
- **Open enrollment.** Eighteen states have open enrollment policies permitting students to attend a public school other than their assigned school. In addition, some districts have instituted within-district open enrollment policies even where there is no statewide policy.
- **Postsecondary options.** Fifteen states have postsecondary options programs that allow high school juniors and seniors to take courses and earn credit in colleges, universities, or vocational-technical institutes.
- **Publicly-funded voucher programs.** Wisconsin and Ohio have enacted city-targeted voucher programs for Milwaukee and Cleveland. Milwaukee's program has been in operation since 1991, providing vouchers to up to 1,400 students (although a court has recently lifted an injunction against a substantial expansion). The Cleveland program has been in court, but is beginning operations in September 1996, providing vouchers to up to 2,000 students. The Milwaukee plan is currently restricted to non-religious schools, although both the Milwaukee and Cleveland voucher laws authorize the participation of religious schools; final court decisions are still pending in both cases.
- **Privately-funded voucher programs.** Voucher programs sponsored by private coalitions of businesses, foundations, and individual donors have been established in at least 23 cities, with six more due to begin operation in 1996-97. These programs share several common features: (1) students must be eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; (2) they must live within the boundaries of the participating school district; and (3) students receive vouchers for up to half the cost of tuition, up to a locally-determined limit, and (4) students may use the vouchers to attend any private school located within the school district, including religious schools. These programs collectively provide vouchers to about 9,900 students; two-thirds of these students are in the three cities with the largest voucher programs: Milwaukee, Indianapolis, and San Antonio.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

September 6, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR OFFICERS AND SENIOR STAFF:

FROM: Jennifer Davis 
Bill Kincaid 
Jonathan Schnur 

RE: Briefing Package on Vouchers

In order to help prepare you for press questions and events you will participate in across the country, attached are background materials on the private school voucher issue, including:

- Quick points on vouchers for interviews and speeches;
- General talking points on the President's support for school choice and strengthening public education;
- Questions and Answers about private school vouchers;
- An overview of the status of federal, state, and local voucher initiatives;
- Official Administration statements on vouchers, including language from the Secretary's 1996 State of Education speech, the President's statement on private school vouchers to the AFL-CIO Convention October 4, 1994, and a recent OP ED by Mike Smith;
- An overview of recent polling data on the public's perception of vouchers; and
- A one page overview of the Dole proposal.

If you are interested, there is also a video tape available featuring two TV debates about vouchers: Crossfire with Governor Kunin and Lamar Alexander and the Lehrer News Hour with Secretary Riley and Bill Bennett. This tape is available if you would like to borrow it from Rick Miller in Public Affairs. Rick can be reached at: 401-3026.

We hope these materials are helpful to you. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

cc: Kevin Sullivan
Susan Frost

KEY POINTS ON PRIVATE SCHOOL VOUCHERS

September 6, 1996

- ▶ A strong public education system has long been the cornerstone of our nation's democracy and our prosperity. Free public schools open to all children have helped generations of Americans reach the American dream. How many of us -- or our friends and neighbors -- would be where we are today had America not taken the unprecedented and courageous step of making available free public education for all children?
- ▶ The Clinton Administration is working very hard to support communities around the country doing what it takes to improve schools. We are supporting efforts to toughen academic standards, involve parents and communities in their children's education, support good teachers, make schools safe, disciplined, and drug-free, teach kids the basics like reading, and bring technology to every classroom in America.
- ▶ We also support school choice within public education -- every parent should be able to choose what public school their child will attend. One size does not fit all. This administration has been providing support for communities to create all kinds of options within public education: schools-within-schools, magnet schools, career preparation schools, and publicly accountable charter schools founded by teachers, parents, and community groups.
- ▶ But this administration agrees with the American people: public taxpayer dollars should not be drained from public education to subsidize tuition at private schools. With student enrollment rising in public schools that already serve nearly 90% of America's children, draining funds from neighborhood public schools simply doesn't make sense. And it certainly doesn't build a bridge to the 21st century.
- ▶ We strongly support private and parochial schools -- they are an important part of the heritage and the future of American education. But vouchers would diminish the independence of private and parochial schools, making them less private and less parochial.

Social experiments like vouchers are hailed by some as quick fixes, but they really offer only false hope and distractions to communities trying to roll up their sleeves and do the hard work of improving their schools together.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL CHOICE AND STRENGTHENING PUBLIC EDUCATION

I challenge every state to give all parents the right to choose which public school their children will attend; and to let teachers form new schools with a charter they can keep only if they do a good job.

-- President Bill Clinton
State of the Union Address, 1996

Public school choice makes good sense. The Clinton Administration has aggressively promoted improving local public schools, expanding public school choice and charter schools, and increasing parent involvement in education.

In 1993, the Clinton Administration proposed a charter school program to provide new seed capital to help parents, teachers, businesses, and others start up charter schools to provide more choice, competition and opportunity within public education. Enacted in 1994, this program is now helping to start up charter schools in 11 states; the Clinton Administration's call to provide \$40 million for this program this year was cut more than half by the House of Representatives. Meanwhile, five states have enacted laws authorizing charter schools since the President's State of the Union appeal in January for more public school choice.

But using public tax dollars for private school vouchers is a bad idea. It would polarize Americans and would sacrifice the time-honored tradition of the American neighborhood public school for the sake of a social experiment.

-- Controversy over vouchers polarizes communities when they should be coming together to do the hard work of improving the local public schools that 89% of parents rely on. In fact, local and state voucher disputes have divided citizens rather than unifying them around tougher standards, getting technology into the classroom, and other basic improvement strategies we know can work. Voucher disputes rob us of the time, energy, and common purpose that we need to put these effective reforms into action.

-- Vouchers would siphon off dollars from neighborhood public schools into private schools of any type that will continue to be funded whether or not they meet community expectations or needs. Vouchers would erode community control over how its education tax dollars are spent, and, at the expense of taxpayers, would support schools that can pick and choose among their students. Over the next ten years, student enrollment at public schools is projected to rise higher than ever before; it doesn't make sense to rob public education of dollars just as this new baby boom brings record numbers of students into our public schools.

-- The results of this social experiment would be a dangerous erosion of public education -- a fundamental pillar of the American way of life, and a bond holding communities together. It is our unique blend of unity and diversity -- forged partly through the common experience of public education -- that sets our nation apart from countries that have disintegrated into ethnic conflicts and wars. Vouchers would also signal a retreat from our commitment to educate all of our children, not just the wealthiest or the easiest to deal with.

-- Vouchers would undermine private and parochial education, making them less private and less parochial. If public funds are used to support the basic costs of private schools, we will see increased calls for private schools to become regulated and more directly accountable to public officials. This would fundamentally alter the nature of private schooling, taking the "private" out of private schools.

Quick fixes like vouchers are no substitute for consistent attention to the basics of American education. Anyone who has spent time learning about education knows there are no quick fixes to the challenges facing our nation's schools. Improving the education of our nation's children depends on consistent attention to the basics, discipline, quality teachers, and on Americans rolling up their sleeves to work together to improve our public schools across America.

Chronology: President Clinton on Public School Choice and Charter Schools

January, 1992: First charter school in the nation, City Academy in St. Paul, MN, opens its doors.

September, 1993: Clinton Administration submits reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Proposal includes new program to provide start-up funds for teachers, parents, and others to start charter schools. The Clinton Administration's bill says that "enhancement of parent and student choices among public schools can assist in promoting comprehensive education reform...." The bill:

- ▶ provided start-up funds to support the development of charter schools around the nation.
- ▶ lists as a possible corrective action for low-performing schools receiving Title 1, "making alternative governance arrangements such as the creation of a charter school.

January, 1994: In his State of the Union Address, President Clinton praises charter schools.

February 15, 1994: In his first annual State of American Education Address, Secretary Riley supports public school choice and charter schools. "That is why we are open to almost every new way of thinking about improving public education. We support public school choice, the creation of charter schools, schools-within-schools, magnet schools."

October 20, 1994: President Clinton signs into law the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including the first federal program to support charter schools.

September 22, 1995: President Clinton visits O'Farrell Community Charter School in San Diego, California. The President announces awards of grants to provide start-up funds for charter schools in 11 states, saying afterward that charter schools provide an "organized entrepreneurialism in the schools" and are an example of how to "invest more in education, but to deregulate it...and raise the level of accountability."

September 27, 1995: Secretary Riley leads a national conference call with charter school leaders from around the U.S., announcing the most comprehensive national study yet undertaken on charter schools. On the call, Riley said, "Charter schools are an exciting and fast-growing element of grass-roots education reform movements around the nation, designed to boost academic achievement in our public schools."

January, 1996: In his State of the Union Address, President Clinton says, "I challenge every state to give all parents the right to choose which public school their children will attend; and to let teachers form new schools with a charter they can keep only if they do a good job."

January, 1996: Secretary Riley visits New Visions Charter school, known as “the Reading School” in Minneapolis, Minnesota and meets with charter school leaders from around the state. New Visions won a Goals 2000 grant to share its lessons learned about reading with teachers from 5 nearby public school districts.

February 28, 1996: At Secretary Riley’s State of American Education Address, thousands of copies of “tips” for parents, teachers, and communities were given out on public school choice and charter schools. In the speech, Secretary Riley said, “ Public school choice needs to be seen as an option...I have visited charter schools, and I am particularly impressed by what charter schools are doing for disabled and under-achieving children.”

March, 1996: Secretary Riley and Deputy Secretary Kunin host a Department of Education satellite town meeting on charter schools, broadcast to hundreds of participating sites around the country and many other viewers at home.

July, 1996: The U.S. Department of Education sponsors a national meeting on charter schools, convened jointly by the first charter school in the nation and the legislator that authored the first charter school law. 75 participants from a dozen states share ideas and what has been learned so far, identify needs facing charter schools, and discuss steps that can be taken to address these needs.

September, 1996: The Department of Education will award almost \$18 million in grants to help teachers, parents, and communities start up charter schools around the country. The Department will also sponsor one-day sessions in several states with recently enacted charter school laws; these meetings will provide information to teachers, parents, and others interested in starting charter schools in their state.

Questions and Answers on Private School Voucher Proposals

September 6, 1996

1. Why Does the Clinton Administration Oppose Private School Vouchers?

- Voucher controversies polarize communities and distract them from working together to improve our public schools. What our schools need are more parents, civic leaders, and caring individuals helping to raise standards, improve discipline, support high-quality, well-trained teachers, and get technology into the classroom.
- Vouchers siphon off dollars from the neighborhood public schools that serve almost 90% of America's children and families, just when school enrollments are projected to rise dramatically through the turn of the century. Moreover, much of this money may go to families whose children already attend private schools, benefiting a few at the expense of many.
- Vouchers erode the traditional role that public education plays in this country, bringing together a diverse nation and instilling common democratic values.
- Vouchers diminish the independence of private and parochial schools, making them less private and less parochial.
- We strongly support public school choice and charter schools, increasing competition and options for parents among schools that open their doors to all students. Ultimately vouchers diminish, rather than expand choice, for most American families.

2. How Are Federally-Funded Tuition Vouchers for Private Elementary and Secondary Schools Different from the GI Bill or Federally-Funded Pell Grants That Allow Students to Attend Private Colleges and Universities?

- State governments bear a constitutional responsibility to provide a free public education at the elementary and secondary level. The Federal government does not have that responsibility. We should not federalize public education.
- There is a traditional role that we expect our local public elementary and secondary schools to play, bringing together Americans from different walks of life and instilling common democratic values. Postsecondary education focuses more on education for careers and employment.
- Private voucher schools can suddenly fail--go bankrupt and close. It's one thing for this to happen to a college-aged student. It's another when, as happened in Milwaukee, it's February, you're a 2nd-grader, and you've got nowhere to go because your voucher school has gone belly-up and shut its doors.

3. Shouldn't Other Americans Have the Same Choice to Attend Private Schools that the Clintons Enjoy?

- The majority of Chelsea Clinton's education has been in urban public schools in Little Rock, Arkansas. She has attended both public and private schools and has had good experiences with both.
- Let's not pretend that a \$1,000 voucher would enable every student to attend the top private schools; the average private school tuition is over \$3,000. Moreover, aside from the issue of cost, many private schools pick and choose who attends--vouchers would not guarantee admission to anyone.
- The real issue is how to give all American children the opportunity to go to the best schools possible.
- Vouchers undermine the public schools that serve almost 90% of our children, draining funds from neighborhood schools, while only benefiting a few.
- Rather than looking for a quick fix, we need to stay focused on those things that can really work to improve local schools, like high standards of achievement and discipline, competent and well-prepared teachers, and getting technology into the classroom.

4. If the President is Concerned About Improving Urban Public Schools, Why Did He Oppose the School Reform Package in the DC Appropriations Bill?

- The President is deeply concerned about improving the quality of schools in the District. That's why he supported eleven out of twelve features of the DC school reform plan considered in Congress, including strong encouragement for new public charter schools. However, the President strongly opposed establishing a federally funded voucher program that would undermine DC public schools and set a troubling precedent for the rest of the Nation.

5. Are Private School Vouchers Unconstitutional?

- Voucher plans involving religious schools raise serious constitutional questions and are guaranteed to lead to years of unnecessary litigation and division, just as they have in Milwaukee and Cleveland.

6. Haven't Our Public Schools Failed? Isn't It Time to Try Something Else?

- The notion that our public schools have failed is nothing but a myth. While we have a long way to go before we reach our ambitious National Education Goals, the fact remains that substantial progress has been made. All over the nation, students are taking more difficult courses, improving their performance in science and math, and testing better on the SAT and ACT. Recently it was announced that SAT scores are up again this year in both verbal and math, and that ACT composite scores were up for the third of four years.
- Moreover, on the latest international assessment of reading skills, U.S. 4th graders outperformed students from all other nations except Finland.
- It remains true that the pace of progress is not fast enough, especially since students need much greater skills to thrive in our high-tech economy. Simply because our public schools are in need of improvement, however, does not justify turning our back on a system that has served generations well and that forms such a critical aspect of our Nation's future.
- Instead, we need to recommit ourselves to the hard work that improves schools: raising standards, improving discipline, supporting high-quality, better trained teachers, getting more technology in the classroom, and increasing greater parental involvement.

7. Is There Really Anything Unique About Public Education? Why Try to Preserve It?

- The tradition of the American public school -- an institution that brings together children and youth from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and walks of life, and instills in them our common democratic and cultural values -- has been a longstanding ideal of our education system.
- Public schools historically have been places where responsible citizenship and respect for others have been taught and exercised. While this ideal is not realized everywhere, it is true in public schools across the Nation. Its abandonment would be tragic, especially at a time when the U.S. desperately needs to come together, rather than pull apart. Instead of building community, vouchers would foster division and balkanization.

8. Would You Still Oppose Vouchers If They Would Only Assist The Very Poorest Children?

- First, it is very unlikely that a large-scale voucher plan would remain targeted to the interests of poor children. In Wisconsin, for example, the ink was barely dry on the inner-city Milwaukee demonstration before some called for spreading funds to wealthier families whose children already attend private schools.
- Moreover, even if voucher funds are targeted to poor children, private schools can pick and choose which students they accept and retain, potentially leaving the students most in need of help no better off. Public schools are committed to serving all children.
- Ultimately, even targeted voucher plans will undermine the local public schools that will continue to serve the vast majority of our children, leaving them with fewer, less well-trained teachers and diminished programs.

9. Didn't the President Write a Letter of Support to Polly Williams, the Wisconsin State Legislator Who Developed the Milwaukee Voucher Plan?

- The President was an early supporter of the concepts of school choice and competition. He wrote Polly Williams to offer encouragement in exploring the few choice ideas that existed at the time and said that he would "have his staff analyze it."
- Ultimately, then-Governor Clinton concluded that the right way to promote parental choice is through public school choice and charter schools, not voucher programs that siphon funds away from public education.
- Under Bill Clinton's leadership, Arkansas was one of the first states to adopt public school choice. As President, he won new funds for parents, teachers, and communities to start public charter schools through the Improving America's Schools Act passed in 1994. States and school districts are also using Goals 2000 funds to foster charter schools.

10. Have Private School Vouchers Been Successful, and What Is the Evidence Where They Have Been Tried?

- Most communities and states that have considered voucher proposals rejected them as too risky, leaving the Nation with little evidence about these chancy schemes.
- These communities determined that slashing funds for local public schools would not lead to improvement. Indeed, it makes no sense to siphon dollars from the local

public schools that nearly 90% of American children attend, just as enrollments are rising dramatically due to the “Baby Boom Echo.”

- While other researchers have disagreed, the officially commissioned-study of Milwaukee’s six-year-old experiment with vouchers suggests that students attending private schools at public expense haven’t fared any better academically than their peers in public schools. (Principal Author: John Witte, University of Wisconsin).
- Milwaukee’s experiment shows the dangers of giving public dollars to private schools with little or no public accountability. The Chicago Tribune reports that two voucher schools in Milwaukee “have gone out of business, leaving students stranded and parents scrambling to find another school” in the middle of the school year. One voucher school director has been accused of writing \$47,000 in bad checks.

11. Isn’t Your Position on Vouchers Just Another Example of How this Administration Always Follows the NEA Party Line?

- We do listen to teachers -- both union and non-union -- who do the vital work of teaching our children and youth, just as we listen to parents, businesses, religious and civic organizations, and others who are concerned with improving education. With all these groups, we agree on some things and disagree on others.
- When necessary to help improve kids’ education, the President has stood up for ideas opposed by teacher unions. As Governor, he fought for teacher competency testing in Arkansas; as President, he has actively supported the development of innovative public charter schools, opposed by many leaders in teacher unions.
- We reject the harmful teacher bashing that we see these days. Teaching is a noble profession, and America’s teachers are among the hardest-working and most dedicated Americans. This administration supports good teachers everywhere, although we need to find fair and efficient ways to ease burned-out teachers out of the classroom.

12. Mary Jones Is a Working-class Mother with a Third Grade Daughter Who Has Educational Needs Not Being Met in Her Public School. What’s Wrong with Offering a Scholarship to Help Mary’s Daughter Attend the Private or Public School of Their Choice?

- We support public school choice, but private voucher schemes offer false hope to the Joneses and families like them. Whether due to cost or selective admissions policies, vouchers are unlikely to open doors to the best private schools, yet vouchers would diminish support and resources for local public schools.
- The Dole voucher plan, for example, would provide some students a \$1,000 voucher,

but that is far below the tuition cost for many of the best private schools. Moreover, cost aside, receiving a voucher provides no guarantee that Mary's daughter would be accepted at a selective private school. Indeed, rather than helping the Jones family and those like it, voucher plans may simply assist those who already send their children to private schools.

- Mary Jones' daughter and millions of children like her would probably remain in a local public school, but now that school would have fewer dollars to help it succeed. Under the Dole plan, for example, federal vouchers would be financed by slashing millions of Goals 2000 dollars from California's reading improvement efforts. Likewise, each student departing the local public schools would result in a loss of thousands of dollars in local and state support.
- My advice to Mary Jones is to get involved in her daughter's school, demand higher standards and richer, more challenging instructional programs, and work with other parents, teachers, and community members to help the school improve. This Administration will support her efforts and fight alongside her to provide her more choices within public education.

13. If You Don't Support Vouchers, How Do You Propose to Improve Education in this Country?

- The President and the Secretary are fighting for to improving education across America: teaching reading and the basics while toughening academic standards; safe and disciplined schools; involving parents in their children's education; supporting good teachers while calling for removing bad teachers fairly, quickly, and inexpensively; providing families and students more choices within public education; getting computers into the classroom; and expanding access to college.
- Improving schools takes people willing to roll up their sleeves and work together on these effective strategies. That's why the President and Secretary have fought against efforts to slash support for communities and schools committed to improving education.
- Be wary of any quick fix that is supposed to improve our schools effortlessly, such as by diverting public funds into private schools.

14. But What Do You Say to Families Like the Jones' with Children Who Need Help Immediately and Are Trapped in Failing Schools That Aren't Getting Any Better?

- First, the Joneses and families like them should do what other parents and communities have done to turn their schools around: get involved in the school,

demand higher standards, and work with other parents, teachers, and community members. We will support these efforts and fight to provide Mary and her daughter with more choices within public education.

- In the case of a persistently failing school, the Joneses need the help of a committed principal willing to get rid of watered-down curriculum, recharge the teaching staff, counsel burnt-out teachers out of the profession and lead innovative approaches like more personalized schools-within-schools. They also need a tough-minded superintendent with the power to “reconstitute” a bad school if intensive assistance doesn’t turn it around. Finally, Mary Jones should have the option to send her child to another public school, or help create a new public charter school that does a better job.
- What will not help is to divert funds from struggling public schools, leaving behind the large majority of students.

15. You Support Public School Choice, but Not Choice Plans That Include Private Schools. Can You Explain Why?

- Unlike public school choice, voucher controversies polarize communities and distract them from working together on common-sense reforms to improve our public schools.
- Public school choice provides families with more options without draining scarce funds from public education.
- Most voucher plans would help families who can already afford a private school and whose children would already be accepted to attend that school. Because private schools can pick and choose their students, and because vouchers may be worth much less than private school tuition, vouchers don’t actually guarantee choice for most students and families. We support charter schools and other forms of choice within public education that expand choice and competition among schools and take students of any kind.
- We need more accountability in education, not less. Public charter schools stay open as long as they do a good job in raising student achievement; vouchers provide public funds to private schools with little or no accountability.
- Vouchers also erode the critical role that public education traditionally plays in this country, bringing together a diverse nation and instilling common democratic values. Rather than building community, vouchers foster balkanization.
- Finally, vouchers diminish the independence of private and parochial schools, making them less private and less parochial.

16. Wouldn't Vouchers Help Break the Monopoly That School Districts Have over Public Education?

- The power to improve schools lies in the hands of a local community, if that community chooses to exercise that power. The best way to improve schools is for parents and members of a local community to get involved in their local school, demand higher standards, and work to improve the school.
- We support a variety of strategies to make schools more responsive to the needs of students, parents, and communities: more decision-making at the school and community level; more charter schools allowing parents, teachers and community groups to run their own public schools; expanded school choice providing more competition within public education; and the development of challenging academic standards that states and communities can use to increase accountability for results.
- Together, these strategies can provide more consequences, choices and accountability in public education. This takes hard work, but if we put these strategies into action, they can benefit many, many students, unlike vouchers, which only assist a few. Our nation depends on the education of *all* of our young people.

Voucher Proposals Across the Nation

September 6, 1996

Operational Private School Voucher Programs

Milwaukee and Cleveland are currently the only two communities in the United States to provide publicly-funded tuition vouchers, but privately-funded voucher programs are operating in 23 cities and voucher proposals are being debated in at least 10 states.

- **Milwaukee, Wisconsin.** In operation since 1991, this program has provided vouchers worth the equivalent of Milwaukee's per pupil state aid (about \$3,600 in 1995-96) to about 1,400 low-income students to attend any state-certified non-sectarian private school. In August 1996, a state trial court declined to lift an existing injunction against participation of religious schools, pending its hearing of the case, but did allow a substantial expansion of the program to allow more students to receive vouchers to attend non-religious schools. The timetable for hearing the case is uncertain at this time; whatever the outcome, the losing party is expected to appeal. (See page 5 for detailed overview)
- **Cleveland, Ohio.** In June 1995, Governor Voinovich signed into law a pilot program that would provide vouchers of up to \$2,500 for low-income students in Cleveland to attend private schools, including religious schools. Vouchers are being issued to about 2,000 students for the 1996-97 school year, despite continuing litigation over the constitutionality of the program. In July 1996, an Ohio state trial court found the voucher plan constitutional. Although the ACLU and Ohio teacher's union have appealed, the Ohio Court of Appeals has declined to issue an injunction halting the program pending its final decision.

Parents of more than 6,000 children applied for the 2,000 vouchers available; about one-third of the applicants were already attending private schools. So far 49 private schools are participating, including 39 religious schools; tuition at these schools ranges from \$710 to \$3,640.

- **Privately-funded voucher programs.** Voucher programs sponsored by private coalitions of businesses, foundations, and individual donors provide vouchers to about 9,900 students in 23 cities, with 16,580 students on waiting lists. These programs typically provide vouchers for up to half the cost of tuition, up to a locally determined limit, to students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.

Federal Voucher Proposals

HOUSE PROPOSALS:

Introduced by Weldon and Riggs: The Low-Income School Choice Demonstration Act (H.R. 1640) has been introduced in the House but there has not yet been any action. The bill would authorize 10 to 20 low-income communities to establish voucher-based school choice programs, costing about \$30 million over three years. The bill is currently in committee and will likely remain there until after the November elections.

Introduced by Watts: Low-Income Educational Opportunity Scholarship Program (H.R. 3467)

Title IV of a larger bill, the Low-Income Educational Opportunity Scholarship Program would create “renewal communities” where families living within the communities could receive Opportunity Scholarships to attend private schools. On July 6, 1996 there was a joint hearing on the bill held by the Subcommittee on Human Resources and the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Youth and Families.

DOLE PROPOSAL:

The Opportunity scholarships for children initiative would provide \$2.5 billion in federal grants each year from FY 1997- FY 2000 matched by \$2.5 billion in state funds. Four-year competitive grants would be awarded to children from low-and middle-income families in up to 15 states, including the District of Columbia. Families could use these Opportunity Scholarships to send their children to public, private or religious schools. The funding offsets include the Goals 2000 program; reducing Department of Education “overhead bureaucracy and wasteful spending”; and program terminations. These offsets would only cover a fraction of the cost of the proposal.

State Legislative Voucher Proposals

During the most recent legislative sessions, voucher proposals appeared on legislative agendas in at least 15 states, according to the National Education Association. Proposals ranged from pilot projects serving a limited number of students in one school district to statewide programs open to all low-income students in the state. Below is a summary of legislative action on vouchers.

- **Arizona.** The Republican-controlled legislature defeated six different voucher measures. Governor Symington said that he will continue to push for passage of a voucher program.
- **California.** Voucher legislation was approved by the Republican-controlled Assembly committee but rejected by the Democratic Senate education committee. The proposed voucher program would have identified 5 percent of the lowest-achieving schools in California. Students attending these schools would have received 90 percent of the public school per-student expenditure allowing them to attend any private school to which they were admitted. The bill may be reintroduced but is unlikely to pass.
- **Illinois.** The House defeated a voucher bill passed by the Senate that would have provided private school vouchers of up to \$2,500 for as many as 2,000 low-income children in Chicago. The bill is still alive, however, and may be discussed in the fall.
- **Indiana.** A Senate proposal that would have allowed students to use state aid for summer school or other mandatory remediation programs, including those offered by religious schools, died in the House of Representatives.
- **Kansas.** In the upcoming legislative session, a voucher bill defeated in the last session will be reintroduced. The "Kansas G.I. Bill for Kids" proposes to introduce school choice by

phasing in the number of families eligible to participate as well as the amount of the vouchers over a five-year period.

- **Maryland.** In Baltimore, the mayor has appointed a choice task force to make recommendations regarding school vouchers and public school choice options. The program would be city-wide and could be similar to the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, or Cleveland, Ohio, programs. The task force may craft legislation to be introduced in the next state legislative session.
- **Minnesota.** The Senate education committee, with an overwhelming bipartisan vote, defeated a voucher bill that would have given low-income parents up to \$2,500 a year for private school tuition. The governor and several state senators will introduce new voucher legislation in the 1997 legislative session. The new proposal will likely offer vouchers worth \$500 to \$3,000, based on families' income levels.
- **New Jersey.** Governor Christine Whitman (R) withdrew her proposal for a pilot program in Jersey City that would have provided vouchers for all 1st-9th-grade students in the district. A study committee subsequently convened by the governor has recommended a city-targeted voucher program, probably for Jersey City. After completing three public hearings on school choice, the panel has developed a bill to be introduced in the next legislative session.
- **New York.** S. 7216 would amend the statewide education law to include a provision for a "pilot project scholarship program." Introduced in the Senate, the bill would provide for a pilot voucher program reaching one school district in each county in the state.
- **Ohio.** In June 1995, Governor Voinovich signed into law a pilot voucher program for low-income families in Cleveland, and an Ohio state court rejected a challenge to the measure in July 1996. Opponents including the ACLU are appealing the ruling but the Ohio Court of Appeals has turned down a requested injunction that would have prevented the program from beginning in the fall. Beginning this fall, the program is providing vouchers of up to \$2,500 for students to use to attend one of 49 participating private schools, including 38 religious schools. The state has already awarded 2000 vouchers, chosen by lottery from a pool of 6,000 applicants; as of late August, 1700 of the vouchers were being used, with families of other students still searching for spots in private schools. Under the program, the state will pay 90 percent of private-school tuition for families whose income is less than twice the federal poverty level, and 75 percent for all other eligible families.
- **Pennsylvania.** Last year, the House defeated a voucher proposal by a margin of seven votes. The governor plans to reintroduce the legislation, which calls for a five-year pilot in selected cities and counties across the state. The Keystone Initiative for a Difference in Our Schools would provide vouchers during the first year to parents earning \$15,000 or less. During the second year, the family eligibility amount would be increased to an income of \$25,000, and the income level would be capped at \$35,000 during the third year. Voucher amounts would vary from \$350 to \$1,500, based on parents' income.

State Ballot Initiatives

- **Washington State.** On November 5, 1996, citizens in Washington State will vote on two education initiatives, Initiatives 173 and 177. Initiative 173 reads “Shall the state pay scholarship vouchers for primary and secondary students to attend voucher-redeeming private or public schools of choice?”

Initiative 177 is characterized by its supporters as a charter school bill, but it is characterized by many as a private school voucher initiative in disguise.

Parent and education organizations in the state consider them both voucher initiatives-- and other pro charter school groups agree.

Recent Court Action

- **Vermont:** The School Board in Chittenden, Vermont voted on August 4, 1996, to take the state Education Department to court rather than meet an August 15 deadline for reversing its decision to pay students' tuition to state-approved religious schools as well as public schools.

Milwaukee Voucher Program

Until Cleveland's voucher program began this fall, Milwaukee was the only community in the United States to provide publicly-funded vouchers for private school tuition. A state law passed in 1990 gives vouchers worth the equivalent of Milwaukee's per pupil state aid (about \$3,600 in 1995-96) to cover the tuition at any state-certified, secular private school. Participation is limited to families whose income is less than 175 percent of the federal poverty level. In September 1995, approximately 1,400 children were participating in the program.

Participating schools may not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, prior achievement, or prior behavioral record, but they are allowed to refuse admittance to students with physical and mental disabilities on the basis of insufficient facilities or resources. If the supply of available choice seats in a school exceeds demand, selection must be on a random basis. Participating schools may have no more than 65 percent of their students attending through vouchers. Seventeen of the city's 23 private nonsectarian schools participated in the program in the 1995-96 school year.

Proposed expansion to include religious schools

The Wisconsin state legislature has passed a law expanding the voucher program, beginning with the 1995-96 school year, by allowing religious schools to participate, making students currently enrolled in private schools eligible to receive vouchers, removing the limitation on the percentage of a school's enrollment that could receive vouchers, raising the maximum voucher amount to \$5,000, and increasing the number of students eligible to participate from 1,500 to 3,500 in 1995-96 and to 15,000 by 1997-98.

These amendments, however, have been contested on state and federal constitutional grounds, and in August 1995 the Wisconsin Supreme Court temporarily restricted participation and voucher awards to 1994-95 levels pending a final judicial decision. The Court then deadlocked (3-3) on whether the inclusion of religious schools is constitutional, and remanded the case back to the Dane County (Madison) circuit court. In August 1996, the circuit court declined to lift the injunction against participation of religious schools, pending its hearing of the case, but did allow the expansion of the program to allow more students to receive vouchers to attend non-religious schools. The timetable for hearing the case is uncertain at this time. A recent poll found that a solid majority of Wisconsin residents oppose the expansion to include religious schools, although a narrow majority of Milwaukee residents endorsed it.

Impact on student outcomes

A state-supported five-year evaluation conducted by Professor John Witte (University of Wisconsin) has found that voucher students' achievement did not improve significantly from their previous achievement in public schools, although parents had consistently high opinions of the program. However, a recent report by Paul Peterson (Harvard) and Jay Greene (University of Houston) has challenged those findings, arguing that students who stayed in the voucher program for four years scored higher on math and reading tests than comparable students who stayed in the public schools. Witte called the Peterson and Greene findings "absolutely insane", charging that the researchers used outdated research methods and analyzed too small a group of students.

The Witte study also found that:

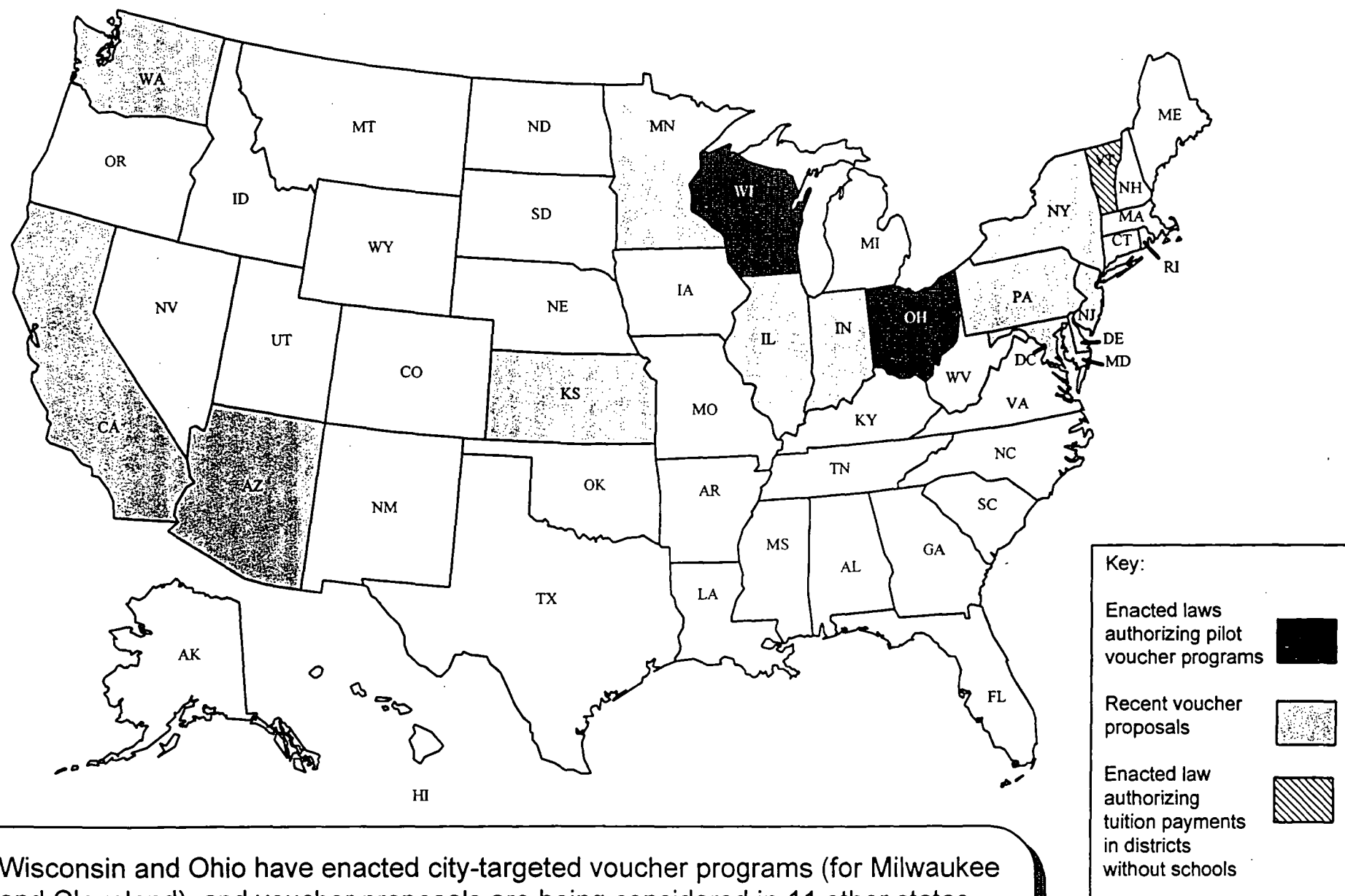
- More than one out of every four voucher students drops out of the program each year (a rate comparable, though, to the mobility rate in MPS). The most commonly cited reasons included complaints about the application and fees, transportation problems, and limitations on religious instruction. Other problems included interactions with staff, the general quality of education, and the lack of specialized programs in the choice schools.
- Overall attendance was not measurably different for choice and MPS students over time.
- Parents of voucher students represented a cross-section of low-income families in Milwaukee, were very disgruntled with the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), and were very involved in their child's education compared to a random sample of MPS parents.
- Voucher students began with relatively lower achievement than average low-income students in MPS.
- The most common reasons cited by parents for participation in the program were improved quality of education and the educational approach of the private school.

Accountability

Questions about accountability were raised by the closure of one participating school in the middle of the program's first year amid allegations of mismanagement of funds and parent complaints about overcrowded classrooms, lack of books and materials, lack of cleanliness, and major discipline problems. In 1995-96, an additional two schools closed amid allegations of enrollment figure misrepresentation, with auditors claiming that the schools had overstated the number of voucher-eligible students by as many as 200; over 350 students were affected by the closings.

The state has discontinued funding for all data collection and evaluation of the Milwaukee voucher program.

Private School Voucher Programs and Proposals



Wisconsin and Ohio have enacted city-targeted voucher programs (for Milwaukee and Cleveland), and voucher proposals are being considered in 11 other states. Milwaukee's program has been in operation since 1991, and the Cleveland program began operations in August 1996.

9/3/96

Participation in School Choice and Voucher Programs

September 6, 1996

- **Public school choice.** Approximately 11 percent of all U.S. students in grades 3-12 attend a public school that their families chose, according to a 1993 survey of parents.
- **Magnet schools.** The number of magnet programs has increased dramatically over the past decade -- as of 1991-92, there were approximately 2,400 magnet schools in 230 school districts. These magnet programs enroll 1.2 million students nationwide (about 3 percent of all students enrolled in public schools). Magnet schools are primarily an urban phenomenon, most commonly found in large urban school systems with above-average levels of minority student enrollments. Half of all large urban districts currently offer magnet programs.
- **Charter schools.** Twenty-five states and the District of Columbia have enacted legislation authorizing charter schools. Roughly 250 charter schools were in operation during the 1995-96 school year, serving an estimated 72,000 students (based on an average school size of 287 students in 1994-95 reported by Medler and Nathan (1995)). According to a 1995 GAO report, California has approved the most charter schools, with large numbers of charter schools also operating in Colorado, Massachusetts, and Minnesota.
- **Open enrollment.** Eighteen states have open enrollment policies permitting students to attend a public school other than their assigned school. In addition, some districts have instituted within-district open enrollment policies even where there is no statewide policy.
- **Postsecondary options.** Fifteen states have postsecondary options programs that allow high school juniors and seniors to take courses and earn credit in colleges, universities, or vocational-technical institutes.
- **Publicly-funded voucher programs.** Wisconsin and Ohio have enacted city-targeted voucher programs for Milwaukee and Cleveland. Milwaukee's program has been in operation since 1991, providing vouchers to up to 1,400 students (although a court has recently lifted an injunction against a substantial expansion). The Cleveland program has been in court, but is beginning operations in September 1996, providing vouchers to up to 2,000 students. The Milwaukee plan is currently restricted to non-religious schools, although both the Milwaukee and Cleveland voucher laws authorize the participation of religious schools; final court decisions are still pending in both cases.
- **Privately-funded voucher programs.** Voucher programs sponsored by private coalitions of businesses, foundations, and individual donors have been established in at least 23 cities, with six more due to begin operation in 1996-97. These programs share several common features: (1) students must be eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; (2) they must live within the boundaries of the participating school district; and (3) students receive vouchers for up to half the cost of tuition, up to a locally-determined limit, and (4) students may use the vouchers to attend any private school located within the school district, including religious schools. These programs collectively provide vouchers to about 9,900 students; two-thirds of these students are in the three cities with the largest voucher programs: Milwaukee, Indianapolis, and San Antonio.



Third Annual
**State of American
Education Address**

Wednesday, February 28, 1996

Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education

St. Louis, Missouri
Maplewood-Richmond Heights
Senior High School

the Moon. If we persevere we will achieve President Clinton's goal of making sure that every library, school and classroom in this nation is wired and on-line by the year 2000.

Getting computers into America's classrooms has to be seen as just one step in our growing effort to move American education into the future. Public school choice, schools-within-schools, and the expansion of the charter school movement are three other winning examples of American creativity.

Public school choice needs to be seen as an option. Some of our most successful schools are small schools that create a community of learning. Young people should not get lost in school and then be forgotten.

This is why President Clinton is a strong supporter of charter schools with public accountability. The President has asked the Congress in his new budget to create new "venture capital" to encourage the development of charter schools. I urge the Congress to respond with enthusiasm. I have visited charter schools, and I am particularly impressed by what charter schools are doing for disabled and under-achieving children.

Now, there are some who will tell you that private school vouchers are good for education as well. I believe they are dead wrong. Unlike charter schools, private school vouchers offer us no public accountability. They are a retreat from the democratic purposes of public education, a way to divert public tax dollars, and they will cost taxpayers a great deal of money. Moreover, receiving public tax dollars through the voucher threatens the very nature of private and parochial schools. It makes them less private and less parochial.

I am keenly sensitive to the fact that many parochial school supporters see vouchers as one way to support the good work that they do. I recognize their day-to-day financial struggle. This is why I shall encourage actively that the United States Supreme Court reconsider its

ruling in *Aguilar v. Felton*, which continues to place an undue burden — both financial and educational — on many Catholic, Lutheran, Jewish and other religiously affiliated schools.

But, I am concerned that some private school voucher proponents have something else in mind when they talk about vouchers. I fear that they seek nothing less than the dismemberment of public education. It dismays me that some think-tank intellectuals are leading this assault on public education, and away from the democratic spirit that has always defined American public education at its best. You and I know what public education really needs. It needs hands-on leaders. Leaders like Governor Mel Carnahan here in Missouri who worries about class size, computers in the classroom and high standards. And leaders like Dr. J in Denver and the late Ernie Boyer and thousands like them who are making a difference every day.

The Challenge to Prepare Young People for Work

Our sixth great challenge is helping our young people to make something of themselves in these new economic times, to have an education relevant to real and good jobs. Today, too many of our young people see no connection between what they learn in school and the skills they need to function in real life. And too many business leaders rightly complain that high school graduates come to them without the skills for today's jobs.

We need to redesign our schools for success, and place more attention on the forgotten middle — the average kids with untapped potential who are still looking for direction. Today's young people will be tomorrow's paramedics, emergency room nurses, Army helicopter pilots, and the skilled technicians who build the NASA rockets. There is no point in preparing our young people for jobs in a widget factory.

This is why I am a strong believer in rethinking the American high school by creating partner-

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(San Francisco, California)

For Immediate Release

October 4, 1993

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE AFL-CIO 20TH CONVENTION

San Francisco Hilton
San Francisco, California

We have learned these things. And if I might, since we're in California, say a special word -- therefore, I believe that having worked for 12 years for higher standards, more choices and greater changes in public education, I'm in a little bit of a position to say that if I were a citizen of the state of California, I would not vote for Proposition 174, The Private Voucher Initiative. (Applause.)

Now, and let me tell you why. Let me tell you why. First of all, keep in mind a lot of the schools out here are doing a good job. I can say -- you know, I never was part of the California education system. I have studied this system out here for more than a decade. They have undertaken a lot of very impressive reforms and many of their schools are doing a good job. I was interviewed last night by two people from a newspaper in Sacramento, and one of them just volunteered that he had two children in the public schools there and they were getting a terrific education.

This bill would start by taking \$1.3 billion right of the top to send a check to people who already have their kids in private schools, and who didn't need any government money to do it, and taking it right of the top away from a school system that doesn't have enough money to educate the kids it's got in it in the first place. (Applause.)

Second thing it would do is to impose no real standards on the quality of the programs which could be funded: Who could set up a school, what standards they'd have to meet, what tests the kids would have to pass. Just take your voucher and who cares whether a private school is a legitimate school or not. That is a significant issue. And all you have to do is to work in this field for a few years to understand that that is a significant issue.

Wouldn't it be ironic that at the very moment we're finally trying to find a way to measure the performance and raise the standards of the public schools, we turn around and start sending tax money to private schools that didn't have to meet any standards at all. (Applause.) When we're trying to get one part of our business, we're going to make the other part worse.

And finally, let me just say, I have always supported the notion that American schools ought to have competition, and the fact that we have a vibrant tradition of pluralistic education and private schools and religious private schools was a good thing, not a bad thing for America. But all the years when I grew up, and all the times I saw that, and for a couple years of my life when I was a little boy, when I went to a Catholic school, when my folks moved from one place to another and we lived way out in the country and didn't know much about the schools in the new area where we were -- no one ever thought that the church would want any money from the taxpayers to run

So I think we have to really thing through -- I have spent 12 years before I became President overwhelmingly obsessed with reform of the public school system, wanting more choices in the system, wanting more accountability, wanting more flexibility about how schools were organized and established and operated. But I can tell you that this is not the way to get it done and the people will regret this if they pass it. I hope the people of California don't do that. (Applause.)

Now, you can educate people all you want -- and I wanted to say a little more about that. The Labor Secretary and I are working on trying to take all these 150 different government training programs and give local communities and states the power to consolidate them, working with you, and just fund the things that work on a state-by-state basis, and to set up a system of lifetime education and training.

Vouchers Undermine Public Education, Divide Communities

Marshall S. Smith

While we have many miles still to go before reaching our ambitious National Education Goals, Americans may be pleasantly surprised to learn that, in some crucial areas, our schools are actually improving. Dating back to the 1983 report, A Nation at Risk, States and local school districts have engaged in the most sustained school improvement effort in U.S. history, and we have taken some important strides as a result:

- The proportion of high school graduates taking the core courses recommended in A Nation At Risk (4 years of English, 3 years of social studies, 3 years of science, 3 years of math) increased from 14 percent in 1982 to 52 percent in 1994.
- Between 1978 and 1992, performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in mathematics improved for all three age groups tested, with the largest gains made by 9- and 13-year-olds. The improvement was equivalent to at least one grade level. Likewise, NAEP science performance rose from 1982 to 1992 in all three age groups.
- In the latest international assessment of reading, American 4th graders outperformed students from all other participating nations except Finland.
- The combined verbal and math scores on the SAT increased 17 points from 1982 to 1995, while at the same time the numbers and diversity of test-takers increased.

Americans should be especially encouraged that these gains have occurred while U.S. schools are serving more students from more diverse backgrounds than ever before. In 1950, much of the country had legally segregated schools, and barely more than one-third of adults had a high school education, while many students with disabilities were shut out of school altogether. By 1994, however, the overall drop-out rate for 16- to 24-year olds had fallen to 10.5 percent and over 80 percent of adults had completed four years of high school or more schooling. Today fifty-seven percent of youth with disabilities are competitively employed within five years of leaving school, compared to only 33 percent of older people with disabilities, the latter having had more limited educational opportunities growing up.

Despite these successes, everyone agrees we need to accelerate progress dramatically; a world-class education is more important than ever before in today's competitive, high-tech economy. That's why the Clinton Administration has worked so hard to help states and school districts raise academic standards, make schools safe and disciplined, get parents more involved in their children's education, support high-quality, well-trained teachers, and better integrate technology into the classroom. But one proposed "solution" would put our Nation's progress in real jeopardy: quick-fix voucher schemes that use taxpayer funds to pay for private elementary and secondary school tuition.

10/01/93

STATEMENT BY U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
RICHARD W. RILEY

CALIFORNIA'S PROPOSITION 174

Public education is an essential foundation of American society. Historically, our nation's public schools have provided each generation of Americans with the basic skills needed to become contributing members of our democracy.

Now, in this new economic era of global competition, public schools must play this role more than ever before by raising academic standards and striving for excellence.

It is against this backdrop that I find Proposition 174 so disturbing and troubling. I oppose Proposition 174.

Proposition 174 will take from the 5 million students now in the California public education system \$1.3 billion in public funding to cover the students now in private schools.

At a time when the California state government and many local jurisdictions are struggling with significant budget limitations, a shift in resources of this magnitude surely will lead to severe and unexpected results.

Proposition 174 does not promote quality teaching and learning. Instead, Proposition 174 will encourage further division between and among the many residents of California. This country cannot afford to waste more time on divisive issues which private school vouchers would encourage inadvertently. The children of America deserve and need more.

No one denies that our public schools can and should be made better by offering students a wide variety of challenging choices. The Clinton administration fully supports and actively encourages school reform -- including public school choice, magnet schools, charter schools within the public school context, parent involvement, strengthened curricula, improved teaching, and high academic and skill standards.

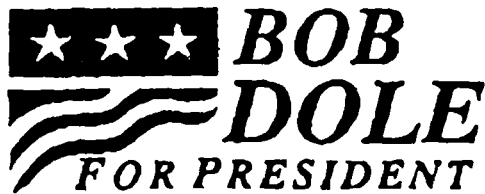
It is my hope that all Americans will involve themselves in an ongoing effort to improve public schools by building on the many positive education reform initiatives now underway.

Public Opinion on School Choice Issues

- **While there is strong public support for public school choice, the public is opposed to providing public funds for private education.**
 - Nationally, 69% of the public favors letting parents choose the public school their child attends, while 28% are opposed (Gallup/Phi Delta Kappan, 1995b).
 - When asked in 1991 about public school choice, while nationally 62% were in favor, stronger support was found from specific groups: 70% of blacks were in favor, as were 70% of inner-city dwellers (Gallup/Phi Delta Kappan, 1991).
 - A majority (54%) of the public favors charter schools--public schools with broad freedom from regulation in return for greater results (Gallup/Phi Delta Kappan, 1994).
 - A strong majority of the public remains opposed to "allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense" (61% to 36% in 1996), but support has increased since 1993, when only 24% favored the idea (Gallup/Phi Delta Kappan, 1996).
 - In 1996, a Gallup poll found a sizeable majority (60%) of private school parents in favor of private school choice at public expense -- the first time the annual Gallup poll has shown a majority of any demographic group in favor of this idea. (Gallup/Phi Delta Kappan, 1996).
- **Opinion on vouchers is mixed, but Americans are strongly opposed to replacing the current public school systems with a system of private schools funded by vouchers.**
 - One survey found that 6 out of 10 people (61%) oppose granting government vouchers to parents of children in private schools, and 63% are against government subsidies to parents who teach their children at home. (NBC/WSJ, 1994). Another recent poll found that 54% oppose government subsidies of all or part of tuition to enable parents to send their child to "any public, private, or church-run school they choose," while 43% favor this idea (Princeton/Newsweek, 1994).
 - Another survey found significant differences for different groups of respondents when asked about vouchers. (It defined vouchers as: "the government allots a certain amount of money for each child's education. The

parents can then send the child to any public, parochial or private school they choose.”). Nationally, 50% favored vouchers and 39% opposed them. Stronger support was found from specific groups: 57% of blacks were in favor, 58% of people with children under 18, and 66% of private school parents (Gallup/Phi Delta Kappan, 1991).

- Over two-thirds of Americans oppose the idea of replacing the public schools with “a system of private and church-related schools with parents selecting from among these nonpublic schools, using vouchers paid for by the government.” Parents of private school children also rejected this idea (57% opposed compared to 37% in favor) (Gallup/Phi Delta Kappan, 1996).
- **Parents’ preferences for public versus private schools vary across polls and appear to depend on the wording of the survey question.**
 - One poll found that a majority (55%) of public school parents “would keep their oldest child in his or her present (public) school even if cost were not a factor.” (Gallup/Phi Delta Kappan, 1996). However, another poll found that almost 6 out of 10 public school parents (57%) would send their children to private schools “if they could afford to do so.” (Public Agenda, 1995).
 - Parents who said they would switch were about evenly divided between religious schools (17% of all parents) and non-religious private schools (19%), with a smaller number choosing another public school (8%). (Gallup/Phi Delta Kappan, 1996).
 - When asked what type of school they would choose if given a \$3,500 voucher, most public school parents said they would keep their child in the public school he or she already attends, and 6% would choose another public school. Only 37% would use the voucher to switch to a private school (Gallup/Phi Delta Kappan, 1996).
 - Given a choice among “any of the public schools in this community,” 68% of public school parents would choose the same schools their children now attend and 23% would choose different ones (Gallup/Phi Delta Kappan, 1991).
- **A survey of leaders in 46 Great City Schools found that a significant percentage employ public school choice as a strategy for education reform.**
 - Along with a variety of other reforms, urban leaders report using district-wide *open enrollment* (39%) and developing *public charter schools* (30%) (GCS, 1996).



JULY 18, 1996

School Choice Backgrounder

For More Information, Call the Dole Press Office at 202/414-6444

THE CHOICE THAT COULD SAVE OUR SCHOOLS Bob Dole's Opportunity Scholarships for Children Initiative

Purpose

Patterned after the Pell Grant and the original GI Bill for veterans, Bob Dole's Opportunity Scholarships for Children initiative is a cooperative federal, state and local effort to give 4 million low- and middle-income families the ability to select the best schools for their children.

Program Description

Opportunity Scholarships for Children would be funded by \$2.5 billion in federal grants each year from FY 1997 to FY 2000 matched by \$2.5 billion in state funds. Four-year competitive grants would be awarded to children from low- and middle-income families in up to 15 states, including the District of Columbia.

Opportunity Scholarships would be at least:

\$1,000 per child in K-8 schools -- \$500 federal/\$500 state.

\$1,500 per child in high schools -- \$750 federal/\$750 state.

Opportunity Scholarships could be larger with the added support from non-federal sources.

Families could use these Opportunity Scholarships to send their children to any lawfully operating school -- public, private, or religious. Scholarship funds could be used to pay for tuition, school fees, and other reasonable expenses.

This program could help fund opportunity scholarships for more than four million children, nearly ten percent of all children in elementary and secondary schools. The maximum family income for eligible children would be determined by the participating state.

This new \$2.5 billion federal commitment to America's children is budget neutral and would not increase the federal deficit. The funding offsets include: eliminating the Goals 2000 program; reducing Department of Education overhead, bureaucracy and wasteful spending; and adopting certain program terminations and reductions called for in the Clinton Administration's budget proposals.

This is a demonstration program with the goals of state flexibility and the encouragement of diverse state proposals that provide a wide array of choices of schools to families and school children. The state proposals could include the widest public, private, and religious schooling options for families, including the option of educating children at home.

Congress and the Governors will direct a comprehensive evaluation of these demonstration projects. The evaluation would assess the impact of the program in such areas as educational achievement, school safety, and parents' involvement in their children's education and their satisfaction with the results.

Background Information on Public School Choice and Vouchers

Summary

The Clinton Administration supports public school choice as a way to offer the benefits of choice without the negative consequences of a voucher program. The perceived benefits of private schools fade away when raw test scores of public and private school students are adjusted to control for the higher socio-economic level of private school students. After controlling for student background, public schools of choice actually show a larger achievement benefit than private schools, both religious and nonreligious.

Why the Clinton Administration Favors Public School Choice over Private School Vouchers

Public school choice makes good sense. The Clinton Administration has aggressively promoted improving local public schools, expanding public school choice and charter schools, and increasing parent involvement in education:

“I challenge every state to give all parents the right to choose which public school their children will attend; and to let teachers form new schools with a charter they can keep only if they do a good job.”

-- President Bill Clinton
State of the Union Address, 1996

In 1993, the Clinton Administration proposed a charter school program to provide new seed capital to help parents, teachers, businesses, and others start up charter schools to provide more choice, competition and opportunity within public education. Enacted in 1994, this program is now helping to start up charter schools in 11 states; the Clinton Administration's call to provide \$40 million for this program this year was cut in half in the House and the Senate proposals. Meanwhile, five states have enacted laws authorizing charter schools since the President's State of the Union appeal in January for more public school choice.

But using public tax dollars for private school vouchers is a bad idea. It would polarize Americans and would sacrifice the time-honored tradition of the American neighborhood public school for the sake of a social experiment.

- Controversy over vouchers polarizes communities when they should be coming together to do the hard work of improving the local public schools that 89% of parents rely on. In fact, local and state voucher disputes have divided citizens rather than unifying them around tougher standards, getting technology into the classroom, and other basic improvement strategies we know can work. Voucher disputes rob us of the time, energy, and common purpose that we need to put these effective reforms into action.
- Vouchers would siphon off dollars from neighborhood public schools into private schools of any type that will continue to be funded whether or not they meet community expectations or

needs. Vouchers would erode community control over how its education tax dollars are spent, and, at the expense of taxpayers, would support schools that can pick and choose among their students. Over the next ten years, student enrollment at public schools is projected to rise higher than ever before; it doesn't make sense to rob public education of dollars just as this new baby boom brings record numbers of students into our public schools.

- The results of this social experiment would be a dangerous erosion of public education -- a fundamental pillar of the American way of life, and a bond holding communities together. It is our unique blend of unity and diversity -- forged partly through the common experience of public education -- that sets our nation apart from countries that have disintegrated into ethnic conflicts and wars. Vouchers would also signal a retreat from our commitment to educate all of our children, not just the wealthiest or the easiest to deal with.
- Vouchers would undermine private and parochial education, making them less private and less parochial. If public funds are used to support the basic costs of private schools, we will see increased calls for private schools to become regulated and more directly accountable to public officials. This would fundamentally alter the nature of private schooling, taking the "private" out of private schools.

Quick fixes like vouchers are no substitute for consistent attention to the basics of American education. Anyone who has spent time learning about education knows there are no quick fixes to the challenges facing our nation's schools. Improving the education of our nation's children depends on consistent attention to the basics, discipline, quality teachers, and on Americans rolling up their sleeves to work together to improve our public schools across America.

The American public also favors public school choice over private school vouchers.

Nationally, 69% of the public favors letting parents choose the public school their child attends (Gallup, 1991), while 61% oppose allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense (Gallup, 1996). Although support for vouchers has risen slightly, it is still opposed by a substantial majority.

Student Performance in Parochial Schools, Public Schools, and Voucher Programs

Much of the difference between performance in public and private schools can be explained by the family background of the students (i.e., family income, parents' educational attainment) (Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore, 1982).

- Students in private church-related schools are at least two-thirds more likely to come from high-income families (the top fifth of families) than students in public schools. (Current Population Surveys, 1994)
- Even when studies control for family background, they probably still overstate achievement differences because they usually cannot control for "self-selection bias"-- the fact that parents and students who choose schools other than their neighborhood school may have higher level of motivation than similar families who do not exercise choice.

Research indicates that public schools of choice show as large a benefit (if not larger) than private schools in producing better student achievement. For example, a recent analysis comparing 10th graders in Catholic schools, nonreligious private schools, and magnet schools to

those in comprehensive public high schools (Adam Gamoran (1996), in Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, based on data from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey) found that, after controlling for pre-existing differences among students:

- Magnet schools showed the strongest achievement benefit, with significantly higher achievement in reading, social studies, and science.
- Catholic schools showed a positive impact on math and reading skills, but the reading advantage was not as large as for magnet schools. They showed no significant impact on science.
- Nonreligious private schools did not have significantly different achievement levels than the comprehensive public high schools in any subject.

Probably the most effective educational choice that parents and students can make is to choose to take more challenging courses.

- Research shows that one factor that produces clear and substantial gains in student achievement is taking tougher courses. For example, Gamoran (1996) found that after controlling for coursetaking and other student factors, both Catholic and nonreligious private schools showed no significant advantage in any subject, while public magnet schools continued to show a significant advantage in reading, social studies, and science.

The assumed benefits of existing private school voucher programs have yet to be substantiated.

- The state-sponsored evaluation of Milwaukee's publicly-funded voucher program (Witte, 1994) found that most participating parents expressed satisfaction with the program, but students' achievement did not improve significantly from their previous achievement in public schools. Recently, Greene and Peterson have challenged the Witte findings, but methodological problems call their results into question. Their analysis was based on a biased sample of voucher students (those who remained in the program for a full four years). Fully half of the voucher students were removed from the analysis. The result was that the voucher students and the public school comparison group were not comparable from the beginning.
- A Hudson Institute study (1996) of the privately-funded voucher program in Indianapolis concluded that the voucher students performed "as well as [public school] students in the earlier grades and seem to be doing better in the middle-school grades." However, this appears to be an overly generous characterization of their data, which showed that the voucher students' average test scores were below those of public school students in grade 2, about the same in grades 3 and 6, and higher only in grade 8.

Private School Voucher Programs and Proposals

Milwaukee and Cleveland are currently the only communities in the United States to provide publicly-funded tuition vouchers, but privately-funded voucher programs are operating in 23 cities and voucher proposals are being debated in at least 11 states.

- **Milwaukee, Wisconsin.** In operation since 1991, this program provides vouchers worth the equivalent of Milwaukee's per pupil state aid (about \$3,600 in 1995-96) to about 1,400 low-income students to attend any state-certified non-sectarian private school. In August 1996, a state trial court declined to lift an existing injunction against participation of religious schools, pending its hearing of the case, but did allow a substantial expansion of the program to allow more students to receive vouchers to attend non-religious schools. The timetable for hearing the case is uncertain at this time; whatever the outcome, the losing party is expected to appeal.
- **Cleveland, Ohio.** This pilot voucher program, which includes religious schools, began issuing vouchers in August 1996 despite continuing litigation over the constitutionality of the program. In July 1996, an Ohio state court found the voucher plan constitutional, and although the ACLU and Ohio teacher's union have appealed, the Ohio Court of Appeals declined to issue an injunction halting the program until pending its decision. Vouchers of up to \$2,500 are being issued to about 2,000 low-income students for the 1996-97 school year; about one-third of the applicants were already attending private schools. So far 49 private schools are participating, including 39 religious schools; tuition at these schools ranges from \$710 to \$3,640.
- **Privately-funded voucher programs.** Voucher programs sponsored by private coalitions of businesses, foundations, and individual donors provide vouchers to about 9,900 students in 23 cities, with 16,580 students on waiting lists. These programs typically provide vouchers for up to half the cost of tuition, up to a locally determined limit, to students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.
- **State voucher proposals.** During the most recent legislative sessions, voucher proposals appeared on legislative agendas in at least 11 states, including Arizona, California, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Proposals ranged from pilot projects serving a limited number of students in one school district to statewide programs open to all low-income students in the state.

Author: Michael Cohen <COHEN_M@a1.eop.gov> at Internet
Date: 8/21/96 10:44 AM
Priority: Normal
CC: William Kincaid at WDCT01
TO: Jennifer Davis at WDCB02
Subject: RE: President re: vouchers

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I have two official statements from the President re: vouchers: (1) The April 26 statement on signing the omnibus consolidated recissions and appropriations act, in which the President indicates he is pleased that Congress deled the DC school voucher provision; and (2) the Oct. 4, 1993 speech to the AFL-CIO in San Francisco, in which the President states and explains his opposition to prop. 174.

I believe you already have both of these. Let me know if you need copies.