

**Questions and Answers on School Vouchers**  
**January 20, 1998**

**Q: When Congress returns later this month, Republicans are likely to continue their calls to support private school voucher programs as a solution for failing public schools. Why do you and most other Democrats continue to oppose private school vouchers?**

**A:** We need to focus on strengthening the public schools that serve nearly 90% of students and expanding choice within the public education system, such as through charter schools.

Vouchers would siphon critical dollars from neighborhood public schools that are already short on resources in order to send a few selected students to private schools. They would distract attention from the hard work of reform needed to change failing schools into good schools and good schools into outstanding schools.

As I made clear in Chicago recently, no child deserves to get a second class education. Where schools are failing, local and state education officials must step in and redesign them, or close them down and reopen them with new, more effective leadership and staff who will raise standards, put into place effective reforms, and create safe, disciplined learning environments where students can succeed.

**Q: Some argue that vouchers are vital to help children escape ineffective, dangerous schools. What is your response to that?**

**A:** My opposition to vouchers is based more on what happens to students who do not participate in a voucher program than on what may happen to the few who do. The fact is that 90% of our students attend public schools, and our primary responsibility, especially with limited federal resources, is to make sure that the public schools they attend are among the best in the world. This means concentrating our time and money on raising academic standards, improving teaching, providing schools with technology and other up-to-date learning tools, and creating charter schools and other forms of choice within the public school system. Vouchers only drain financial resources and energy away from our most important task -- improving our public schools.

**Questions and Answers on School Vouchers**  
**January 19, 1998**

**Q: When Congress returns later this month, Republicans are likely to continue their calls to support private school voucher programs as a solution for failing public schools. Why do you and most other Democrats continue to oppose private school vouchers?**

**A:** I strongly oppose any legislation allowing the use of federal taxpayer funds for vouchers.

We need to focus on strengthening the public schools that serve nearly 90% of students and expanding choice within the public education system, such as through charter schools.

Vouchers would siphon critical dollars from neighborhood public schools that are already short on resources in order to send a few selected students to private schools, and would distract attention from the hard work of reform needed to change failing schools into good schools and good schools into outstanding schools.

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Please give to Jon

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From Bill

Bill Per our  
conversation re.  
vouchers. We  
need to talk it  
re-disability.  
com. TOM



INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE

MEMORANDUM

TO: SCHOOL CHOICE ALLIES  
FROM: CLINT BOLICK  
RE: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS  
DATE: SEPTEMBER 22, 1997

We report on several recent developments in the school choice battle.

*Peterson study.* The favorable recent study on the Cleveland school choice program by Harvard professor Paul Peterson and his colleagues is welcome news. We worked closely with Prof. Peterson to get the word out, and were delighted with the *New York Times* headline and the article under Prof. Peterson's byline in the *Wall Street Journal*.

*Heritage Paper on Legal Issues.* Last week, the Heritage Foundation released a backgrounder I prepared entitled "School Choice, the Law, and the Constitution: A Primer for Parents and Reformers." Copies are available from Heritage or the Institute for Justice.

*District of Columbia.* We have provided legal counsel to Rep. Dick Armey and Sen. Dan Coats on the proposed District of Columbia scholarship program. The final bill is a good one, providing for income-based scholarships that can be used in private schools or suburban public schools. The bill features direct payment of scholarships to parents. Dick Komer and I met with representatives of the Catholic Conference, who urged that the bill contain the full panoply of federal civil rights regulations, including Title IX (gender) and disability provisions. We argued strongly against those regulations. We are pleased to report that the final bill contains only a general antidiscrimination requirement, and expressly provides that schools are not "recipients of federal funds."

The program, which will be attached to the District of Columbia appropriation, should come up for votes over the next few weeks. A similar bill received majority support in both chambers in the last Congress, but did not win enough Senate support to overcome a filibuster. Thanks to strong backing from Democrats Sen. Joseph Lieberman and Rep. Floyd Flake, and to community support developed by several school choice organizations, we have a better chance this time.

*Lingamon.* We have filed our opening brief in the Vermont Supreme Court, and await the other side's response. Our motion to recuse two of the five justices--on grounds that they were involved in developing the state's position before they were appointed--was granted. We expect two retired justices will be appointed in their places, giving us the same Court that

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OFFICE OF SECRETARY

## SCHOOL CHOICE UPDATE

September 22, 1997

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decided the favorable 1993 *Campbell* decision. In Wisconsin and Ohio, we await official word that the courts will hear the cases, followed by a briefing schedule. Groups interested in joining an *amicus* brief should contact Jeanne Allen at the Center for Education Reform, which once again is coordinating *amicus* support (thanks, Jeanne!). In Maine, we are about to file a motion for summary judgment. The ACLU has moved to intervene, which we are opposing. In Arizona, we await an imminent legal challenge to the scholarship tax credit statute from the Arizona Education Association. We will represent several low-income families along with a prominent taxpayer, namely Jeffrey Flake of the Goldwater Institute. It promises to be a very busy future!



October 30, 1997  
(House)

## STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

(THIS STATEMENT HAS BEEN COORDINATED BY OMB WITH THE CONCERNED AGENCIES.)

### **H.R. 2616 - Charter Schools Amendments Act of 1997** (Reps. Riggs (R) CA and Roemer (D) IN)

The Administration supports House passage of H.R. 2616, but has concerns about provisions in the bill that would extend, from three years to five years, the period for which Federal assistance could be provided to individual charter schools.

The Administration understands that the rule for consideration of H.R. 2616 provides that the text of H.R. 2746, the Helping Empower Low-income Parents (HELP) Scholarships Amendments of 1997, be added to H.R. 2616 in the engrossment of the bill. Under H.R. 2746, States and local school districts could provide vouchers for basic instruction in private schools using funds that are otherwise available for the supplementary costs of education reform under Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. If H.R. 2616 is amended to include this bill, the President's senior advisers would recommend that the bill be vetoed. Federal funding of private school vouchers is bad policy because it would divert needed attention and resources from the Nation's public schools, which serve approximately 90 percent of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

October 30, 1997  
(House)

## STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

(THIS STATEMENT HAS BEEN COORDINATED BY OMB WITH THE CONCERNED AGENCIES.)

**H.R. 2746 - Helping Empower Low-income Parents (HELP)**  
**Scholarships Amendments of 1997**  
(Rep. Riggs (R) CA and 11 others)

The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 2746. If the bill were presented to the President, his senior advisers would recommend that the bill be vetoed. Under H.R. 2746, States and local school districts could provide vouchers for basic instruction in private schools, using funds that are otherwise available for the supplementary costs of education reform under Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Federal funding of private school vouchers is bad policy because it would divert needed attention and resources from the Nation's public schools, which serve approximately 90 percent of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

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October 28, 1997  
(House)

**H.R. 2616 – Charter Schools Amendments Act of 1997**  
(Reps. Riggs (R) CA and Roemer (D) IN)

The Administration supports House passage of H.R. 2616, but has concerns about provisions in the bill that would extend, from three years to five years, the period for which Federal assistance could be provided to individual charter schools.

The Administration understands that an amendment may be offered to add the text of H.R. 2724, the Helping Empower Low-income Parents (HELP) Scholarships Amendments of 1997, to H.R. 2616. Under H.R. 2724, States and local school districts could provide vouchers for basic instruction in private schools using funds that are otherwise available for the supplementary costs of education reform under Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. If H.R. 2616 is amended to include this bill, the President's senior advisers would recommend that the bill be vetoed. Federal funding of private school vouchers is bad because it would divert needed attention and resources from the Nation's public schools, which serve approximately 90 percent of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

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Constance J. Bowers  
10/27/97 04:06:09 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message  
cc: James C. Murr/OMB/EOP, Janet R. Forsgren/OMB/EOP  
Subject: Draft SAP on HR 2724 -- School Vouchers

Attached is draft SAP language for HR 2724. Per the Department of Education's recommendation, the draft SAP states that **the President's senior advisers would recommend that the President veto the bill, if he were presented to him.** [Last week, OMB cleared an ED letter to the H. Committee containing a Secretarial veto threat. The Committee markup was postponed, and ED did not send up its letter.]

ED reports that HR 2724 could come to the Floor this week without going through Committee markup. Alternatively, the bill could be attached to HR 2616, Charter Schools Expansion, which is scheduled for consideration by the House. ED recommends that the draft SAP language attached below be inserted into the SAP on HR 2616 if the voucher language is attached to the Charter Schools bill.

Please provide any comments **by 10:00 a.m., tomorrow, Tuesday, Oct. 28th.**



hr2724#2.sap

Message Sent To:

Mary I. Cassell/OMB/EOP  
Wayne Upshaw/OMB/EOP  
Barry White/OMB/EOP  
Robert M. Shireman/OPD/EOP  
Michael Cohen/OPD/EOP  
William R. Kincaid/OPD/EOP  
Ananias Blocker III/WHO/EOP  
Lisa M. Kountoupes/OMB/EOP  
Alice E. Shuffield/OMB/EOP  
Jonathan H. Schnur/OVP @ OVP

**DRAFT -- NOT FOR RELEASE**

October , 1997  
(House)

**H.R. 2724 - Helping Empower Low-income Parents (HELP)**  
**Scholarships Amendments of 1997**  
**(Rep. Riggs (R) CA and 11 others)**

The Administration opposes H.R. 2724. If the bill is presented to the President, the President's senior advisers would recommend that he veto it. Under H.R. 2724, States and local school districts could provide vouchers for basic instruction in private schools using funds that are otherwise available for the supplementary costs of education reform under Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Federal funding of private school vouchers is bad policy because it would divert needed attention and resources from our public schools, which serve approximately 90 percent of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

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Constance J. Bowers  
10/28/97 11:37:30 AM

Record Type: Record

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

cc:

Subject: REVISED SAP on HR 2616 - Charter Schools

The draft SAP below has been revised for H. Floor to address the possibility of a Floor amendment to insert the text of HR 2724 (school vouchers). Therefore, it states that if such an amendment is attached to HR 2616 (charter schools), **the President's senior advisers would recommend that he veto the bill.**

Please let me know **by 4:00 p.m. today, Tuesday, if you agree with this SAP.** (The bill could reach the Floor tomorrow.)



hr2616h#.sap

Message Sent To:

Mary I. Cassell/OMB/EOP  
Wayne Upshaw/OMB/EOP  
Barry White/OMB/EOP  
Robert M. Shireman/OPD/EOP  
Michael Cohen/OPD/EOP  
William R. Kincaid/OPD/EOP  
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Lisa M. Kountoupes/OMB/EOP  
Alice E. Shuffield/OMB/EOP  
Ananias Blocker III/WHO/EOP  
Daniel J. Chenok/OMB/EOP

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 30, 1997

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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Outside the Oval Office

10:00 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. I have said that I had no higher priority than getting our children the best education in the world in the 21st century, and that to achieve that politics must stop at the schoolhouse door. I'm committed to making sure every 8-year-old can read, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old can go on to college, every adult can continue to learn through a lifetime. And we have made significant progress in our efforts to strengthen, improve and hold more accountable public education.

As Congress continues to debate the education bill this fall it's become clear that there are some who are waging an effort to undermine our commitment to public education and our public schools. First, the Senate has passed an amendment that would virtually close the Department of Education and abolish some of its most successful efforts to expand school choice and charter schools, to bring computers to every classroom, to create more safe and drug-free schools.

Second, the House of Representatives has actually voted to prevent our country from setting high standards of academic excellence with voluntary national tests to ensure that every child masters the basics in reading and math. I will veto any legislation that damages our commitment to public education and to high national standards. I am pleased that our effort on standards has received strong bipartisan support in the Senate and I intend to continue this fight for as long as it takes.

Third, in a vote to occur today, some in Congress would diminish our country's commitment to public education by siphoning badly needed funds away from our public schools into a voucher program that would support private academies for a very limited number of students.

Ninety percent of our children in America attend public schools. Our public schools do face a host of challenges. Every city especially faces problems with large numbers of poor children

and often old facilities and other difficult challenges. But the answer, the answer is to put competition, change, excellence, accountability back into the public school system, not to take limited funds away from it.

The District of Columbia has some very good public schools and others that are not performing as well as they should. We can have more competition there and more options for parents and children without abandoning the schools through public school choice and greater use of charter schools. I have worked very hard on these things for the last several years and will continue to support them.

But instead of abandoning our schools, we should continue to support proven reform efforts, including getting more parents involved, improving teaching, getting drugs out of the schools, getting more discipline in the schools, raising the

standards so that we can hold teachers and principals, schools and students accountable.

Public schools are the cornerstone of our democracy. We have always recognized our common responsibility for preparing all our young children for the challenges of the future. I call upon Congress to challenge our public schools, to change our public schools, but not to walk away from them.

Thank you.

Q Mr. President, what are your concerns about a credibility or confidence crisis for the IRS, and what do you think about this Republican idea for an independent board for oversight?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, I think some very important things came out of those hearings to which the IRS has to respond. There has been some response already. But let me back up a little bit and say we have been working to professionalize, not to politicize, the IRS for the last several years. I signed the Taxpayer Bill of Rights about a year and a half ago. We established an IRS modernization board to improve technology and customer service.

One of the things that I asked my staff to find out for me after the hearings were held is, how many of the abuses that were reported occurred before the Taxpayer Bill of Rights was passed, how many if they occurred after the Taxpayer Bill of Rights was passed were a violation of those law's requirements, and then, where are we going to go from here -- that's the most important thing.

For quite a long while now, the Vice President and Secretary Rubin have been working on a project, part of the Vice President's National Performance Review, to change and improve the IRS, and Secretary Rubin will have some more to say about that later. But we believe that we have to respond to what was said.

There were some difficult issues posed, and you have pointed out some of them in your reporting. But I think that we should continue to press ahead with change. But I think it's very important that all the American people have confidence that they're going to be treated fairly and that taxes will be collected in a fair, nondiscriminatory and nonburdensome manner, and that we will not have any kind of abuse there. And so we intend to push ahead

Q But are you concerned that the government's tax collecting agency faces credibility and confidence problems because of the specter of those hearings?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think they raised some legitimate points that ought to be responded to. I believe the IRS is functioning better today than it was five years ago. I think it has to improve more. And I think we should not try to sweep any of these problems under the rug. I follow the hearings with great interest, and I am glad to see that there has been some action based on the evidence that was adduced at the hearings already, and there will be more. But I think it's also important to know that we have done a lot of things to try to make the IRS more accountable, more professional. We can do more. We should not politicize it, and we should not do anything that will in any way call into question whether it's being even-handed or fair in the future.

Thank you.

END

10:07 A.M. EDT



Remarks by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

**What Really Matters in American Education**  
**National Press Club, Washington, D.C.**  
**September 23, 1997**

Good morning. I am pleased to be back in Washington after completing the first leg of my annual 'America Goes Back to School' campaign. In the last few weeks, I have visited with parents and teachers and students in about a dozen states from Alaska to Florida including Wyoming, Colorado, and Ohio.

I find these trips very worthwhile. I always come back to Washington with a much better sense of what really matters and what is really going on in the classroom. I want to make some comments about my impressions and then speak to several of the issues in the background paper that we are releasing today entitled, 'What Really Matters'.

One of the strongest impressions I have is that we have some very crowded schools. Right now we have 52.2 million young people in our schools, a new national record. I was in Florida on Thursday and Friday, and I can tell you that the school construction issue is alive and kicking. I believe the Congress needs to revisit this issue within a balanced budget framework.

A second impression is that a new American consensus has now developed about how to improve education. It has taken us over a decade since Ted Bell issued his report, "*A Nation at Risk*" to develop this consensus but every where I go I see the core elements of this consensus being put in place.

There is a growing emphasis, for example, on early childhood and the importance of pre-k and kindergarten for all children. I attended the President's Conference on Brain Research last year and I can tell you that the research is really galvanizing people.

A second element is a commitment to high standards linked to challenging assessments. The American people recognize that progress is only going to happen if we make sure that every child has mastered the basics once and for all. That's the third element; a clear focus on the fundamentals. This is a very conservative idea so it always surprises me that some on the right attack the President's proposal for voluntary national tests in the basics of reading and math. As W. Edwards Deming, a leading management expert said, "You can't improve something you can't measure."

The President is on a national crusade to lift up American education starting with these two basics. This is why 79 % of all Americans support these voluntary national tests according to the latest Wall Street Journal poll, and why the American people have made education the number one issue that should concern the federal government.

I believe that the two voluntary national tests in reading and math coupled with our strong investment in education can shake-up the status-quo and help drive American education forward.

As I travel around the country I see four other elements to this new education consensus falling into place. These include a stronger focus on more parental involvement; teacher quality; a greater investment in technology; and growing recognition -- even among young people -- that taking the tough core courses pays off.

Another element to this consensus is the willingness of school leaders to get on with job when it comes to turning around failing schools. We know how to fix failing schools, and we have a new and tougher breed of superintendents who are willing to hold people accountable; Paul Vallas in Chicago, Rudy Crew in New York City, Bill Rojas in San Francisco, David Hornbeck in Philadelphia -- just to name a few -- are all 'no nonsense' leaders who are committed to turning around failing schools, ending social promotion and raising standards.

They are not willing to put up with mediocrity or failure and neither am I. If a school is failing, don't let it drift. You have to be willing to close it down or reconstitute it. If a principal is slow to get the message, superintendents and school boards need to be willing to replace them.

If teachers are burnt out, counsel them to leave the profession in a fair but speedy process or make sure they get the extra help they need from master teachers -- what educators call peer review. We know how to fix failing schools, and as this report indicates, there are school districts that are making things happen.

The new American consensus on how to improve education is a pragmatic, mainstream consensus, and we are starting to see steady and positive results. Math and science scores have been rising for a decade. SAT scores are up, particularly in math, and ACT scores have gone up in four of the last five years. And one-third of this year's college freshmen class took Advanced Placement courses.

Public education is beginning to improve. We are not where we want to be, but we are headed in the right direction. This is why we need to stay focused on what really matters and not get side-tracked by divisive issues like vouchers. Let's remember that almost 90% of all of our young people go to public schools and the great majority of our public schools are successful.

I can tell you this -- if you gave the American people a choice today between using federal dollars to renovate and build new public schools or using public tax dollars to pay for private school vouchers there would be no question how the American people would vote.

It could cost roughly \$15 billion just to pay the tuition of the 5 million children already enrolled in private schools in this nation. The last thing we should be doing at a time when so many of our schools are bursting at their seams is to be draining public tax dollars from public education to subsidize private education.

The President in his Saturday radio address indicated his determination to veto any legislation that includes the Gorton Amendment on block granting or the Goodling Amendment that would block the voluntary national tests. I will also urge the President to veto any legislation that includes the DC voucher proposal now moving through Congress or the Coverdell IRA proposal -- which is a voucher by another name.

I am not satisfied with the status-quo when it comes to public education, but I will not stand by and see public education run down every chance that some people get. The American people believe in public education and that's where they want to make the improvements.

This is why the President has made education his top priority and why he released \$40 million in charter schools grants last Saturday. Charter schools are creative schools that are making things happen but they are still public schools that are accountable.

Vouchers are wrong for many reasons and we need to be clear about what is at stake. Vouchers undermine a 200 year American commitment to the common school -- a commitment that has helped America keep faith with our democratic ideals and become a beacon of light for people all over the world.

Let's remember that public education has always been and continues to be the open door to American success and good citizenship -- the American way to achievement and freedom. Vouchers would begin the unraveling of this uniquely American fabric -- the common public school that is open to all and gives everyone a fair chance to succeed.

Every state in this nation provides for a free, public education and a great majority of them have written this idea into their state constitution. The ideal that every child in this country has a constitutional right to a free, public education is not to be dismissed lightly. I do not think that voucher proponents have thought long and hard about the very negative consequences of 'balkanizing' public education.

The background paper we are releasing today notes that vouchers would reduce public accountability and make private schools less private and less independent -- and make parochial schools less parochial.

There is little certainty that religious schools that now make up 79% of all private schools would be willing to give up their religious mission in order to overcome constitutional barriers. The paper also notes that private schools simply do not have the capacity to absorb additional students, much less those children with special disabilities.

I worry, too, that those who support vouchers have become almost myopic in their insistence that public education is failing across-the-board. Tell that to the parents in Montgomery County, or in Louisville, Kentucky or in Charlotte, North Carolina or in countless school districts across the country where parents and community leaders support public education.

Two years ago, *Money* magazine did a survey of the top 100 school districts in the country. The survey found out that the two defining factors that led to the creation of what *Money* magazine called "super schools" were community and family involvement, not income or family status. Vouchers, on the other hand, divide communities.

The background paper also provides research evidence -- and this is very important -- that the most important choice students can make is not the type of school they go to -- public or private -- but the academic courses they take.

This is the first choice that parents should be making -- making sure their children take the tough academic courses like algebra, geometry, chemistry and other core courses. This is why I am always perplexed that voucher advocates almost never talk about how to improve reading, how to improve teaching, how to raise academic standards or how to fix crumbling schools.

Their solution for every issue that confronts American education is vouchers. It is a very simplistic world view -- a silver bullet solution -- and it is just dead wrong. If a school is failing the solution isn't to give scholarships to 50 children and leave 500 behind, but to fix the whole school.

The current \$7 million DC voucher initiative in Congress, which offers vouchers for 2,000 low income D.C. public school students, is a case in point. It targets 2,000 children and leaves another 75,000 behind. Is this fair?

If Congress has an additional \$7 million to spend on education in the District, let me tell you how it could be spent. You can spend it to support additional reading programs. We have already recruited 450 work-study college students from six local colleges to be reading tutors. Or you can spend it and help a lot more young people get ahead. Let me tell you how.

Under my proposal \$3.5 million would be used to match up 58 schools with proven education reformers like Robert Slavin's 'Success for All' program at John Hopkins University -- the New American Schools effort -- or the Laboratory for Success at Temple University.

These are programs with a solid track record that are specifically designed to turn around failing inner schools. This effort would impact 29,000 District children -- not 2,000 children -- but 29,000 children. Each of these programs is based on solid research that will help local schools redesign themselves with a program of high academic standards, professional teacher development, and real parent involvement.

We need to respect home rule here in the District and let every parent in D.C. know that all of their children deserve the best education possible. Our challenge is not to help 2,000 students move out, but to help all 78,000 students in the District move-up academically.

My proposal would also set aside \$3.5 million to support 70 new after-school programs in the public schools to help 7,000 children. The FBI tells us that the after-school hours -- from 3 pm to 6 pm -- are the most dangerous for children. Let's give these young people safe-havens where they can be safe and get the extra tutoring help they need.

Does public education need to be improved? Of course it does and there is a consensus about how it can be done. Public tax dollars ought to be spent to improve reading and math, to improve the skills of America's teachers, to get computers into the classroom, to renovate and build new schools -- to make sure that high school diplomas really mean something.

I believe that if we focus in on what we agree on and what really matters rather than on what divides us -- we can make the next ten years the 'golden era' of American education. The American people have made the improvement of public education a national priority. We know how to fix our schools. Now is the time to roll-up our sleeves and get it done.

**Q. Yesterday's New York Times reported a very favorable evaluation of the Cleveland school voucher program. The Administration is opposed to vouchers. Has this study caused you to reassess your views?**

**A.** No, for several reasons.

First, the New York Times article is misleading. The "evaluation" findings it reports are not from the official, independent state evaluation being conducted by Indiana University, and whose first report is not scheduled to be released for several weeks.

Second, this study actually focuses on students in only 2 of the 41 schools participating in the Cleveland voucher program -- only 15% of the students involved in the voucher program. These two schools are resource-intensive, run by avowed pro-voucher advocates, and are not typical of the other private schools participating in the program.

Further, the study relies on questionable analysis techniques. For example, it uses questionable testing procedures and fails to take into account the background or prior achievement of the voucher students.

Third, our opposition to vouchers is based as much on what happens to students who do not participate as on what may happen to the few who do. The fact is that 90% of our students attend public schools, and our primary responsibility, especially with limited federal resources, is to make sure that the public schools they attend are among the best in the world. This means concentrating our time and money on raising academic standards, improving teaching, providing schools with technology and other up-to-date learning tools, and creating charter schools and other forms of choice within the public school system. It means holding schools accountable for the results they achieve -- something fundamentally impossible to do with private schools which are, by design, unaccountable to the public. Instead, vouchers drain financial resources and energy away from our most important task -- improving our public schools.

**Questions and Answers on School Vouchers**  
**September 23, 1997**

**Q: While integration was the civil rights issue of the 50's and 60's, some African Americans (such as Martin Luther King Jr.'s daughter) see vouchers as the civil rights issue of the 90's. What is the administration's position on vouchers in DC?**

**A:** The Administration strongly opposes any legislation allowing the use of federal taxpayer funds for vouchers, including in D.C.

We need to focus on strengthening the public schools that serve the vast majority of students and expanding choice within the public education system, such as through charter schools.

Vouchers would siphon critical dollars from neighborhood public schools that are already short on resources in order to send a few selected students to private schools, and would distract attention from the hard work of reform needed to change failing schools into good schools and good schools into outstanding schools.

**Q: Doesn't the failure of the DC schools to manage so basic a task as opening the schools on time call into question the capacity of the school system here to improve? Shouldn't vouchers be allowed here at least?**

**A:** The delay in opening the DC schools has been very unfortunate. However, vouchers would do nothing to speed the process of repairing DC schools, and would accomplish nothing for the vast majority of students who will continue to attend these schools. In fact, vouchers would divert attention and resources away from the public schools and the hard task of reforming them. We need to confront the real problems that the DC school system has -- by raising standards, putting into place effective reform strategies, and holding students, teachers, and schools accountable for their performance. Establishing vouchers in DC would set a dangerous precedent for using taxpayer funds to support schools that are unaccountable to the public.

**Q: A Harvard University study recently found that students participating in Cleveland's school voucher program performed very well. Has this study caused you to reassess your views?**

**A:** No. First, the study is quite limited: it focuses on students in only 2 of the 41 schools participating in the Cleveland voucher program --and these schools are unusually well-funded.

More important, my opposition to vouchers is based more on what happens to students who do not participate in a voucher program as on what may happen to the few who do. The fact is that 90% of our students attend public schools, and our primary responsibility, especially with limited federal resources, is to make sure that the public schools they attend are among the best in the world. This means concentrating our time and money on raising academic standards, improving teaching, providing schools with technology and other up-to-date learning tools, and creating charter schools and other forms of choice within the public school system. Vouchers only drain financial resources and energy away from our most important task -- improving our public schools.

# House Panel Passes D.C. Bill With Vouchers, Without Cuts

By Vernon Loeb  
Washington Post Staff Writer

The House Appropriations Committee agreed yesterday to drop a \$300 million spending cut from the \$4.2 billion D.C. appropriations bill but refused to remove numerous other highly controversial riders, including one creating a school voucher program in the District.

The bill now goes to the full House, where a fierce partisan debate is expected next week over the voucher provision, which would provide public subsidies of up to \$3,200 a year that as many as 2,000 D.C. schoolchildren could use for tuition at public or private schools.

The Senate is expected to debate an identical voucher provision today, with Congress fashioning a temporary spending measure to fund the District through Oct. 21, when GOP leaders from both houses believe a final spending plan can be put in place.

In the House, Democrats took little solace in having helped persuade Rep. Charles H. Taylor (R-N.C.), chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee on the District, to remove his provision man-

dating a \$300 million spending cut in fiscal 1998, which begins tomorrow.

Rep. James P. Moran Jr. (D-Va.), the subcommittee's ranking Democrat, said that even without the \$300 million spending cut, the legislation reached new heights in micro-managing the District. He predicted a veto by President Clinton, should a measure emerge from a House-Senate conference committee.

Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) called the committee's vote a "charade" and said in an interview afterward that Taylor and Republicans on the committee should have backed a consensus budget sent to Capitol Hill by Mayor Marion Barry, the D.C. Council and the D.C. financial control board.

Norton said that it was "disgraceful" for House GOP leaders to have decided weeks ago to allow the fiscal year to begin without a D.C. budget in place so that Republicans could use the city's appropriations bill as a vehicle to advance school vouchers, limits on punitive damage awards to plaintiffs in medical malpractice lawsuits and other conservative causes.

Moran noted during committee debate that the District's budget bill included 62 riders, such as provisions that would reopen Pennsylvania

Aviation and prohibit private helicopter rides over the District. Rep. David R. Obey (D-Wis.), the committee's ranking Democrat, added that he had "never seen an effort on the part of the Congress to so micro-manage any unit of government."

But the committee's Republican majority was unmoved by those arguments, rejecting an attempt by Moran to substitute the Senate Appropriations Committee's D.C. budget bill—which contains no riders—for the House version crafted by Taylor.

"This subcommittee has finally taken the opportunity to be bold," said Rep. James T. Walsh (R-N.Y.), Taylor's predecessor as subcommittee chairman. "Everyone in the country knows what's happening to this city. It's time that the Congress stood up and took its responsibility."

After defeating Moran's amend-

ment, Taylor and his GOP colleagues chose only to remove the \$300 million spending cut, a mandate for a 10 percent cut in all D.C. workers and a residence requirement that would have forced all D.C. employees to live in the city.

Those deletions were part of a so-called manager's amendment offered by Taylor that he and other Republicans argued was necessary to provide tax relief in the city and quicken the pace of reform. Among other things, Taylor's amendment requires that all tax revenue that exceeds projections in the coming fiscal year be used to lower taxes in the city.

It also mandates that all savings produced by management reforms go toward further reductions in the city's long-term debt.

Finally, the Taylor amendment approved yesterday changes substantial-



BY DAYNA SMITH—THE WASHINGTON POST

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bob Livingston (R-La.), left, talks to Rep. Charles H. Taylor (R-N.C.), chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee on the District.

ly the city's plan for allocating a \$235 million surplus expected in the coming fiscal year as a result of President Clinton's D.C. rescue package.

Barry, the D.C. Council and the control board had allocated \$202 million of the surplus for debt reduction, \$30 million to support management

reforms and \$3.5 million to support a \$50 million bond sale for capital projects.

But Taylor's amendment appropriates only \$5 million for management reform, earmarking \$200 million for debt reduction and \$30 million for school and road repairs.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1997

## Vouchers May Open Few Doors

### D.C. Students Would Find Costs High and Openings Scarce

By Cindy Loose and Valerie Strauss  
Washington Post Staff Writers

Sen. Dan Coats (R-Ind.) told colleagues that he was disheartened by the "squandered potential" of poor children in D.C. public schools but that he had something "immediately helpful and hopeful" to offer. Vouchers for \$3,200, he urged last week, would allow nearly 2,000 children to attend public and private schools throughout the Washington area.

But there is a question about how much choice those vouchers would buy.

Suburban public schools charge out-of-

county students about three times as much as the voucher payments provide, and many have no extra room.

The vast majority of secular private schools—and many religious schools—also charge much more than \$3,200, and students must compete for openings.

Most schools that are affordable are Catholic elementary schools. Yet even parochial schools are full in the Virginia and Maryland suburbs, though the Archdiocese of Washington has empty seats in the District's 16 inner-city schools. Moreover, opponents of vouchers

See VOUCHERS, A12, Col. 1

#### VOUCHERS, From A1

say they will challenge in court any move to allow public money to be spent in religious schools.

If the opponents are successful, as they have been elsewhere in the country, that would leave little choice.

The Senate is scheduled to vote today on a measure to cut off debate and force a vote on the voucher amendment, which is tacked on to the D.C. appropriations bill. Yesterday, the House Appropriations Committee approved its D.C. spending bill, which includes the voucher proposal, and sent it to the House floor for a vote next week.

Opponents say they expect the voucher measure to pass the House but are unsure what will happen in the Senate.

The diametrically opposed philosophies dividing voucher opponents and proponents promise a continued debate. But there are indications that a voucher system would provide fewer options for students in public and private schools than proponents contend.

Without massive subsidies and the sudden appearance of empty desks, suburban public schools would remain off limits to most voucher-holders.

"Our schools are filled to the brim, and some are overcrowded," said Lisa Farbstein, of the Arlington schools.

County school systems also have high tuition. Elementary-age children who live outside Arlington County are charged \$9,866 to attend schools there; secondary students are charged \$10,785. For special education, the county spends \$13,416 to \$25,900 per student, Farbstein said, and would charge a similar amount to outsiders.

Montgomery County schools have few empty desks, said spokeswoman Kate Harrison, and \$3,200 would not buy even a half-day of kindergarten in county schools. Asked whether the county might make up the difference between the voucher and the \$7,484 spent annually on each secondary student, she said, "I don't see why or how."

In Prince George's County, out-of-state students are charged \$5,167 for elementary school and \$5,570 for secondary school. Tuition waivers sometimes are granted on a case-by-case basis, a spokesman said.

Erik Hotmire, a spokesman for Coats, said a congressional survey found six private secular and 54 religious schools in the Washington area that charge \$3,200 or less. But his data was gathered from the Independent Schools Guide for the 1995-96 school year, and tuition at many schools has increased since then.

Asked to identify the six secular schools that charge no more than \$3,200, Richard Diamond, press secretary for House Majority Leader Richard K. Arney (R-Tex.), pointed to two: Roots Activity Learning Center and the Nation House of Watoto. Both are small, African-centered schools in the District.

A spokeswoman at Roots said not a single seat was available. The Nation House of Watoto, which has about 90 students from nursery school through 12th grade, has some openings.

Diamond said that prices had gone up at the four other secular schools identified by voucher advocates but that they are "still in the ballpark." One of them, Little People's Paradise in the District, now costs \$3,400, he said. At the three Virginia schools initially identified—all Montessori schools—prices "went up a lot," he said. No secular schools that charge \$3,200 or less have been found in Maryland.

Hotmire said that even if the voucher does not cover the full cost of tuition, "people or schools manage to come up with the difference."

Full vouchers would be available only to students with family incomes below the poverty line, \$16,036 for a family of four last year. Partial vouchers—a maximum of \$2,400—would be available to students in families with incomes below 185 percent of the poverty line.

Fifteen percent of children in the area already attend private schools, mostly parochial. Most private schools do not go beyond eighth grade, and there are fewer slots available in private high schools. The most prestigious cost about \$14,000. Among the 80 schools belonging to the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington,

the median price is \$10,075 for elementary and \$12,800 for secondary schools.

The association has taken no position on vouchers, according to Executive Director Ritalou Harris, who said, "Lots of money needs to be provided before the voucher is meaningful." She noted that schools in the association already raise \$26 million a year in financial aid for 4,700 students to whom they are committed until graduation.

Even at parochial schools, there are issues of cost and crowding.

"Trying to accommodate more kids is a real concern this year," said Lawrence Callahan, superintendent of schools for the Catholic Archdiocese of Washington. In suburban Maryland, the archdiocese has waiting lists, although in the District's inner city, enrollment ranges from just over 50 percent of capacity to 95 percent.

Tuition varies from less than \$2,000 to as much as \$12,995.

In June, one day before they proposed the voucher program, Sens. Coats and Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.) invited reporters on a tour of the Nannie Helen Burroughs School in far Northeast. It was to be an example of the excellence that would be available to D.C. students with vouchers.

But Principal Shirley G. Hayea, a retired D.C. principal, said last week that she had concerns about the voucher program and that she wondered how many schools could make a go of it by charging only \$3,200 per pupil.

Most of her teachers are retired from D.C. schools, and she can afford to pay them only \$17,000 a year. "Isn't that awful?" she said.

Thanks to the low salaries and free space provided by the Progressive National Baptist Convention, tuition at the school is just \$3,400. But the budget is so "bare-bones," Hayea said, that she would be unable to accept anyone with \$200 less than that unless a benefactor could make up the difference.

She was surprised that her school was being held up as a model for the voucher program but said it was valuable for important people to meet her bright, articulate boys and girls.

"The two congressmen in question had never been this far out in Northeast Washington," she said. "It was good for them to see."

# The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

## *The Voucher Issue*

**B**OTH HOUSE and Senate will be called upon to vote in connection with this year's appropriations process on a proposal to give a limited number of vouchers to children seeking to opt out of the D.C. public school system. The vouchers could be cashed at private schools or in the suburbs.

The fight is a national one in which the city has become, without quite willing it, part testing ground, part political trophy. The national battle in turn has taken on an ideological resonance having to do with public vs. private services, the role of public employee unions and much else, extending well beyond the schools.

The main arguments have become familiar. Proponents say that vouchers, by creating a buyer's market and competition, will prod the public schools to get better, lest the families they are meant to serve abandon them. What seems to the other side as already an abandonment they describe as a way of reenergizing what is now a monopoly, and as an instrument of reform. They make a fairness argument as well. The better-off already exercise choice by moving to the suburbs or shifting to private schools; means-tested voucher such as contemplated here would put lower-income families on a similar footing.

The arguments against are that the public funds should be spent to improve the public schools; that to spend them instead to help students leave those schools is wrong and will in the long run do more harm than any good; and that vouchers create an instant church-state problem. No matter that the money is filtered through parents, much of it still will end up as federal aid to sectarian schools at one remove.

The president says that for all these reasons he will veto a bill containing the vouchers. The fight becomes all the more symbolic—a matter of gesture all around—if you assume such a veto would be sustained. In fact, it's unclear this proposal could pass a church-state court test. If it did, however, it might

be worth at least a cautious, provisional try. You balance risks in a case such as this—the risk that the vouchers could do harm against the risk of walking away from a plan that could do some good. We don't agree that this limited plan is powerful enough to have the effect on the school system—create the healthy competition—that its sponsors describe. But maybe it would produce some of that; we would find out. In the meantime, it isn't clear that it would do the damage that its detractors predict, either. Both sides may be inflating this one.

What it would do, while we waited to see the rest, is give 2,000 children a year an alternative they currently lack. Some would use their vouchers wisely, others possibly not. We would have a chance as well to test the commitment of those who favor vouchers to supporting the city system at the same time. The people who sneer at the District school system as if it were everywhere ineffectual are wrong, and some of them sound as if they are rather reveling in this misconception too, for unworthy political reasons. It is not all as innocent as it is made to look. Of course, the system needs to be shaken up; which school system of its kind in the country doesn't? The District also has its strong schools, principals and teachers alongside the weak, a fact too widely ignored. A modest voucher experiment might help energize the public schools. It won't replace them. People who think of vouchers as a way somehow of evading the responsibility for public education are blowing smoke. And such a program, we believe, will not do harm to the system or by implication suggest that it is a permanent loser. As we say, the schools in this city do not present one solid, bleak picture such as the political critics sometimes paint. The point—the hope—would be that such an experiment could be one small part of the effort being undertaken with vigor and optimism by the new school team to bring the District system to a higher, more even standard of achievement, one that reflects the quality of our best schools, which are the models.

*Final*

# **What Really Matters in American Education**

White Paper prepared for  
U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley  
for speech at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C.

September 23, 1997

U.S. Department of Education

## **PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DEMOCRACY, AND FREE ENTERPRISE**

Quality public schools are the foundation of a democracy and a free enterprise economic system. The public school concept is fundamentally American: most of the fifty U.S. states have a provision in their state constitution for free, public education. These statutes reflect a commitment to the idea that all children, regardless of their academic readiness, race, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, or special education needs, have equal access to a quality K-12 education, and a chance to develop to their maximum potential. State constitutions describe this most essential purpose as:

"A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools." (Texas)

"The General Assembly shall provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth, and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained." (Virginia)

"It is the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person...The legislature shall provide a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools." (Montana)

Therein lies the power of the American system of education — it is truly *public*. The "common school" — the concept upon which our public school system was built — teaches children important lessons about both the commonality and diversity of American culture. These lessons are conveyed not only through what is taught in the classroom, but by the very experience of attending school with a diverse mix of students. The common school has made quality public education and hard work the open door to American success and good citizenship and the American way to achievement and freedom.

## **VOUCHERS THREATEN THE FUNDAMENTAL MISSION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Using public tax dollars for private school vouchers fundamentally undermines 200 years of public education in America. As Neil Postman has suggested in his book The End of Education, "...public education does not serve the public. It creates the public. And in creating the right kind of public, the schools contribute toward strengthening the spiritual basis of the American Creed. That is how Jefferson understood it, how Horace Mann understood it, how John Dewey understood it." Private school vouchers strike at this ideal because they would:

- **Divert attention from the need to improve the public schools.** Providing private school vouchers for a few children will not help to improve the quality of education for most of America's children. Expanded choice in public schools through magnet schools and charter schools, coupled with a focus on the basics, increased parent involvement, improved teaching, and high standards for achievement and discipline, can do far more to improve the education of all children than private school vouchers for a few. The purpose of any school improvement idea should be to invite effective innovation in more schools, particularly those schools that are lagging behind.
- **Add to the public cost of education.** A voucher system would substantially increase the public cost of education by providing public funds to pay private school tuition for children who are already enrolled in private schools. If a voucher program open to all students were implemented today, it would cost American taxpayers over \$15 billion to pay the tuitions of the 5 million students already enrolled in private schools.<sup>1</sup> This enormous cost would drain resources from public schools at the same time that billions of dollars are needed just to accommodate the 1.9 million additional students projected to be enrolled in public schools in 2007<sup>2</sup> [NCES, *The Condition of Education*, 1997].
- **Reduce accountability.** Vouchers could create a situation at the elementary/secondary school level analogous to that at the postsecondary level; in the last four years, 700 for-profit schools in our nation's higher education system were removed from the federal loan program by the U.S. Department of Education because of their misuse of federal tax dollars. Private schools operate outside of the scope of public authority, and therefore have no public accountability for providing a quality education to all students.
- **Force private and parochial schools to become less private and less parochial.** If a systemwide voucher program were adopted, the influx of public dollars into these unregulated schools would result in increased pressure for greater public scrutiny and accountability for these public expenditures. Quality private and parochial schools are valuable parts of the educational variety in our democracy, and these pressures would ultimately interfere with their unique missions and curricula.
- **Possibly violate State and U.S. Constitutions.** Using public tax dollars to pay tuition at religious schools could violate the constitutional separation of church and state. Indeed, publicly funded voucher programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland have been legally challenged for their inclusion of religious schools in their programs, as judges in both Wisconsin and Ohio have ruled that the participation of religious schools violates federal and state constitutional provisions barring government aid to religious institutions. Voucher program advocates in both states have consistently appealed these decisions to higher courts, but no court has yet to overturn this basic ruling.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on average private school tuition of \$3,116 in 1993-94.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated total additional costs in 2007 (in constant 1995-96 dollars).

Expanding the options available to students and families is a worthy goal, as long as this is not done in a way that undermines a quality education for all children. But private school vouchers are too small, too costly, and too divisive to have any potential for improving the public school system.

## IMPACT OF VOUCHERS ON SCHOOLING

A voucher program which served a substantial number of public school students would suffer from serious implementation problems related to private schools' capacity and mission, and would violate basic principles of equity and a quality education for all students. Specifically:

- **Private schools have little capacity to absorb a substantial number of additional students.** According to a California study, less than 1 percent of public school students in that state could expect to find spaces in existing private schools. [Corwin and Dianda, "What Can We Really Expect from Large-Scale Voucher Programs," Phi Delta Kappan, 1993] The study found that most private schools that were interested in participating in a voucher program were already operating at 85 percent or more of their capacity. Although some private schools might be created or expanded, a voucher system would do little or nothing to address the needs for educating the 89 percent of students in public schools (46.5 million students).
- **Most private schools are religious in nature, and few are likely to give up their religious mission in order to overcome constitutional barriers to receiving public funds.** Religious schools account for 79 percent of all private schools and 85 percent of private school students. A recent survey found that most associations of religious schools believe their schools would not participate in a voucher program if they were required to permit exemptions from religious instruction for students transferring from public schools [Muraskin et al., Barriers, Benefits, and Costs of Using Private Schools to Alleviate Overcrowding in Public Schools: Preliminary Report, 1997]. In addition, government officials should not be expected to choose which private and religious schools merit taxpayer support. For a religiously diverse country like the U.S., this is a road to onerous problems.
- **Private schools could select the best and the brightest students.** As Representative Bill Goodling (Pennsylvania), then ranking minority member of the Education and Labor Committee, said in 1991, "If you have 500 students in a school and 250 of them are the 'thousand points of light' and decide to go to a school of choice, that leaves 250 fallen angels behind." [Congressional Quarterly, 1991, p. 379] Research shows that private school vouchers do skim more advantaged students — those whose parents have more education, higher expectations for their children, and higher incomes. This finding holds even for programs where vouchers are restricted to low-income families. For example:
  - In San Antonio, mothers of low-income voucher students were three times more likely to have had some college education than mothers of comparable public school students (55 percent vs. 19 percent). [Martinez, V., et al. (1995). "The Consequences of School Choice: Who Leaves and Who Stays in the Inner City," Social Science Quarterly, September.]

- In England, researchers found that parents who expressed preferences for schools outside their immediate neighborhood tended to be more highly educated and have more prestigious occupations than those who expressed a preference for their neighborhood school. Moreover, in the most competitive areas, “schools are more likely to choose students than students are to choose schools.” (Stearns, School Reform: Lessons from England, 1996)

When a school is failing, providing an escape hatch for a few students will do nothing to improve the quality of education for the majority of students who remain in that school. Indeed, vouchers could hasten the deterioration of the public school system by creating a two-tier educational system in which the motivated, pro-active families and students — those who have the potential to make the school system better — would attend private schools and the less involved families and students would attend the public schools. Instead of giving a few students a way out, we need to give all students a way up by improving the quality of all schools.

## **IMPACT OF CHOICE AND SCHOOL TYPE ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

In addition to the negative effects of a voucher program on schooling, there are also basic, unanswered questions about the benefits of vouchers and the comparative advantage of private schools for student learning. A growing research base enables us to examine the impact of choice and school type on student achievement. Although they come from different perspectives and may arrive at different conclusions, these studies do share some common themes:

- Evaluations of existing voucher programs provide no conclusive evidence of the benefit of these programs for student achievement, while public school choice programs show promise for raising academic proficiency; and
- Differences in student achievement can often be explained by coursetaking and high standards.

Descriptions of studies that support these themes follow.

### **Impact of Private and Public School Choice Programs on Student Achievement**

Research on the impact of existing private school voucher programs has not demonstrated substantial achievement benefits for these programs. In fact, most differences 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, High School Achievement: Public, Catholic and Private Schools Compared, 1982) Even when studies control for these factors, they probably still overstate achievement differences because they usually cannot control for “self-selection bias” — the fact that parents and students who choose to attend schools other than their neighborhood school may have higher motivation and place a higher priority on education than similar families who do not exercise choice.

Three separate evaluations of the longest-running publicly-funded voucher program (in Milwaukee) found vastly different results. The first evaluation found voucher students'

achievement *did not* improve significantly from their previous achievement in public schools (Witte et al., Fourth-Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, 1994), but a second evaluation of the same data *did* find evidence that the Milwaukee voucher program had a substantial positive impact on the achievement of students who remained in the program for 3-4 years (Greene, Peterson, and Du, "The Effectiveness of School Choice in Milwaukee: A Secondary Analysis of Data from the Program's Evaluation," 1996). This second analysis, however, has serious methodological flaws, including the attrition of 85-95 percent of voucher students in the two years in which significant results were found, and a failure to account for student family background and prior achievement. Yet a third analysis (Rouse, "Private School Vouchers and Student Achievement: An Evaluation of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program," 1997) repeated Greene, et al.'s analysis, and found that voucher recipients *did* significantly outperform non-enrolled voucher program applicants and a random sample of Milwaukee public school students in math, but *did not* in reading. These conflicting results provide more of a lesson in the art of statistics than in the effectiveness of voucher programs. The one clear implication of these studies is that the impact of voucher programs on student achievement remains unproven.

In Cleveland, the voucher program has only been in existence since the Fall of 1996, and no systematic research on the impact of the program on student achievement is yet available. The Ohio Department of Education is currently sponsoring an Indiana University evaluation of third-graders in the Cleveland voucher program, and a first-year report is expected in late September of this year. However, a recent, well-publicized Harvard press release on the achievement gains of Cleveland voucher students has been touted as evidence of the benefits of voucher programs. (Harvard University, "Gains in Test Scores in the Cleveland Voucher Program Found," 1997) This analysis, conducted by Paul Peterson and funded by the Olin Foundation, claims that students enrolled in two schools in the Cleveland program have realized "moderately large" gains in reading and "even more substantial" gains in math. However, even this analysis concedes that these academic results are mixed, with language scores declining by 5 percentage points overall, and declining by 19 percent among first graders. More importantly, this analysis is in no way a representation of the effectiveness of the Cleveland voucher program, as it is based on only 15 percent of participating students who are enrolled in uniquely operated, resource-intensive schools, and it suffers from severe methodological problems.<sup>3</sup>

Lastly, a Hudson Institute study (Weinschrott and Kilgore, "Educational Choice Charitable Trust: An Experiment in School Choice," 1996) of the privately-funded voucher program in Indianapolis found 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.

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<sup>3</sup> Among the problems with the Peterson analysis are: (1) it does not compare the gains of these voucher students to their counterparts in the Cleveland public schools; (2) it does not control for the family background or prior achievement of the voucher students; (3) it is based on the results of an old, invalid form of the California Achievement Test; (4) it lumps together results for students in grades K through 3, suggesting that differences among grades are being masked; and (5) the researchers tested the voucher students within the same school year (fall and spring), an approach that has been widely rejected by test experts as producing artificially positive achievement gains.

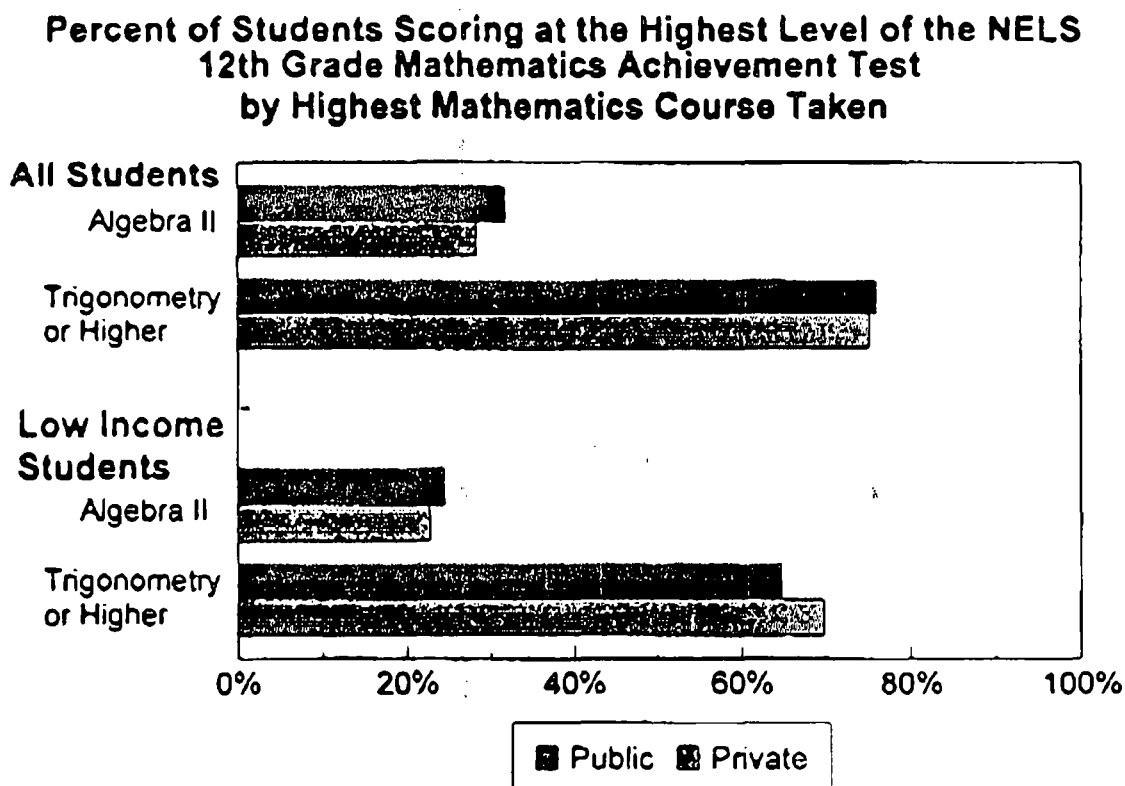
An analysis of 1991 International Assessment of Educational Progress data in 16 industrialized nations provides international evidence showing that private schools do not have significantly higher student achievement than public schools after controlling for student background. [Bishop, "Nerd Harassment, Incentives, School Priorities and Learning," 1996] This study found that, after controlling for family background, independent schools did not have higher math and science achievement (for 13-year-olds) than public schools and religiously-controlled schools had significantly lower achievement levels. In Canada, where there is no constitutional prohibition against public subsidies of religious schools and 20 percent of the schools are religiously controlled, students at religious schools scored 3.9 to 4.5 points lower on science and math tests than public school students.

Some 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 of data from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey (Gamoran, "Student Achievement in Public Magnet, Public Comprehensive, and Private City High Schools," Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 1996) found that magnet schools were more effective than comprehensive public high schools at raising the proficiency of students in science, reading, and social studies, while secular private schools did not offer any advantage, after controlling for pre-existing differences among students.

### **Impact of Coursetaking and Standards on Student Achievement**

The choice of courses taken has been shown to have a direct connection to student achievement. As Figure 1 depicts, an analysis of National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) data suggests that the mathematics courses students take in high school are more important for achievement than the type of high school attended. While recognizing that a great deal of diversity exists among public and private schools, it is useful to note that when coursetaking patterns are accounted for, the mathematics achievement of students in both categories of school is very similar. Public and private school students who had taken the same mathematics courses were almost equally likely to score at the highest achievement level on the NELS twelfth-grade mathematics achievement test. This was also true for low-income public and private school students. Additionally, among both public and private school students of all incomes, students who had taken more rigorous mathematics courses were much more likely to score at the highest achievement level.

Figure 1.



Source: Analysis of National Educational Longitudinal Survey data

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that public school reform efforts like challenging standards and rigorous coursetaking can improve achievement for the majority of students who are in the public schools. States and local communities that have set more challenging standards are seeing substantial gains in student achievement. For example:

- Kentucky's comprehensive school reforms continue to result in substantial improvement in school performance. More than 92 percent of Kentucky's schools posted achievement gains in 1995-96. Fifty percent of schools in the state met or exceeded their performance goals. These schools are distributed across all grade levels, throughout every geographic region in the state, and in poor as well as wealthy communities. Elementary schools performed well above expectations, as they exceeded their statewide performance goal by 27 percent. (Kentucky Department of Education Press Release, October 1996)

- In New York City, tougher graduation requirements are spurring thousands more high school students to take and pass college-preparatory mathematics and science courses. The number of Hispanic and black students who passed the science test more than doubled from the previous year (New York Times, 5/9/95). Entering freshmen at the City University of New York are the best prepared academically in two decades (New York Times, 12/10/95). Grade schools in the city continue a four-year rise in test scores (New York Times, 6/21/96).

## FUNDAMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The evidence provided above illuminates that our nation has made progress, but we still have a long way to go. This is particularly true in high-poverty school systems across the country. We recognize the legitimate problems in our nation's schools — especially in urban areas where voucher programs are often proposed. We are committed to focusing on turning around troubled schools and undertaking comprehensive educational reform that creates and sustains safe and high-performing schools. There are no silver bullets to improving schools and improving student learning, and that is why President Clinton emphasizes the need to focus on many vehicles for educational improvement in his "Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century."

Promoting student performance starts with a focus on the basics, safety, discipline, and parent involvement. Sustained improvement must be based on what works, and supported by parents, educators and the larger community. Research suggests that student achievement can best be improved by supporting a comprehensive set of district and school level reforms. (See, for example, Newmann and Weblage, "Successful School Restructuring: A Report to the Public and Educators by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools," 1995; Lein, Johnson, and Ragland, Successful Texas Schoolwide Programs: Research Study Results, 1996) These reforms include:

- **Safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools.** A prerequisite to comprehensive, enduring school reform which promotes student performance is ensuring that our children have a safe, strong, and drug-free learning environment. Providing such an environment requires a focus on strong discipline in the schools and zero tolerance for drugs.
- **A clear focus on improving learning and mastering the basics.** Effective schools are organized around a clear focus on educational excellence and equity for all students and have an academic orientation that challenges all students to master basic and advanced skills in reading, math, and other core subjects. The goal of learning is captured in the curriculum and the very atmosphere of the school. Time, resources, and energies center on enabling all students to achieve higher levels of performance.
- **Parent involvement and public commitment to improving schools.** Thirty years of research show that greater family involvement in children's learning is a critical link to achieving a high quality education and a safe, disciplined learning environment for every student. (U.S. Department of Education, Strong Families, Strong Schools, 1994) Districts and schools must reach out to parents and community members to develop a shared commitment to excellence and equity for all students and to work in partnership toward that goal.

- **High academic standards and rigorous coursetaking.** Probably the most effective educational choice that parents and students can make is to choose to take more challenging academic courses. Taking tougher courses is one factor that produces substantial gains in student achievement. Making challenging curriculum and engaging instruction available to all students must be schools' central mission.
- **Sustained and intensive professional development for teachers.** In order for students' performance to improve, teachers must be able to teach to higher standards. They must know the content of the curriculum and the best strategies for engaging students in learning more challenging content. Professional development can be supported formally through intensive training and also more informally through teachers working together on common classroom concerns and learning from each other.
- **Buildings and technology suited for learning.** Children cannot learn to high standards in schools that are literally falling down. Environments where children learn best are schools that are safe and modern, more spacious and technologically equipped, and that can be used not only during the school day but after school and during the summer, as well.
- **Reinforcement through after-school and summer programs.** Research shows that students in quality after-school programs (lower student to staff ratios, age-appropriate activities, academic and enrichment activities) demonstrate higher academic achievement and have better attitudes towards school than children left alone or under the care of siblings. (Posner and Vandell, 1994) Moreover, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, youth are most at risk of getting in trouble or being victims between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., after the regular school day.
- **Greater school autonomy and accountability.** Greater school autonomy when coupled with performance accountability also can contribute to conditions that make optimal learning possible. Unreasonable regulations can produce a compliance mentality in which no one takes ownership or is personally responsible. If teachers are to act as professionals and not as automatons, they need to be given responsibility for making professional decisions regarding classroom practice and school policy. Holding our students to high standards requires that adults take responsibility for improving student performance.
- **Expansion of public school choice options.** Public charter schools, magnet schools and open enrollment policies offer real alternatives to students and parents while maintaining the kind of accountability that is crucial to ensuring a quality education.

In some cases, drastic actions are needed to improve chronically troubled schools. For example, in San Francisco, failing schools have been "reconstituted." The district has shut down these schools and reopened them with new administrators, teachers, and programs.

## NATIONAL AND LOCAL INDICATORS SUGGEST REFORMS ARE BEGINNING TO WORK

### Trends in Improvement Nationwide

U.S. education is improving on many measures of student learning, especially in critical areas on which schools, communities, states, and this nation have focused sustained effort. A wide variety of national indicators are showing substantial gains, both short-term and long-term:

- **Students are taking more rigorous subjects and courses.** 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 to 52 percent by 1994, up from 14 percent in 1982 and 40 percent in 1990. Similarly, the percentage of graduates taking biology, chemistry, and physics has doubled, rising from 11 percent in 1982 to 19 percent in 1990 and 21 percent in 1994. (NCES, High School Transcript Study, various years)

Similarly, participation in advanced placement (AP) courses has also increased, and the number of AP exams that scored at 3 or above has tripled since 1982. The number of AP examinations that received a passing score rose from 131,871 in 1982 to 523,321 in 1996. (College Board, AP Program: National Summary, various years)

- **The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has shown long-term gains in student achievement in mathematics and science**, areas that have been the focus of national attention. Average performance in mathematics and science has improved since the late 1970s and early 1980s for all three age groups tested and in every quartile. The improvement in math achievement was equivalent to at least one grade level. NAEP scores in reading and writing showed small, inconsistent changes and were stable overall. The achievement gap between white and minority students narrowed substantially over the period, although improvement has stalled since the late 1980's. (NCES, NAEP 1996 Trends In Academic Progress, 1997)
- **College admissions tests have shown increases in average scores even as the numbers and diversity of test-takers are increasing.** On the ACT, the national composite score increased to 21.0 in 1997 (from 20.6 in 1992) — the fourth year in the last five that the national average has increased. (ACT, Composite Averages by State, 1997) ACT president Richard L. Ferguson attributed the increase in scores to more students, especially females and minorities, taking higher-level courses in English, math, social studies, and science. (ACT, "Trend of Increases in ACT College Entrance Scores Continues," 1997) On the SAT, combined verbal and math scores increased 19 points from 1982 to 1997 (and increased by 15 points from 1992 to 1997) and the average mathematics score is at its highest level in 26 years.<sup>4</sup> (College Board, College Bound Seniors National Report, 1997)

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<sup>4</sup> This figure is not affected by the College Board's recent "re-centering" of SAT scores because previous scores have been adjusted for equivalence with 1997 scores.

- **Dropout rates show similar improvements, particularly for minority students.** From 1982 to 1995, the dropout rate for persons 16-24 years old fell from 13.9 percent to 12.0 percent and has been relatively flat throughout the 1990's.<sup>5</sup> For blacks, the dropout rate fell from 18.4 percent in 1982 to 12.1 percent in 1995 — a 34 percent decrease. For whites, the rate fell from 11.4 to 8.6 percent over the same period — a 25 percent decrease. [NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 1996]

### **Exemplary Efforts at Comprehensive School Reforms in Urban Districts**

Across the nation, states and communities are implementing comprehensive reforms focused on enabling students to meet challenging standards, and student achievement is improving as a result. These districts reach out to teachers, principals, parents, and community members in developing a shared commitment to excellence and equity for all students and cultivating these partnerships. Their mission statements reflect in plain language the real-world concerns of parents, employers, and other citizens. Beyond that, they dedicate themselves to making that mission a reality through careful planning, efficient and equitable management of resources, and the development and recognition of instructional leaders throughout the school system. Examples of this process can be found in San Antonio, Memphis, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, New York City's Community District 2, and Chicago:

- **San Antonio Independent School District** underwent a major organizational restructuring aimed at placing maximum emphasis on instructional needs, giving more direct support to schools in matters of instruction and curriculum, streamlining decisionmaking, and strengthening intradistrict communication and collaboration. The district implemented site-based decision-making (as mandated by the state) during the 1994-95 school year by incorporating it with its broader strategic plan. Each school has an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) composed of school staff, parents, and community residents, who receive annual training provided by the district. A ten-year grant from the Rockefeller Foundation supports professional development and technology for teachers, as well as promoting community involvement through monthly public town hall meetings and a community newsletter. In 1996, the district entered into a partnership with the New American Schools Design Corporation (NASDC), and half of the district's schools have committed to a whole school design through NASDC. Student achievement on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) has shown significant gains; from 1995 to 1996, the percentage of students passing the TAAS rising from 33 percent to 41 percent for 4th-graders and from 31 percent to 36 percent for 10th graders. Math skills showed even greater improvement, with the percentage of students passing the math portion of the TAAS rising from 42 percent to 55 percent for 4th-graders and from 35 percent to 42 percent for 10th graders.
- **Memphis** adopted in 1993 a comprehensive school reform plan designed to raise student achievement that includes setting higher standards for all students, implementing site-

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<sup>5</sup> The dropout rate is defined as the percent of 16-24 year-olds who have not completed high school and were not enrolled in school that year.

based decisionmaking and models of school reform to support students in meeting the standards, and creating a new belief system within the school system. The district developed content standards in seven core curricular areas that reflected the Lifelong Learning Standards adopted by the community and disseminated guides to show what instruction and curriculum that reflects these standards should look like in classrooms. All Memphis schools now have site-based decisionmaking councils composed of equal numbers of teachers and parents to set school policy and allocate school budgets. In addition, since 1995, about half of all schools have adopted a "break-the-mold" reform model, including several of the models developed by the New American Schools Development Corporation. In 1996, the district opened its new Teaching and Learning Academy, which coordinates professional development opportunities for all teachers in the district. The Academy offers workshops in all major areas of school reform including leadership, core content, performance assessment, and uses of technology.

- **Milwaukee's** experience in raising students' math performance to challenging standards provides a remarkable example of systemwide improvement. The impetus came out of community embarrassment over its math assessment and a requirement that students pass the assessment to graduate. While Equity 2000 provided a focus for the effort, support came from higher standards, professional development of teachers, special assistance for students who failed the test, parental involvement, and feedback on results. There has been a substantial increase in enrollment in algebra and more advanced math courses; ninth-graders' enrollment in Algebra I rose from 33 percent of all students in 1990 to 100 percent today, while the number of tenth-grade students taking geometry or more advanced math increased from 24 to 57 percent. The percent of students passing algebra has remained essentially unchanged, at about 56 percent, despite the expansion of algebra enrollment from a select group to all students.
- **Cincinnati** has injected accountability for both administrators and students into the educational system. School district administrators' pay raises are now linked to job performance. The policy change replaced automatic cost-of-living adjustments and salary rates with new criteria, including: performance on staff development, management, and community involvement; students' scores on standardized tests and on the state's graduation test; and graduation, promotion, passing, and dropout rates. At the student level, promotion is now based on specific standards that define what students must know and be able to do. The standards are designed to prepare students to pass a ninth-grade proficiency test. Cincinnati also reorganized its school system in 1991, cutting the central office staff — mostly mid-level managers — by 70 percent, in order to direct a greater share of its resources to the school and classroom levels.
- **New York City's Community District 2** is a model for local districts seeking to improve instruction in fundamental ways. Serving an extremely diverse population from the Upper East Side to Chinatown, the district implements a corresponding diversity in its approaches to teaching and learning. This particular district illustrates the powerful, participatory role that a local district can play in instructional improvement. Every decision made by the district takes instructional improvement into account. It is a group

effort and a long-term commitment based on high expectations, clear objectives, and shared expertise. The concrete strategies revolve around the idea that professional development is not a series of programs per se but rather an ongoing opportunity to build and bridge skills. Strategies include: a Professional Development Laboratory in which visiting teachers observe and practice with a resident teacher for three weeks while their classrooms are taught by a teacher who has also gone through the Laboratory; extensive use of visits across classrooms and schools by teachers and principals; and a core of consultants hired by the districts and available to the schools for one-on-one and small group assistance. With these strategies in hand, the district has a direct impact on improving its schools: on the 1996 assessment, District 2 ranked second in the city in math scores.

- Chicago is ensuring that promotion to the next grade reflects students' learning the content to enable them to succeed. In August 1996, the Chicago School Reform Board adopted a rigorous student promotion policy that requires underachieving students in grades three, six, eight, and nine to complete a summer school program before being promoted to the next grade. The policy sets performance standards based on test scores for third-, sixth-, eighth-, and ninth-graders. Students who score more than one year below their grade level (one-and-a-half years for sixth-graders) on the standardized tests, or who fail reading or math, must successfully complete a six- or seven-week Summer Bridge program. All ninth-graders who miss more than 20 days of school or fail to earn the required 4.5 core credits are also required to attend the summer-school programs. Students who fail the summer programs are held back. Results show that over 80 percent of Chicago students were able to meet the promotion criteria; many would not have done so without the intensive summer instruction provided through the Bridge program.

These large, urban districts face some of the most complex educational issues in the nation, yet their students are beginning to benefit from sustained school improvement efforts. We are committed to continue working for high standards of discipline and achievement and a means to assess student performance in meeting them, safe schools, technology in the classroom, quality teachers, and increased access to college. When we focus sustained effort and careful investments on critical education issues at school, neighborhood, community, and national levels, students progress and so does our nation.

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## **What Really Matters in American Education**

White paper prepared for  
U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley  
for speech at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C.

September 23, 1997

U.S. Department of Education

## **PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DEMOCRACY, AND FREE ENTERPRISE**

Quality public schools are the foundation of a democracy and a free enterprise economic system. The public school concept is fundamentally American: most of the fifty U.S. states have a provision in their state constitution for free, public education. These statutes reflect a commitment to the idea that all children, regardless of their academic readiness, race, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, or special education needs, have equal access to a quality K-12 education, and a chance to develop to their maximum potential. State constitutions describe this most essential purpose as:

“A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools.” (Texas)

“The General Assembly shall provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth, and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained.” (Virginia)

“It is the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person...The legislature shall provide a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools.” (Montana)

Therein lies the power of the American system of education — it is truly *public*. The “common school” — the concept upon which our public school system was built — teaches children important lessons about both the commonality and diversity of American culture. These lessons are conveyed not only through what is taught in the classroom, but by the very experience of attending school with a diverse mix of students. The common school has made quality public education and hard work the open door to American success and good citizenship and the American way to achievement and freedom.

## **VOUCHERS THREATEN THE FUNDAMENTAL MISSION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Using public tax dollars for private school vouchers fundamentally undermines 200 years of public education in America. As Neil Postman has suggested in his book The End of Education, “...public education does not serve the public. It creates the public. And in creating the right kind of public, the schools contribute toward strengthening the spiritual basis of the American Creed. That is how Jefferson understood it, how Horace Mann understood it, how John Dewey understood it.” Private school vouchers strike at this ideal because they would:

- **Divert attention from the need to improve the public schools.** Providing private school vouchers for a few children will not help to improve the quality of education for most of America's children. Expanded choice in public schools through magnet schools and charter schools, coupled with a focus on the basics, increased parent involvement, improved teaching, and high standards for achievement and discipline, can do far more to improve the education of all children than private school vouchers for a few. The purpose of any school improvement idea should be to invite effective innovation in more schools, particularly those schools that are lagging behind.
- **Add to the public cost of education.** A voucher system would substantially increase the public cost of education by providing public funds to pay private school tuition for children who are already enrolled in private schools. If a voucher program open to all students were implemented today, it would cost American taxpayers over \$15 billion to pay the tuitions of the 5 million students already enrolled in private schools.<sup>1</sup> This enormous cost would drain resources from public schools at the same time that billions of dollars are needed just to accommodate the 1.9 million additional students projected to be enrolled in public schools in 2007<sup>2</sup> (NCES, The Condition of Education, 1997).
- **Reduce accountability.** Vouchers could create a situation at the elementary/secondary school level analogous to that at the postsecondary level; in the last four years, 700 for-profit schools in our nation's higher education system were removed from the federal loan program by the U.S. Department of Education because of their misuse of federal tax dollars. Private schools operate outside of the scope of public authority, and therefore have no public accountability for providing a quality education to all students.
- **Force private and parochial schools to become less private and less parochial.** If a systemwide voucher program were adopted, the influx of public dollars into these unregulated schools would result in increased pressure for greater public scrutiny and accountability for these public expenditures. Quality private and parochial schools are valuable parts of the educational variety in our democracy, and these pressures would ultimately interfere with their unique missions and curricula.
- **Violate the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution.** Using public tax dollars to pay tuition at religious schools would violate the constitutional separation of church and state. Indeed, publicly funded voucher programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland have been legally challenged for their inclusion of religious schools in their programs, as judges in both Wisconsin and Ohio have ruled that the participation of religious schools violates federal and state constitutional provisions barring government aid to religious institutions. Voucher program advocates in both states have consistently appealed these decisions to higher courts, but no court has yet to overturn this basic ruling.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on average private school tuition of \$3,116 in 1993-94.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated total additional costs in 2007 (in constant 1995-96 dollars).

Expanding the options available to students and families is a worthy goal, as long as this is not done in a way that undermines a quality education for all children. But private school vouchers are too small, too costly, and too divisive to have any potential for improving the public school system.

## IMPACT OF VOUCHERS ON SCHOOLING

A voucher program which served a substantial number of public school students would suffer from serious implementation problems related to private schools' capacity and mission, and would violate basic principles of equity and a quality education for all students. Specifically:

- **Private schools have little capacity to absorb a substantial number of additional students.** According to a California study [Corwin and Dianda, "What Can We Really Expect from Large-Scale Voucher Programs," Phi Delta Kappan, 1993], less than 1 percent of public school students in that state could expect to find spaces in existing private schools. The study found that most private schools that were interested in participating in a voucher program were already operating at 85 percent or more of their capacity. Although some private schools might be created or expanded, a voucher system would do little or nothing to address the needs for educating the 89 percent of students in public schools (46.5 million students).
- **Most private schools are religious in nature, and few are likely to give up their religious mission in order to overcome constitutional barriers to receiving public funds.** Religious schools account for 79 percent of all private schools and 85 percent of private school students. A recent survey found that most associations of religious schools believe their schools would not participate in a voucher program if they were required to permit exemptions from religious instruction for students transferring from public schools [Muraskin et al., "Barriers, Benefits, and Costs of Using Private Schools to Alleviate Overcrowding in Public Schools: Preliminary Report," 1997]. In addition, government officials should not be expected to choose which private and religious schools merit taxpayer support. For a religiously diverse country like the U.S., this is a road to onerous problems.
- **Private schools could select the best and the brightest students.** As Representative Bill Goodling (Pennsylvania), then ranking minority member of the Education and Labor Committee, said in 1991, "If you have 500 students in a school and 250 of them are the 'thousand points of light' and decide to go to a school of choice, that leaves 250 fallen angels behind." [Congressional Quarterly, 1991, p. 379] Research shows that private school vouchers do skim more advantaged students — those whose parents have more education, higher expectations for their children, and higher incomes. This finding holds even for programs where vouchers are restricted to low-income families. For example:
  - In San Antonio, mothers of low-income voucher students were three times more likely to have had some college education than mothers of comparable public school students (55 percent vs. 19 percent). [Martinez, "The Consequences of School Choice: Who Leaves and Who Stays in the Inner City," 1995]

- In England, researchers found that parents who expressed preferences for schools outside their immediate neighborhood tended to be more highly educated and have more prestigious occupations than those who expressed a preference for their neighborhood school. Moreover, in the most competitive areas, “schools are more likely to choose students than students are to choose schools.” [Stearns, School Reform: Lessons from England, 1996]

When a school is failing, providing an escape hatch for a few students will do nothing to improve the quality of education for the majority of students who remain in that school. Indeed, vouchers could hasten the deterioration of the public school system by creating a two-tier educational system in which the motivated, pro-active families and students — those who have the potential to make the school system better — would attend private schools and the less involved families and students would attend the public schools. Instead of giving a few students a way out, we need to give all students a way up by improving the quality of all schools.

## **IMPACT OF CHOICE AND SCHOOL TYPE ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

In addition to the negative effects of a voucher program on schooling, there are also basic, unanswered questions about the benefits of vouchers and the comparative advantage of private schools for student learning. A growing research base enables us to examine the impact of choice and school type on student achievement. Although they come from different perspectives and may arrive at different conclusions, these studies do share some common themes:

- Evaluations of existing voucher programs provide no conclusive evidence of the benefit of these programs for student achievement, while public school choice programs show promise for raising academic proficiency; and
- Differences in student achievement can often be explained by coursetaking and high standards.

Descriptions of studies that support these themes follow.

### **Impact of Private and Public School Choice Programs on Student Achievement**

Research on the impact of existing private school voucher programs has not demonstrated substantial achievement benefits for these programs. In fact, most differences 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, High School Achievement: Public, Catholic and Private Schools Compared, 1982] Even when studies control for these factors, they probably still overstate achievement differences because they usually cannot control for “self-selection bias” — the fact that parents and students who choose to attend schools other than their neighborhood school may have higher motivation and place a higher priority on education than similar families who do not exercise choice.

Three separate evaluations of the longest-running publicly-funded voucher program (in Milwaukee) found vastly different results. The first evaluation found voucher students'

achievement *did not* improve significantly from their previous achievement in public schools [Witte et al., Fourth-Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, 1994], but a second evaluation of the same data *did* find evidence that the Milwaukee voucher program had a substantial positive impact on the achievement of students who remained in the program for 3-4 years [Greene, Peterson, Du, et al., "The Effectiveness of School Choice in Milwaukee: A Secondary Analysis of Data from the Program's Evaluation," 1996]. This second analysis, however, has serious methodological flaws, including the attrition of 85-95 percent of voucher students in the two years in which significant results were found, and a failure to account for student family background and prior achievement. Yet a third analysis [Rouse "Private School Vouchers and Student Achievement: An Evaluation of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program," 1997] repeated Greene, et al.'s analysis, and found that voucher recipients *did* significantly outperform non-enrolled voucher program applicants and a random sample of Milwaukee public school students in math, but *did not* in reading. These conflicting results provide more of a lesson in the art of statistics than in the effectiveness of voucher programs. The one clear implication of these studies is that the impact of voucher programs on student achievement remains unproven.

In Cleveland, the voucher program has only been in existence since the Fall of 1996, and no systematic research on the impact of the program on student achievement is yet available. The Ohio Department of Education is currently sponsoring an Indiana University evaluation of third-graders in the Cleveland voucher program, and a first-year report is expected in late September of this year. However, a recent, well-publicized Harvard press release on the achievement gains of Cleveland voucher students has been touted as evidence of the benefits of voucher programs. [Harvard University, "Gains in Test Scores in the Cleveland Voucher Program Found," 1997] This analysis, conducted by Paul Peterson and funded by the Olin Foundation, claims that students enrolled in two schools in the Cleveland program have realized "moderately large" gains in reading and "even more substantial" gains in math. However, even this analysis concedes that academic results are mixed, with reading scores for first graders declining by 19 percent. More importantly, this analysis is in no way a representation of the effectiveness of the Cleveland voucher program, as it is based on only 15 percent of participating students who are enrolled in uniquely operated, resource-intensive schools, and it suffers from severe methodological problems.<sup>3</sup>

Lastly, a Hudson Institute study [Weinschrott and Kilgore, "Educational Choice Charitable Trust: An Experiment in School Choice," 1996] of the privately-funded voucher program in Indianapolis found 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.

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<sup>3</sup> Among the problems with the Peterson analysis are: (1) it does not compare the gains of these voucher students to their counterparts in the Cleveland public schools; (2) it does not control for the family background or prior achievement of the voucher students; (3) it is based on the results of an old, invalid form of the California Achievement Test; (4) it lumps together results for students in grades K through 3, suggesting that differences among grades are being masked; and (5) the researchers tested the voucher students within the same school year (fall and spring), an approach that has been widely rejected by test experts as producing artificially positive achievement gains.

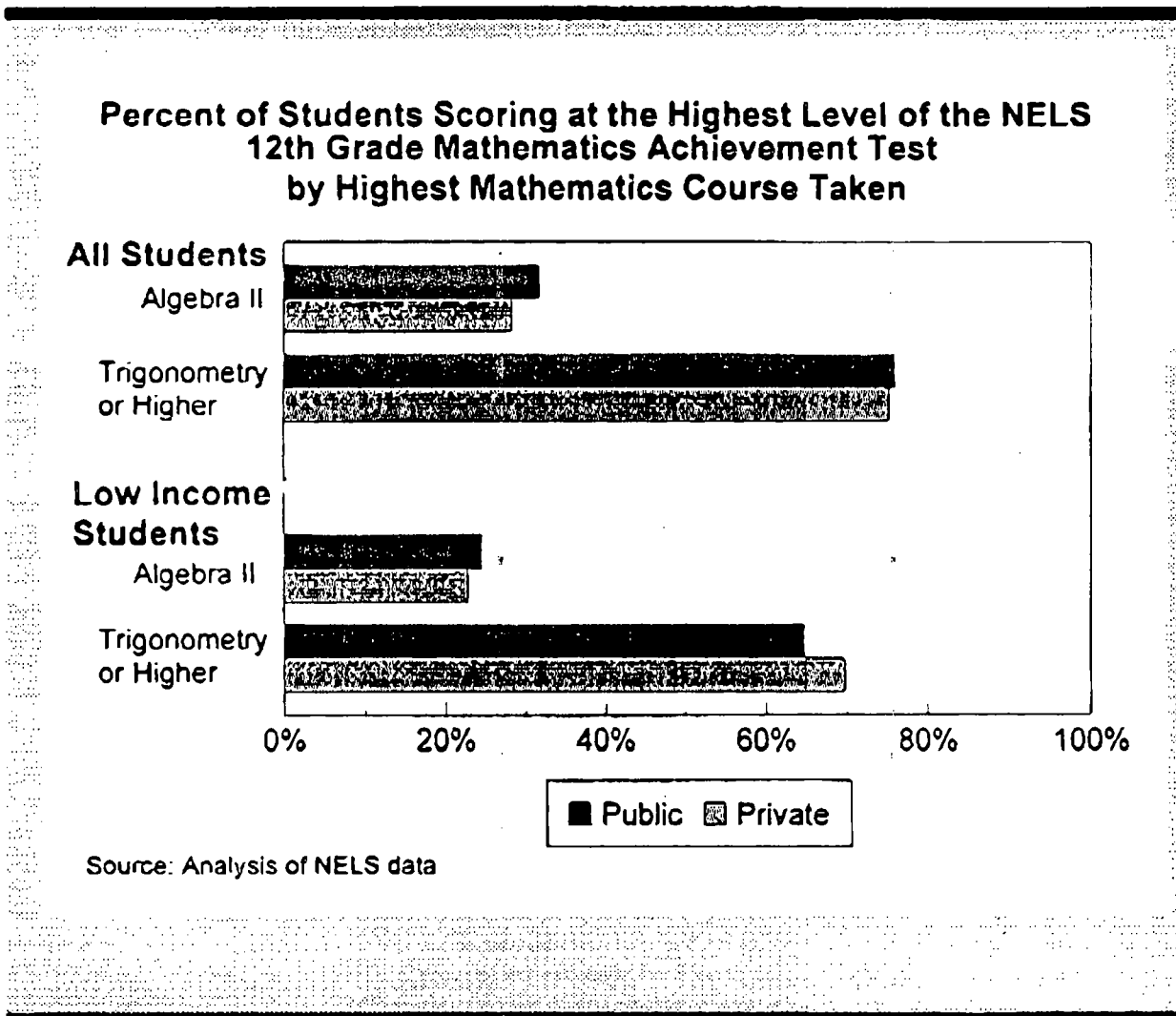
An analysis of 1991 International Assessment of Educational Progress data in 16 industrialized nations provides international evidence showing that private schools do not have significantly higher student achievement than public schools after controlling for student background. [Bishop, "Nerd Harassment, Incentives, School Priorities and Learning," working paper #96-10, Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies, 1996] This study found that, after controlling for family background, independent schools did not have higher math and science achievement (for 13-year-olds) than public schools and religiously-controlled schools had significantly lower achievement levels. In Canada, where there is no constitutional prohibition against public subsidies of religious schools and 20 percent of the schools are religiously controlled, students at religious schools scored 3.9 to 4.5 points lower on science and math tests than public school students.

Some 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 of data from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey [Gamoran, "Student Achievement in Public Magnet, Public Comprehensive, and Private City High Schools," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 1996] found that magnet schools were more effective than comprehensive public high schools at raising the proficiency of students in science, reading, and social studies, while secular private schools did not offer any advantage, after controlling for pre-existing differences among students.

### **Impact of Coursetaking and Standards on Student Achievement**

The choice of courses taken has been shown to have a direct connection to student achievement. As Figure 1 depicts, an analysis of National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) data suggests that the mathematics courses students take in high school are more important for achievement than the type of high school attended. While recognizing that a great deal of diversity exists among public and private schools, it is useful to note that when coursetaking patterns are accounted for, the mathematics achievement of students in both categories of school is very similar. Public and private school students who had taken the same mathematics courses were almost equally likely to score at the highest achievement level on the NELS twelfth-grade mathematics achievement test. This was also true for low-income public and private school students. Additionally, among both public and private school students of all incomes, students who had taken more rigorous mathematics courses were much more likely to score at the highest achievement level.

Figure 1.



A growing body of evidence demonstrates that public school reform efforts like challenging standards and rigorous coursetaking can improve achievement for the majority of students who are in the public schools. States and local communities that have set more challenging standards are seeing substantial gains in student achievement. For example:

- Kentucky's comprehensive school reforms continue to result in substantial improvement in school performance. More than 92 percent of Kentucky's schools posted achievement gains in 1995-96. Fifty percent of schools in the state met or exceeded their performance goals. These schools are distributed across all grade levels, throughout every geographic region in the state, and in poor as well as wealthy communities. Elementary schools performed well above expectations, as they exceeded their statewide performance goal by 27 percent, and comprised the majority of schools that met or exceeded their goals.  
(Kentucky Department of Education Press Release, October 1996)
- In New York City, tougher graduation requirements are spurring thousands more high

school students to take and pass college-preparatory mathematics and science courses. The number of Hispanic and black students who passed the science test more than doubled from the previous year [The New York Times, 5/9/95]. Entering freshmen at the City University of New York are the best prepared academically in two decades [The New York Times, 12/10/95]. Grade schools in the city continue a four-year rise in test scores [The New York Times, 6/21/96].

## FUNDAMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The evidence provided above illuminates that our nation has made progress, but we still have a long way to go. This is particularly true in high-poverty school systems across the country. We recognize the legitimate problems in our nation's schools — especially in urban areas where voucher programs are often proposed. We are committed to focusing on turning around troubled schools and undertaking comprehensive educational reform that creates and sustains safe and high-performing schools. There are no silver bullets to improving schools and improving student learning, and that is why President Clinton emphasizes the need to focus on many vehicles for educational improvement in his "Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century."

Promoting student performance starts with a focus on the basics, safety, discipline, and parent involvement. Sustained improvement must be based on what works, and supported by parents, educators and the larger community. Research suggests that student achievement can best be improved by supporting a comprehensive set of district and school level reforms. (See, for example, Newmann and Wehlage, "Successful School Restructuring: A Report to the Public and Educators by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools," 1995; Lein, Johnson, and Ragland, Successful Texas Schoolwide Programs: Research Study Results, 1996) These reforms include:

- **Safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools.** A prerequisite to comprehensive, enduring school reform which promotes student performance is ensuring that our children have a safe, strong, and drug-free learning environment. Providing such an environment requires a focus on strong discipline in the schools and zero tolerance for drugs.
- **A clear focus on improving learning and mastering the basics.** Effective schools are organized around a clear focus on educational excellence and equity for all students and have an academic orientation that challenges all students to master basic and advanced skills in reading, math, and other core subjects. The goal of learning is captured in the curriculum and the very atmosphere of the school. Time, resources, and energies center on enabling all students to achieve higher levels of performance.
- **Parent involvement and public commitment to improving schools.** Thirty years of research show that greater family involvement in children's learning is a critical link to achieving a high quality education and a safe, disciplined learning environment for every student (U.S. Department of Education, Strong Families, Strong Schools, (1994)). Districts and schools must reach out to parents and community members to develop a shared commitment to excellence and equity for all students and to work in partnership toward that goal.

- **High academic standards and rigorous coursetaking.** Probably the most effective educational choice that parents and students can make is to choose to take more challenging academic courses. Taking tougher courses is one factor that produces substantial gains in student achievement. Making challenging curriculum and engaging instruction available to all students must be schools' central mission.
- **Sustained and intensive professional development for teachers.** In order for students' performance to improve, teachers must be able to teach to higher standards. They must know the content of the curriculum and the best strategies for engaging students in learning more challenging content. Professional development can be supported formally through intensive training and also more informally through teachers working together on common classroom concerns and learning from each other.
- **Buildings and technology suited for learning.** Children cannot learn to high standards in schools that are literally falling down. Environments where children learn best are schools that are safe and modern, more spacious and technologically equipped, and that can be used not only during the school day but after school and during the summer, as well.
- **Reinforcement through after-school and summer programs.** Research shows that students in quality after-school programs (lower student to staff ratios, age-appropriate activities, academic and enrichment activities) demonstrate higher academic achievement and have better attitudes towards school than children left alone or under the care of siblings. [Posner and Vandell, 1994] Moreover, youth are most at risk of getting in trouble or being victims between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., after the regular school day.
- **Greater school autonomy and accountability.** Greater school autonomy when coupled with performance accountability also can contribute to conditions that make optimal learning possible. Unreasonable regulations can produce a compliance mentality in which no one takes ownership or is personally responsible. If teachers are to act as professionals and not as automatons, they need to be given responsibility for making professional decisions regarding classroom practice and school policy. Holding our students to high standards requires that adults take responsibility for improving student performance.
- **Expansion of public school choice options.** Public charter schools, magnet schools and open enrollment policies offer real alternatives to students and parents while maintaining the kind of accountability that is crucial to ensuring a quality education.

In some cases, drastic actions are needed to improve chronically troubled schools. For example, in San Francisco, failing schools have been "reconstituted." The district has shut down these schools and reopened them with new administrators, teachers, and programs.

## NATIONAL AND LOCAL INDICATORS SUGGEST REFORMS ARE BEGINNING TO WORK

### Trends in Improvement Nationwide

U.S. education is improving on many measures of student learning, especially in critical areas on which schools, communities, states, and this nation have focused sustained effort. A wide variety of national indicators are showing substantial gains, both short-term and long-term:

- **Students are taking more rigorous subjects and courses.** 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 to 52 percent by 1994, up from 14 percent in 1982 and 40 percent in 1990. Similarly, the percentage of graduates taking biology, chemistry, and physics has doubled, rising from 11 percent in 1982 to 19 percent in 1990 and 21 percent in 1994. [NCES, High School Transcript Study: 1982, 1987, 1990, and 1994]

Similarly, participation in advanced placement (AP) courses has also increased, and the number of AP exams that scored at 3 or above has tripled since 1982. The number of AP examinations that received a passing score rose from 131,871 in 1982 to 523,321 in 1996. [The College Board, AP Program: National Summary, various years]

- **The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has shown long-term gains in student achievement in mathematics and science**, areas that have been the focus of national attention. Average performance in mathematics and science has improved since the late 1970s and early 1980s for all three age groups tested and in every quartile. The improvement in math achievement was equivalent to at least one grade level. NAEP scores in reading and writing showed small, inconsistent changes and were stable overall. The achievement gap between white and minority students narrowed substantially over the period, although improvement has stalled since the late 1980's. [NCES, NAEP 1996 Trends in Academic Progress, 1997]
- **College admissions tests have shown increases in average scores even as the numbers and diversity of test-takers are increasing.** On the ACT, the national composite score increased to 21.0 in 1997 (from 20.6 in 1992) — the fourth year in the last five that the national average has increased. [ACT, Composite Averages by State, 1997] ACT president Richard L. Ferguson attributed the increase in scores to more students, especially females and minorities, taking higher-level courses in English, math, social studies, and science. ["Trend of Increases in ACT College Entrance Scores Continues," News from the ACT, 8/13/97] On the SAT, combined verbal and math scores increased 19 points from 1982 to 1997 (and increased by 15 points from 1992 to 1997) and the average mathematics score is at its highest level in 26 years.<sup>4</sup> [1997 College Board Seniors National Report]

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<sup>4</sup> This figure is not affected by the College Board's recent "re-centering" of SAT scores because previous scores have been adjusted for equivalence with 1997 scores.

- **Dropout rates show similar improvements, particularly for minority students.** From 1982 to 1995, the dropout rate for persons 16-24 years old fell from 13.9 percent to 12.0 percent and has been relatively flat throughout the 1990's.<sup>5</sup> For blacks, the dropout rate fell from 18.4 percent in 1982 to 12.1 percent in 1995 — a 34 percent decrease. For whites, the rate fell from 11.4 to 8.6 percent over the same period — a 25 percent decrease. (NCES, Digest of Education Statistics, 1996, Table 101)

### **Exemplary Efforts at Comprehensive School Reforms in Urban Districts**

Across the nation, states and communities are implementing comprehensive reforms focused on enabling students to meet challenging standards, and student achievement is improving as a result. These districts reach out to teachers, principals, parents, and community members in developing a shared commitment to excellence and equity for all students and cultivating these partnerships. Their mission statements reflect in plain language the real-world concerns of parents, employers, and other citizens. Beyond that, they dedicate themselves to making that mission a reality through careful planning, efficient and equitable management of resources, and the development and recognition of instructional leaders throughout the school system. Examples of this process can be found in San Antonio, Memphis, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, New York City's Community District 2, and Chicago:

- **San Antonio Independent School District** underwent a major organizational restructuring aimed at placing maximum emphasis on instructional needs, giving more direct support to schools in matters of instruction and curriculum, streamlining decisionmaking, and strengthening intradistrict communication and collaboration. The district implemented site-based decision-making (as mandated by the state) during the 1994-95 school year by incorporating it with its broader strategic plan. Each school has an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) composed of school staff, parents, and community residents, who receive annual training provided by the district. A ten-year grant from the Rockefeller Foundation supports professional development and technology for teachers, as well as promoting community involvement through monthly public town hall meetings and a community newsletter. In 1996, the district entered into a partnership with the New American Schools Design Corporation (NASDC), and half of the district's schools have committed to a whole school design through NASDC. Student achievement on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) has shown significant gains; from 1995 to 1996, the percentage of students passing the TAAS rising from 33 percent to 41 percent for 4th-graders and from 31 percent to 36 percent for 10th graders. Math skills showed even greater improvement, with the percentage of students passing the math portion of the TAAS rising from 42 percent to 55 percent for 4th-graders and from 35 percent to 42 percent for 10th graders.
- **Memphis** adopted in 1993 a comprehensive school reform plan designed to raise student achievement that includes setting higher standards for all students, implementing site-

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<sup>5</sup> The dropout rate is defined as the percent of 16-24 year-olds who have not completed high school and were not enrolled in school that year.

based decisionmaking and models of school reform to support students in meeting the standards, and creating a new belief system within the school system. The district developed content standards in seven core curricular areas that reflected the Lifelong Learning Standards adopted by the community and disseminated guides to show what instruction and curriculum that reflects these standards should look like in classrooms. All Memphis schools now have site-based decisionmaking councils composed of equal numbers of teachers and parents to set school policy and allocate school budgets. In addition, since 1995, about half of all schools have adopted a "break-the-mold" reform model, including several of the models developed by the New American Schools Development Corporation. In 1996, the district opened its new Teaching and Learning Academy, which coordinates professional development opportunities for all teachers in the district. The Academy offers workshops in all major areas of school reform including leadership, core content, performance assessment, and uses of technology.

- **Milwaukee's** experience in raising students' math performance to challenging standards provides a remarkable example of systemwide improvement. The impetus came out of community embarrassment over its math assessment and a requirement that students pass the assessment to graduate. While Equity 2000 provided a focus for the effort, support came from higher standards, professional development of teachers, special assistance for students who failed the test, parental involvement, and feedback on results. There has been a substantial increase in enrollment in algebra and more advanced math courses; ninth-graders' enrollment in Algebra I rose from 33 percent of all students in 1990 to 100 percent today, while the number of tenth-grade students taking geometry or more advanced math increased from 24 to 57 percent. The percent of students passing algebra has remained essentially unchanged, at about 56 percent, despite the expansion of algebra enrollment from a select group to all students.
- **Cincinnati** has injected accountability for both administrators and students into the educational system. School district administrators' pay raises are now linked to job performance. The policy change replaced automatic cost-of-living adjustments and salary rates with new criteria, including: performance on staff development, management, and community involvement; students' scores on standardized tests and on the state's graduation test; and graduation, promotion, passing, and dropout rates. At the student level, promotion is now based on specific standards that define what students must know and be able to do. The standards are designed to prepare students to pass a ninth-grade proficiency test. Cincinnati also reorganized its school system in 1991, cutting the central office staff — mostly mid-level managers — by 70 percent, in order to direct a greater share of its resources to the school and classroom levels.
- **New York City's Community District 2** is a model for local districts seeking to improve instruction in fundamental ways. Serving an extremely diverse population from the Upper East Side to Chinatown, the district implements a corresponding diversity in its approaches to teaching and learning. This particular district illustrates the powerful, participatory role that a local district can play in instructional improvement. Every decision made by the district takes instructional improvement into account. It is a group

effort and a long-term commitment based on high expectations, clear objectives, and shared expertise. The concrete strategies revolve around the idea that professional development is not a series of programs per se but rather an ongoing opportunity to build and bridge skills. Strategies include: a Professional Development Laboratory in which visiting teachers observe and practice with a resident teacher for three weeks while their classrooms are taught by a teacher who has also gone through the Laboratory; extensive use of visits across classrooms and schools by teachers and principals; and a core of consultants hired by the districts and available to the schools for one-on-one and small group assistance. With these strategies in hand, the district has a direct impact on improving its schools: on the 1996 assessment, District 2 ranked second in the city in math scores.

- **Chicago** is ensuring that promotion to the next grade reflects students' learning the content to enable them to succeed. In August 1996, the Chicago School Reform Board adopted a rigorous student promotion policy that requires underachieving students in grades three, six, eight, and nine to complete a summer school program before being promoted to the next grade. The policy sets performance standards based on test scores for third-, sixth-, eighth-, and ninth-graders. Students who score more than one year below their grade level (one-and-a-half years for sixth-graders) on the standardized tests, or who fail reading or math, must successfully complete a six- or seven-week Summer Bridge program. All ninth-graders who miss more than 20 days of school or fail to earn the required 4.5 core credits are also required to attend the summer-school programs. Students who fail the summer programs are held back. Results show that over 80 percent of Chicago students were able to meet the promotion criteria; many would not have done so without the intensive summer instruction provided through the Bridge program.

These large, urban districts face some of the most complex educational issues in the nation, yet their students are beginning to benefit from sustained school improvement efforts. We are committed to continue working for high standards of discipline and achievement and a means to assess student performance in meeting them, safe schools, technology in the classroom, quality teachers, and increased access to college. When we focus sustained effort and careful investments on critical education issues at school, neighborhood, community, and national levels, students progress and so does our nation.

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## **Comments on Draft Remarks on “What Really Matters”**

### **Overall**

- There needs to be a strong mention of the problems with the Gorton block grant bill. Currently there is none

### **P. 1**

- In this particular speech, at this particular juncture, does it make a lot of sense to talk about the “bipartisan consensus” -- seems a little off-key right now.

### **P. 2**

- I wouldn't refer to the tests as a “symbol” but stick with the argument that they are substantively important to give needed info to parents, teachers, and communities.
- If we can get underlying numbers on the Wall Street Journal poll it might be helpful to us to discuss in a little more detail (say, racial breakdown on test support)
- In discussion of the test, need to make the case that opponents are taking the approach that states, school districts and parents shouldn't be given the option to choose whether they would like to have this tool for raising student achievement. George Miller did a great job on this during House floor debate.
- Need to hit the “no social promotion” theme at some point in relation to fixing failing schools, etc.

### **P. 3**

- For AP number, should show that this is an increase over the past.

### **P. 4**

- Currently no voucher provision in Labor-H bill and should remove language on POTUS veto.
- On commitment to public school choice, should play off POTUS's event from this weekend, noting that the President just visited a charter school, released \$40 million in grants, that charters have gone from 1 to 700 under this administration, and that charter schools are PUBLIC schools that are accountable for high standards and only stay open as long as they do a good job.

- Anti-voucher rationales seem all over the map. Cynical journalist will ask how right to a free public education is not met by just giving \$ to attend a private school? Balkanizing argument is not developed. Also, I would encourage that we leave the religious/constitutional argument to others, and focus on the argument that vouchers would help very few kids while drawing attention and resources away from the hard work of improving our public schools, in effect undermining the schools that have been a bedrock of our democracy.
- Naming only Fairfax and Montgomery counties as school districts that work sounds pretty suburban.
- Secretary should be prepared to discuss 3 or 4 concrete things that we have been doing to help the DC schools get back on track.

**Remarks of  
U.S. Secretary of Education  
Richard W. Riley**

**What Really Matters in American Education  
National Press Club, Washington, D.C.  
September 23, 1997**

**Good morning. I am pleased to be back in Washington after completing the first leg of my annual 'America Goes Back to School' campaign. In the last three weeks, I have visited with parents and teachers in Pennsylvania, Wyoming, Alaska, Colorado, North Dakota, Ohio and Florida.**

**I find these trips very worthwhile. I always come back to Washington with a much better sense of what really matters and what is really going on in the classroom. I want to make some comments about my impressions and then speak to several of the issues in the background paper that we are releasing today entitled, 'What Really Matters'.**

**One of the strongest impressions I have is that we have some very crowded schools. Right now we 52.2 million young people in our schools, a new national record. I was in Florida with Governor Chiles on Friday and I can tell you that the school construction issue is alive and kicking. I believe the Congress needs to revisit this issue within a balanced budget framework.**

**A second impression is that a new American, bi-partisan consensus has now developed about how to improve education. It has taken us over a decade since Ted Bell issued his report, "*A Nation at Risk*" to develop this consensus but every where I go I see the core elements of this consensus being put in place.**

**There is a growing emphasis, for example, on early childhood development, and the importance of pre-k and kindergarten for all children (N.Dakota/NH). A second element is a commitment to higher standards and strong assessments. ( Philadelphia/David Hornbeck).**

**The American people also recognize that progress is only going to happen if we make sure that every child has masters the basics once and for all. That's the third element -- a clear focus on the fundamentals. This is a very conservative idea so it always surprises me that conservative attack the President's proposal for voluntary national tests in reading and math.**

**Critics of these tests see them as a form of federal intrusion but the American people see them very differently. They recognize that they are a symbol and a means to make sure that we start every American child off on the right foot when it comes to giving them a first class education.**

**The President is on a national crusade to lift-up American education starting with these two basics. This is why 79 % of all Americans support these voluntary national tests according to latest Wall Street Journal poll, and why the American people have made education the most important issue that should concern the federal government. These tests coupled with our strong investment in education can change the status-quo.**

As I travel around the country I see four other elements to this new education consensus falling into place. These include a stronger focus on teacher quality; a greater investment in technology; more parental involvement; and a growing recognition -- even among young people -- that taking the tough core courses pays off. I was very impressed by the recent College Board report that 25% of all incoming college freshman took the tough AP courses in high school.

Another element to this consensus is the willingness of school leaders to get tough when it comes to turning around failing schools. We know how to fix failing schools, and we have a new and tougher breed of superintendents who are willing to hold people accountable. Rudy Crew in New York, Paul Vallas in Chicago, Bill Rojas in San Francisco, David Hornbeck in Philadelphia -- just to name a few -- are all 'no nonsense' leaders who are committed to raising standards.

They are not willing to put up with mediocrity or failure and neither am I. If a school is failing don't let it drift. You have to be willing to close it down or reconstitute it. If a principal is slow to get the message, superintendents need to be willing to replace them. If teachers are burnt out, counsel them to leave the profession in a fair but speedy process or make sure they get the extra help they need from master teachers. What educators call peer review.

We know how to fix failing schools, and as this report indicates, there are school districts that are making things happen.

The new American consensus is a pragmatic, mainstream consensus, and we are starting to see some positive results. Math and science scores have been rising for a decade. SAT scores are up and ACT scores have gone up in four of the last five years.

Public education is improving. We are not where we want to be, but we are headed in the right direction. This is why we need to stay focused and not get side-tracked by divisive issues like vouchers. Let's remember that 90% of all of our young people go to public schools and the great majority of our public schools are successful.

And, I can tell you this -- if you gave the American people a choice today between using federal dollars to renovate and build new public schools or give out vouchers to subsidize private education there would be no question how the American people would vote. It would cost between \$5 billion to \$25 billion just to pay the tuition of the 5 million children already enrolled in private schools in this nation. The last thing we should be doing at a time of record enrollment increases is to be draining public tax dollars from public education to subsidize [the private education of some children.] ✓

I strongly oppose the current voucher proposals now moving through the Congress and so does the President. [The President will veto the Labor-HAS appropriations bill if it includes a voucher proposal.] Both the President and I believe in public school choice. We have been at the forefront of growing effort to expand charter school movement. ✓

But vouchers are wrong for many reasons and we need to be clear about what is at stake. Vouchers are undemocratic and undermine a 200 year American commitment to the common school. Every state constitution in this country has a clause in it that makes free and public education available to all children. The idea that every child in this country has such a constitutional right to a free, public education at the state level is not to be dismissed lightly. I do not think that voucher proponents have thought long and hard about the very negative consequences of 'balkanizing' public education.

As the background paper notes vouchers would reduce public accountability and make private schools less private and less independent. There is little certainty that religious schools that now make up 79% of all private schools would be willing to give up their religious mission in order to overcome constitutional barriers. The paper also notes that private schools simply do not have the capacity to absorb additional students much less those children with special disabilities.

I worry too that those who support vouchers have become almost myopic in their insistence that public education is failing across the board. Tell that to the parents in Fairfax County or Montgomery County or in countless school districts across the country where parents and community leaders support public education. Two years ago, *Money* magazine did a survey of the top 100 school districts in the country. The two defining factors that made a school district successful were family and community involvement, not income or family status.

Sounds very  
suburban.

**The paper also notes -- and this is very important -- that the most important choice a student can make is not the type of school they go to but the academic courses they take. Course taking rather than the type of school is far more important.**

**This is why I am always perplexed that voucher advocates never talk about how to improve reading, how to improve teaching, how to raise academic standards. Their solution for every issue that confronts American education is vouchers. It is a very simplistic world view -- a silver bullet solution and it is just wrong.**

**If a school is failing the solution isn't to give scholarships to 50 children and leave 500 behind, but to fix the whole school. The current \$7 million DC voucher initiative in Congress, which offers vouchers for 2,000 low income D.C. public school students, is just such a misguided and shortsighted effort.**

**This is why I am supporting legislation that will be introduced by Eleanor Holmes Norton that will help more than 31,000 children in 62 schools -- representing nearly half of the students in the D.C. Public Schools. This \$7 million proposal benefits more than 16 times the number of students that the voucher proposal purports to help. The first part of this legislation would dedicate \$5 million to those District schools that commit themselves to implementing whole school change through programs such as New American Schools or the Laboratory for Success at Temple University.**

**These are programs with a proven track record that are specifically designed to produce improvement in inner city school systems. Each of these programs are based on significant research that will help local schools transform their entire system, with a program of high academic standards, professional teacher development, and community and parent involvement. This legislation would also set aside \$2 million dollars for after-school programs in 20 schools; something that is very needed in D.C.**

**Does public education need to be improved? Of course it does and we know how to get it done. Public tax dollars ought to be spent to improve reading and math, to improve the skills of America's teachers, to get computers into the classroom, to renovate and build new schools -- to make sure that high school diplomas really stand for something.**

**I believe that if we focus in on what we agree on -- and we agree on many things -- rather than what divides us -- we can make the next ten years the 'golden era' of American education. The American people have made the improvement of public education a national priority. We know how to fix our schools and we know what really matters. Now is the time to roll-up our sleeves to make it happen.**

**Thank you.**

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Pages: 9 , including this cover sheet.

From: Terry K. Peterson/Lidice Rivas

Subject:

Mike -

attached are KWR's remarks for  
"What Really Matters in American Education"  
scheduled for tomorrow, Tuesday - INCLUDING  
a chart on DC schools.

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**Remarks of  
U.S. Secretary of Education  
Richard W. Riley**

**What Really Matters in American Education  
National Press Club, Washington, D.C.  
September 23, 1997**

**Good morning. I am pleased to be back in Washington after completing the first leg of my annual 'America Goes Back to School' campaign. In the last three weeks, I have visited with parents and teachers in Pennsylvania, Wyoming, Alaska, Colorado, North Dakota, Ohio and Florida.**

**I find these trips very worthwhile. I always come back to Washington with a much better sense of what really matters and what is really going on in the classroom. I want to make some comments about my impressions and then speak to several of the issues in the background paper that we are releasing today entitled, 'What Really Matters'.**

**One of the strongest impressions I have is that we have some very crowded schools. Right now we 52.2 million young people in our schools, a new national record. I was in Florida with Governor Chiles on Friday and I can tell you that the school construction issue is alive and kicking. I believe the Congress needs to revisit this issue within a balanced budget framework.**

**A second impression is that a new American, bi-partisan consensus has now developed about how to improve education. It has taken us over a decade since Ted Bell issued his report, "*A Nation at Risk*" to develop this consensus but every where I go I see the core elements of this consensus being put in place.**

**There is a growing emphasis, for example, on early childhood development, and the importance of pre-k and kindergarten for all children (N.Dakota/NH). A second element is a commitment to higher standards and strong assessments. ( Philadelphia/David Hornbeck).**

**The American people also recognize that progress is only going to happen if we make sure that every child has masters the basics once and for all. That's the third element -- a clear focus on the fundamentals. This is a very conservative idea so it always surprises me that conservative attack the President's proposal for voluntary national tests in reading and math.**

**Critics of these tests see them as a form of federal intrusion but the American people see them very differently. They recognize that they are a symbol and a means to make sure that we start every American child off on the right foot when it comes to giving them a first class education.**

**The President is on a national crusade to lift-up American education starting with these two basics. This is why 79 % of all Americans support these voluntary national tests according to latest Wall Street Journal poll, and why the American people have made education the most important issue that should concern the federal government. These tests coupled with our strong investment in education can change the status-quo.**

As I travel around the country I see four other elements to this new education consensus falling into place. These include a stronger focus on teacher quality; a greater investment in technology; more parental involvement; and a growing recognition — even among young people — that taking the tough core courses pays off. I was very impressed by the recent College Board report that 25% of all incoming college freshman took the tough AP courses in high school.

Another element to this consensus is the willingness of school leaders to get tough when it comes to turning around failing schools. We know how to fix failing schools, and we have a new and tougher breed of superintendents who are willing to hold people accountable. Rudy Crew in New York, Paul Vallas in Chicago, Bill Rojas in San Francisco, David Hornbeck in Philadelphia — just to name a few — are all 'no nonsense' leaders who are committed to raising standards.

They are not willing to put up with mediocrity or failure and neither am I. If a school is failing don't let it drift. You have to be willing to close it down or reconstitute it. If a principal is slow to get the message, superintendents need to be willing to replace them. If teachers are burnt out, counsel them to leave the profession in a fair but speedy process or make sure they get the extra help they need from master teachers. What educators call peer review.

We know how to fix failing schools, and as this report indicates, there are school districts that are making things happen.

**The new American consensus is a pragmatic, mainstream consensus, and we are starting to see some positive results. Math and science scores have been rising for a decade. SAT scores are up and ACT scores have gone up in four of the last five years.**

**Public education is improving. We are not where we want to be, but we are headed in the right direction. This is why we need to stay focused and not get side-tracked by divisive issues like vouchers. Let's remember that 90% of all of our young people go to public schools and the great majority of our public schools are successful.**

**And, I can tell you this – if you gave the American people a choice today between using federal dollars to renovate and build new public schools or give out vouchers to subsidize private education there would be no question how the American people would vote. It would cost between \$5 billion to \$25 billion just to pay the tuition of the 5 million children already enrolled in private schools in this nation. The last thing we should be doing at a time of record enrollment increases is to be draining public tax dollars from public education to subsidize the private education of some children.**

**I strongly oppose the current voucher proposals now moving through the Congress and so does the President. The President will veto the Labor-HAS appropriations bill if it includes a voucher proposal. Both the President and I believe in public school choice. We have been at the forefront of growing effort to expand charter school movement.**

But vouchers are wrong for many reasons and we need to be clear about what is at stake. Vouchers are undemocratic and undermine a 200 year American commitment to the common school. Every state constitution in this country has a clause in it that makes free and public education available to all children. The idea that every child in this country has such a constitutional right to a free, public education at the state level is not to be dismissed lightly. I do not think that voucher proponents have thought long and hard about the very negative consequences of 'balkanizing' public education.

As the background paper notes vouchers would reduce public accountability and make private schools less private and less independent. There is little certainty that religious schools that now make up 79% of all private schools would be willing to give up their religious mission in order to overcome constitutional barriers. The paper also notes that private schools simply do not have the capacity to absorb additional students much less those children with special disabilities.

I worry too that those who support vouchers have become almost myopic in their insistence that public education is failing across the board. Tell that to the parents in Fairfax County or Montgomery County or in countless school districts across the country where parents and community leaders support public education. Two years ago, *Money* magazine did a survey of the top 100 school districts in the country. The two defining factors that made a school district successful were family and community involvement, not income or family status.

The paper also notes – and this is very important – that the most important choice a student can make is not the type of school they go to but the academic courses they take. Course taking rather than the type of school is far more important.

This is why I am always perplexed that voucher advocates never talk about how to improve reading, how to improve teaching, how to raise academic standards. Their solution for every issue that confronts American education is vouchers. It is a very simplistic world view – a silver bullet solution and it is just wrong.

If a school is failing the solution isn't to give scholarships to 50 children and leave 500 behind, but to fix the whole school. The current \$7 million DC voucher initiative in Congress, which offers vouchers for 2,000 low income D.C. public school students, is just such a misguided and shortsighted effort.

This is why I am supporting legislation that will be introduced by Eleanor Holmes Norton that will help more than 31,000 children in 62 schools – representing nearly half of the students in the D.C. Public Schools. This \$7 million proposal benefits more than 16 times the number of students that the voucher proposal purports to help. The first part of this legislation would dedicate \$5 million to those District schools that commit themselves to implementing whole school change through programs such as New American Schools or the Laboratory for Success at Temple University.

**These are programs with a proven track record that are specifically designed to produce improvement in inner city school systems. Each of these programs are based on significant research that will help local schools transform their entire system, with a program of high academic standards, professional teacher development, and community and parent involvement. This legislation would also set aside \$2 million dollars for after-school programs in 20 schools; something that is very needed in D.C.**

**Does public education need to be improved? Of course it does and we know how to get it done. Public tax dollars ought to be spent to improve reading and math, to improve the skills of America's teachers, to get computers into the classroom, to renovate and build new schools – to make sure that high school diplomas really stand for something.**

**I believe that if we focus in on what we agree on – and we agree on many things – rather than what divides us – we can make the next ten years the 'golden era' of American education. The American people have made the improvement of public education a national priority. We know how to fix our schools and we know what really matters. Now is the time to roll-up our sleeves to make it happen.**

**Thank you.**

## COMPARISON OF D.C. SCHOOLS PROPOSALS

### DRAFT II: KEVIN

| \$7 million to Fix Failing Schools in DC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | \$7 million for D.C. Vouchers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improves educational opportunity for about 31,450 students in 62 schools -- almost 16 times the number of children that would be served in the proposed D.C. voucher plan. Under this proposal no child is left behind.</li><li>• Allows parents, teachers and communities to 'fix' their schools using proven, successful research-based models that have helped other urban school systems turn around failing schools with the full involvement of parents, teachers and the community.</li><li>• Provides new after-school programs for 2,000 children in need of an extended learning environment. Research has shown that youth are at greatest risk of violence after the regular school day, and that students in quality after-school programs help youth resist unsafe behaviors and demonstrate higher academic achievement.</li><li>• A recent poll found that 69% of Americans prefer strategies that improve public schools</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides 2,000 students with \$3,200 vouchers to attend public, private and religious schools in D.C. and the surrounding area, and gives scholarships of up to \$500 for tutoring assistance.</li><li>• Vouchers would divert attention and scarce resources away from efforts to raise standards and improve achievement in all D.C public schools. Further, there is no conclusive evidence that vouchers help raise student achievement.</li><li>• The DC vouchers proposal would not meet the safety and educational needs of children during the hours outside the school day.</li><li>• The same poll found that only 25% favor approaches that promote private alternatives to public education.</li></ul> |



September 18, 1997  
(Senate Floor)

## STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

(THIS STATEMENT HAS BEEN COORDINATED BY OMB WITH THE CONCERNED AGENCIES.)

### S. 1156 – DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS BILL, FY 1998

(Sponsors: Stevens (R), Alaska; Faircloth (R), North Carolina)

This Statement of Administration Policy provides the Administration's views on S. 1156, the District of Columbia Appropriations Bill, FY 1998, as reported by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The Administration commends the Committee for developing a bill that provides sufficient funding to implement the National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997 successfully. The Senate is urged to approve a bill that is free of extraneous provisions.

The Administration strongly supports charter schools which provide parents and students more choice within the public education system. However, the Administration understands that an amendment may be offered that would provide for the use of school vouchers in the District. The Administration would strongly oppose any legislation allowing the use of Federal taxpayer funds for private school vouchers. Instead of investing additional resources in public schools, vouchers would allow a few selected students to attend private schools, and would draw attention away from the hard work of reforming public schools that serve the overwhelming majority of D.C. students. Establishing a private school voucher system in the Nation's Capital would set a dangerous precedent for using Federal taxpayer funds for schools that are not accountable to the public. If such an amendment were adopted and included in the bill presented to the President, his senior advisers would recommend that the President veto the bill.

The Administration strongly opposes the abortion language of the Committee bill, which would prohibit the use of both Federal and District funds to pay for abortions except in those cases where the life of the mother is endangered or in situations of rape or incest. The Administration continues to view this prohibition on the use of local funds as an unwarranted intrusion into the affairs of the District and would support an amendment, if offered, to strike this prohibition.

The Administration understands that an amendment may be offered that would limit the use of a portion of the D.C. prison construction funds for housing inmates in private contract facilities. The Administration strongly opposes such a restriction on the use of these funds as it would hinder the Bureau of Prisons' ability to house serious violent offenders in a timely and cost effective manner. The amendment is not needed since the Revitalization Act already requires that fifty percent of D.C. inmates be housed in private contract facilities.

The Administration urges the Senate to consider an amendment that would make funds collected by the D.C. Courts available to the Courts for necessary expenses, including the funding of pension costs.



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## CRS-10

school, and the maximum would be the full AEPP. The AEPP would be adjusted to account for the additional costs of educating pupils with disabilities. Scholarships would not be considered to be taxable income to the parents of participating pupils or federal aid to participating schools. Participating schools must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, but would not otherwise be subject to regulation by ED beyond those regulations in effect on the date of enactment or established under this proposal. An evaluation of the program would be conducted by ED. This proposal is similar to H.R. 3467, introduced in the 104th Congress (see below).

**H.R. 318**, introduced by Representative Solomon, would authorize tax credits of up to \$1,000 per pupil per year for expenses of tuition, fees, books, supplies, and equipment for pupils attending private elementary or secondary schools, as well as public or private vocational schools or institutions of higher education. This is similar to H.R. 156, introduced in the 104th Congress (see below).



The "District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1997" was introduced in the House as **H.R. 1797** by Representative Arney, *et al.*, and in the Senate as **S. 847** by Senator Coats, *et al.* The proposal is similar to one that was contained in the House-passed and conference versions of **H.R. 2546** of the 104th Congress (see the next section of this report). This legislation would authorize the provision of scholarships to District of Columbia resident students in grades K-12 from low-income families to attend public or private schools in the District or nearby suburbs ("tuition scholarships"), or to pay the costs of supplementary academic programs outside regular school hours for students attending District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) ("enhanced achievement scholarships"). The authorized appropriation level for this program would be \$7 million for FY1998, rising to \$10 million for each of FY2000-FY2002, plus a one-time authorization of \$250,000 for program evaluation. No more than \$500,000 of the appropriations for any year may be used for program administration or any purpose other than aid to students.

This program would be administered by a non-governmental District of Columbia Scholarship Corporation. The Corporation's Board would have 7 members — 3 appointed by the President from nominations by the Speaker of the House (in consultation with Minority Leader), 3 appointed by the President from nominations by the Majority Leader of the Senate (in consultation with Minority Leader), and 1 appointed by the Mayor. All Board members must be D.C. residents, and none may be D.C. or Federal Government employees (unless they are on leave). Board members would serve for 5-year terms, and would receive stipends of \$150 per day, up to \$5,000 per year. In carrying out its functions, the Board is to consult with the District of Columbia Board of Education, the Superintendent of the DCPS, other entities with jurisdiction over the DCPS (such as the current Board of Trustees named by the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority), and other scholarship programs in the District of Columbia.

Students in grades K-12 who are residents of the District of Columbia with family income below 185% of the standard federal poverty income threshold for families of the relevant size would be eligible for scholarships. During the initial years of the program (1997-99), first priority in the awarding of scholarships would go to students who have been attending DCPS schools (or are about to enter kindergarten in DCPS schools). In all years, priority would also be given to previous scholarship

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recipients. Thus, the proposal places an emphasis at first on pupils who are attending *public* schools in D.C., but pupils already in private school may receive scholarships after these first priority pupils are served in 1997-99 (and previous recipients in 2000 and beyond). In addition, the Corporation would be required to "attempt to ensure an equitable distribution of scholarship funds to students at diverse academic achievement levels" (Section 4(c)).

There would be two types of scholarships: (a) "tuition scholarships" could be used to pay the costs of tuition and fees<sup>16</sup> at a public or private (including a religiously-affiliated) school in D.C. or the inner ring of suburban jurisdictions<sup>17</sup>; and (b) "enhanced achievement scholarships" could pay the costs of tuition, fees, and transportation for "a program of instruction ... which enhances student achievement of the core curriculum and is operated outside of regular school hours to supplement the regular school program" (Section 4(d)(2)). The amount of *tuition scholarships* would be the lesser of \$3,200<sup>18</sup> or 100% of tuition<sup>19</sup>, fees, and transportation costs if family income is *below the poverty level*, and the lesser of \$2,400 or 75% of tuition, fees, and transportation costs if family income is *between 100% and 185% of poverty*. The amount of *enhanced achievement scholarships* would be the lesser of tuition, fees, and transportation or \$500 for all students with family income below 185% of poverty. In all cases, the bill states that scholarships would be considered to be aid to the student, not the institution.

In order for its students to be eligible for either a tuition or an enhanced achievement scholarship, an educational institution generally must have been in operation for at least 3 years, with at least 25 students. Alternatively, institutions may obtain provisional, 1-year certification after providing a variety of information to the Corporation (e.g., a business plan, course of study, list of the institution's board of directors, etc.). Certification of eligibility may be revoked for "good cause" (such as failure to meet program requirements) or if 25% or more of the scholarship recipients at the school fail to "make appropriate progress" (Section 6(d)). Institutions must file annual reports on their budget; and may not discriminate on the basis of race, color,

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<sup>16</sup> There is some ambiguity in the bill regarding whether tuition scholarships could be used to pay transportation costs — Section 4(d)(1), "Use of Scholarship", does not include transportation costs, but Section 5(c), "Scholarship Payments and Amounts", includes transportation costs. Presumably, this ambiguity will be resolved if the bill receives further consideration.

<sup>17</sup> These include Montgomery and Prince Georges counties in Maryland, plus Arlington and Fairfax counties, and the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church in Virginia.

<sup>18</sup> Each of the specific maximum dollar amounts for scholarships (\$3,200, \$2,400, and \$500) would be increased in the future by increases in the Consumer Price Index.

<sup>19</sup> Participating schools may not charge scholarship recipients tuition and fees in excess of the amounts charged to other District of Columbia resident students attending the school.

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or national origin<sup>20</sup>, and must comply with Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.<sup>21</sup> Further, the bill states that, "[N]othing in this Act shall affect the rights of students, or the obligations of the District of Columbia public schools, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" (Section 9).

Participating educational institutions would be required to make annual reports to the Corporation containing a variety of data on student achievement, disciplinary actions, academic program, parental involvement, etc. The Corporation would also be required to submit an annual report to the Congress, including information on how program funds have been expended, and the initial achievement levels of scholarship recipients. The U.S. General Accounting Office would be required to contract for an evaluation of the scholarship program within 4 years of the bill's enactment. The evaluation would include comparisons of scholarship recipients and similar but non-participating students in the DCPS with respect to test scores, graduation rates, parental satisfaction, and impact of the program on the DCPS. A one-time appropriation of \$250,000 would be authorized for the evaluation.

Finally, the Senate-passed version of H.R. 2014, the Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1997, would allow withdrawals from newly-authorized, tax-advantaged education savings accounts for elementary and secondary education expenses, including private school tuition. The Senate version of H.R. 2014, now being considered by a conference committee, would authorize a new form of Education Individual Retirement Accounts, the earnings from which would be exempt from federal income taxes. These accounts could be established on behalf of children under the age of 18 years; up to \$2,000, plus the amount of a related tax credit of up to \$500 per year for children aged 13-16, could be invested in the account for each child. The proceeds from these accounts could be withdrawn without penalty only if used to pay tuition and other qualified expenses of attending a postsecondary or elementary or secondary school (including private schools), postsecondary tuition prepayment programs, or expenses related to home schooling.

**Legislative Proposals in the 104th Congress.** The 104th Congress considered several legislative proposals that would have provided federal support for public and private school choice. The Congress considered a choice program that was included in the conference version of H.R. 2546, FY1996 appropriations legislation for the District of Columbia (D.C.). While the House passed original and conference versions of this legislation that included authorization for a private-public school scholarship program, the Senate failed to invoke cloture on a filibuster against the

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<sup>20</sup> Discrimination on the basis of religion, sex, or age, which is currently prohibited for educational institutions that are deemed to be federal aid recipients, would not be explicitly prohibited under the bill.

<sup>21</sup> The bill as introduced states that schools must comply with Title IV of the Civil Rights Act. However, since Title IV does not directly prohibit discrimination (its provisions deal mostly with technical assistance to public school systems undergoing desegregation), it is possible that the reference was intended to be to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in federally assisted programs.

### Coverdell Amendment--Summary

This amendment in the Senate reconciliation bill (S. 949) would allow taxpayers to establish an "education individual retirement account" to pay the "qualified education expenses" of their dependents. Non-deductible contributions to the account would be limited to \$2,000 per year (plus the amount of the applicable child tax credit ) until the dependent reaches 18. Income from the account would accumulate tax-free, and withdrawals from the account would be tax-free so long as they are used for qualified education expenses. When the dependent reaches 30, the education individual retirement account would become a regular IRA.

Beginning January 1, 2001, qualified education expenses would include, in addition to higher education expenses, "qualified elementary and secondary education expenses" defined as "tuition, fees, tutoring, special needs services, books, supplies, equipment, transportation, and supplementary expenses required for the enrollment or attendance at a public, private, or sectarian school." The expenses of home schooling the dependent would also be allowed as a qualified expense "if the requirements of any applicable State or local law are met with respect to such education."

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AMENDMENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Calendar No. \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: To allow tax-free expenditures from an education individual retirement account for elementary and secondary school expenses and to adjust the modifications to the minimum tax.

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To provide  
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Referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_  
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AMENDMENTS intended to be proposed by Mr. COVERDELL, • Mr. Abraham  
Mr. Costa, Mr. Craig, Mr. Santorum, Mr. Asher  
Viz:

1 On page 19, between lines 14 and 15, insert:

2           “(D) ADJUSTMENT.—The Secretary shall  
3           reduce the dollar amounts otherwise in effect  
4           under this paragraph for any calendar year to  
5           the extent necessary to increase Federal reve-  
6           nues by the amount the Secretary estimates  
7           Federal revenues will be reduced by reason of  
8           allowing distributions from education individual  
9           retirement accounts under section 530 to be

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2

1 used for qualified elementary and secondary  
2 education expenses described in section  
3 530(b)(2)(A)(ii)."

4 On page 64, beginning with line 8, strike all through  
5 page 67, line 15, and insert:

6 "(1) EDUCATION INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT AC-  
7 COUNT.—The term 'education individual retirement  
8 account' means a trust created or organized in the  
9 United States exclusively for the purpose of paying  
10 the qualified education expenses of the account hold-  
11 er, but only if the written governing instrument cre-  
12 ating the trust meets the following requirements:

13 "(A) No contribution will be accepted—

14 "(i) unless it is in cash,

15 "(ii) after the date on which the ac-  
16 count holder attains age 18, or

17 "(iii) except in the case of rollover  
18 contributions, if such contribution would  
19 result in aggregate contributions for the  
20 taxable year exceeding the sum of—

21 "(I) \$2,000, plus

22 "(II) the amount of the credit al-  
23 lowable under section 25A for the tax-  
24 able year for 1 qualifying child.

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3

1           “(B) The trustee is a bank (as defined in  
2           section 408(n)) or another person who dem-  
3           onstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary  
4           that the manner in which that person will ad-  
5           minister the trust will be consistent with the re-  
6           quirements of this section.

7           “(C) No part of the trust assets will be in-  
8           vested in life insurance contracts.

9           “(D) The assets of the trust shall not be  
10          commingled with other property except in a  
11          common trust fund or common investment  
12          fund.

13          “(E) Upon the death of the account hold-  
14          er, any balance in the account will be distrib-  
15          uted as required under section 529(b)(8) (as if  
16          such account were a qualified tuition program).

17          “(F) The account becomes an IRA Plus as  
18          of the date the account holder attains age 30  
19          (and meets all requirements for an IRA Plus on  
20          and after such date), unless the account holder  
21          elects to have sections 529(b)(8) apply as of  
22          such date (as if such account were a qualified  
23          tuition program).

24          “(2) QUALIFIED EDUCATION EXPENSES.—

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1           “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘qualified  
2 education expenses’ means—

3           “(i) qualified higher education ex-  
4 penses (as defined in section 529(e)(3),  
5 and

6           “(ii) in the case of taxable years be-  
7 ginning after December 31, 2000, qualified  
8 elementary and secondary education ex-  
9 penses (as defined in paragraph (5)).

10          “(B) QUALIFIED TUITION PROGRAMS.—

11          Such term shall include amounts paid or in-  
12 curred to purchase tuition credits or certifi-  
13 cates, or to make contributions to an account,  
14 under a qualified tuition program (as defined in  
15 section 529(b)) for the benefit of the account  
16 holder.

17          “(3) ELIGIBLE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION.—

18          The term ‘eligible educational institution’ has the  
19 meaning given such term by section 529(e)(5).

20          “(4) ACCOUNT HOLDER.—The term ‘account

21 holder’ means the individual for whose benefit the  
22 education individual retirement account is estab-  
23 lished.

24          “(5) QUALIFIED ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY  
25 EDUCATION EXPENSES.—

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5

1           “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘qualified el-  
2           ementary and secondary education expenses’  
3           means tuition, fees, tutoring, special needs serv-  
4           ices, books, supplies, equipment, transportation,  
5           and supplementary expenses required for the  
6           enrollment or attendance at a public, private, or  
7           sectarian school of any dependant of the tax-  
8           payer with respect to whom the taxpayer is al-  
9           lowed a deduction under section 151.

10           “(B)       SPECIAL       RULE       FOR  
11           HOMESCHOOLING.—Such term shall include ex-  
12           penses described in subparagraph (A) required  
13           for education provided for homeschooling if the  
14           requirements of any applicable State or local  
15           law are met with respect to such education.

16           “(C) SCHOOL.—The term ‘school’ means  
17           any school which provides elementary education  
18           or secondary education (through grade 12), as  
19           determined under State law.

20           “(c) TAX TREATMENT OF DISTRIBUTIONS.—

21           “(1) IN GENERAL.—Any amount paid or dis-  
22           tributed shall be includible in gross income to the ex-  
23           tent required by section 529(a)(3) (determined as if  
24           such account were a qualified tuition program and

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N.L.A.

6

1 as if qualified higher education expenses include  
2 qualified education expenses).

3 "(2) SPECIAL RULES FOR APPLYING ESTATE  
4 AND GIFT TAXES WITH RESPECT TO ACCOUNT.—  
5 Rules similar to the rules of paragraphs (2), (4),  
6 and (5) of section 529(c) shall apply for purposes of  
7 this section.

8 "(3) ADDITIONAL TAX FOR DISTRIBUTIONS NOT  
9 USED FOR EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES.—

10 "(A) IN GENERAL.—The tax imposed by  
11 section 529(f) shall apply to payments and dis-  
12 tributions from an education individual retire-  
13 ment account in the same manner as such tax  
14 applies to qualified tuition programs (as defined  
15 in section 529), except that section 529(f) shall  
16 be applied by reference to qualified education  
17 expenses.

JUN 27 1997 2:56pm

NO. 648 P. 2

JUN 27 1997

(Date)

# Roll Call Vote

Legislative  
 Executive

NO.

150

SUBJECT

12:57pm COVERDELL H.M.P.T. No. 574

| YEAS |                   | NAYS |
|------|-------------------|------|
|      | Abraham           |      |
|      | Akaka             |      |
| 1    | Allard            |      |
| 2    | Ashcroft          |      |
|      | Baucus            | 1    |
|      | Bennett           |      |
|      | Biden             |      |
|      | Bingaman          |      |
|      | Bond              |      |
|      | Bauer             |      |
|      | Bronx             |      |
|      | Brownback         |      |
|      | Bryan             |      |
| 3    | Bumpers           |      |
|      | Burns             |      |
|      | Byrd              |      |
|      | Campbell          |      |
|      | Chafee            |      |
|      | Cleland           |      |
|      | Coats             |      |
| 4    | Cochran           |      |
|      | Collins           | 2    |
|      | Conrad            |      |
| 5    | Coverdell         |      |
| 6    | Craig             |      |
|      | D'Aquino          |      |
|      | Daschle           |      |
| 7    | DeWine            |      |
|      | Dodd              | 3    |
|      | Domenici          |      |
|      | Dorgan            |      |
|      | Durbin            |      |
|      | Earm              |      |
|      | Faircloth         |      |
|      | Fehlgold          | 4    |
|      | Finkelstein       | 5    |
|      | Ford              |      |
|      | Fyfe              |      |
|      | Glenn             | 6    |
|      | Gorton            |      |
|      | Graham, Florida   | 7    |
|      | Graham, Texas     |      |
| 8    | Cranus, Minnesota |      |
|      | Grassley          |      |
| 9    | Grassley          |      |
| 10   | Hagel             |      |
|      | Harkin            |      |



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
THE SECRETARY

July 26, 1996

Honorable Randy "Duke" Cunningham  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Early  
Childhood, Youth and Families,  
Committee on Economic and  
Educational Opportunities  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cunningham:

I am writing in response to your letter of July 12 in which you ask for the views of the Department of Education on Title IV of H.R. 3467, the "Saving Our Children: The American Community Renewal Act of 1996." Title IV of the bill, the "Low-Income Educational Opportunity Act of 1996," would authorize the appropriation of five billion dollars for formula grants to no more than 100 "renewal communities" designated by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; the grants would be used for the operation of "Low-Income Educational Opportunity Scholarship Programs," the central feature of which are the award of tuition "scholarships"--vouchers, by another name--to the parents of children attending participating private elementary and secondary schools. The Department of Justice is reviewing the bill and may have comments regarding the constitutionality of Title IV and other provisions of the bill. I strongly oppose Title IV because I strongly oppose the use of Federal taxpayer funds to pay for private school vouchers.

Under Title IV, each renewal community would submit to the Secretary of Education a plan for increasing "educational options for low-income children." Included in the plan would be the community's Low-Income Educational Opportunity Scholarship program, under which selected students would receive a scholarship for tuition and fees and a transportation allowance, if they attend a private elementary or secondary school, or a transportation allowance, if they attend a public school other than the one they "normally would attend." Students receiving assistance under the program could not be from families with income in excess of 185 percent of the poverty line, but communities would otherwise have broad flexibility to select students on a non-discriminatory basis. The value of the scholarships would be substantial: they could not be less than the lesser of 60 percent of the average per pupil cost in the public school system of the community or the full amount of the tuition and fees charged by the private school the student attends. To participate in the program a private school need only comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (prohibiting discrimination based on race) and meet State or local standards for curriculum and facilities, as well as health and safety, that are applicable on January 1, 1996. If the amount of the community's grant exceeds the amount needed for scholarships and transportation allowances, the excess funds may be used "for the general

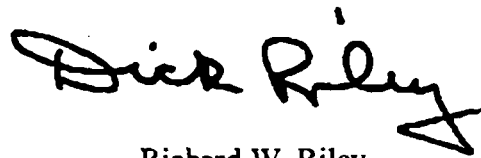
Page 2

education of children from low-income families who attend public schools within the renewal community." Finally, the bill would override any State laws or constitutional provisions that would prohibit the expenditure of Federal funds in or by a religious school.

The President and I have long supported comprehensive, community-based education reform; indeed, that is the very heart of the "Goals 2000: Educate America Act." In addition, the President and I have long supported public school choice and publicly accountable charter schools. But while the President and I support the goal of stimulating broad-based educational reform at the local level, we cannot support federally funded vouchers for students to use at private elementary or secondary schools, with little or no public accountability for how those funds are used. We need to focus instead on approaches to education reform--approaches such as high standards for achievement and discipline, competent and well-prepared teachers, and appropriately employed educational technology--that will improve education for all children instead of draining much-needed resources from our public schools, which serve almost 90 percent of our Nation's children, leaving them worse off. Title IV would be an extremely costly venture--one that provided Federal assistance to students attending private schools that is many times larger than the amount of Federal assistance provided to most public school children--and could be a first step toward a nationalized voucher program that we do not need and cannot afford. Choice among private schools should be paid for with private funds, and public funds should be used to provide choice among public schools. On these grounds, Title IV of H.R. 3467 is unacceptable.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the submission of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick Riley", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard W. Riley

FAX TRANSMISSION  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

800 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE SW, RM. 8133  
WASHINGTON, DC 20202  
202-401-3414  
FAX: 202-401-0598

Bill Kincaid

To: Mike Cohen

Fax #:

Date: 9/16

Pages: 7, including this cover sheet.

From: Terry K. Peterson/Lidice Rivas

Subject:

FYI --

latest talking Points on voucher and  
summary of recent (voucher) court  
decisions re: vouchers in Wisconsin & Ohio.

**CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE**

**THIS TRANSMISSION IS INTENDED FOR AND RESTRICTED TO THE NAMED ADDRESSEE ONLY. IT MAY CONTAIN CONFIDENTIAL AND/OR PRIVILEGED INFORMATION. IF YOU RECEIVE THIS TRANSMISSION IN ERROR, YOU ARE NOTIFIED THAT YOU ARE PROHIBITED FROM READING, COPYING, OR DISSEMINATING THE TRANSMISSION. PLEASE CALL 202/401-3000 TO ARRANGE FOR RETURN OF ANY TRANSMISSION SENT IN ERROR. THANK YOU.**

## Talking Points On Vouchers

1. Vouchers are bad public policy -- they are unnecessary, divisive, and diversionary. They are political gimmicks that distract from the real business of creating quality education.
2. They divert attention and bleed taxpayer dollars from public schools that need this attention and money more than ever.
  - The primary by-product of vouchers is to undermine and damage our local public schools that serve nearly 90 percent of our children by draining funds and shifting public tax dollars to private schools of any type, thereby benefiting a small minority of students.
3. Vouchers divide communities -- precisely the opposite of what public education should do and historically has done.
  - Presently, public schools are one place where communities successfully come together as a community.
  - Public schools represent the best of a long American tradition of pluralism and democracy.
  - Taking away this kind of community control would distract from such efforts to improve public schools, including: keeping drugs away from our children, raising standards, emphasizing the basics, improving professional development of teachers, and getting computers and other learning technologies into every classroom.
4. Private school vouchers don't solve the problem of a troubled school. They only make the problem worse.
  - Anyone who has ever thought about educational improvement understand that it requires more than a magic potion to fix a school. It requires hands-on involvement and long term community commitment.
  - We need to make fundamental, not cosmetic or politically inspired changes to schools. This includes building more schools to address the overcrowding and unsafe conditions that are the result of record school enrollments (52.2 million this year as a result of the baby boom echo); bringing challenging standards of learning to every classroom, and helping make sure every child can read well and independently by the end of the third grade and can handle basic math including algebra and some geometry by the end of the eighth grade. (Achieved in part through the use of voluntary national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math).

## VOUCHER PROGRAMS

Voucher programs are currently in operation in Ohio and Wisconsin and similar issues are being litigated in Vermont:

1. Ohio-This pilot program provides scholarships of up to \$2,500 for about 2,000 low-income students in Cleveland to attend private schools in Cleveland or public schools in adjacent school districts. (However, no public schools are participating in the program yet.) The program also provides tutorial assistance grants for public school students. The program began to operate in the 1996-97 school year.

Legal Status-The program was challenged as violating the First Amendment as well as several provisions of the Ohio Constitution.

The program was found to be constitutional by the Court of Common Pleas, Franklin County, Ohio in a decision dated July 31, 1996. The Court concluded that the sectarian schools participating in the scholarship program benefit only indirectly as a result of the independent and private choices of the aid recipients.

On May 1, 1997, the Ohio Court of Appeals struck down the program as violating both the Federal and state constitutions. On May 30, the court allowed the voucher program to continue through the end of this school year (but said such a request for next school year was premature as no funds have been appropriated yet for next year). On July 24, 1997, the Ohio Supreme Court ordered that the program could be funded through the 1997-98 school year while it hears the case.

2. Wisconsin-This program has been in operation since 1991 in nonsectarian schools in Milwaukee. The program provides vouchers of up to \$3,200 to about 1,400 low-income students. The program was amended in 1995 to include sectarian schools, but the courts have enjoined temporarily the use of vouchers in sectarian schools.

Legal Status-The expansion of the program to include sectarian schools was challenged as violating the First Amendment and various provisions of the Wisconsin Constitution.

In August 1995, the Wisconsin Supreme Court temporarily enjoined the use of vouchers at sectarian schools, while it considered the merits of the case in an original action. In March, 1996, the Court divided equally on the constitutionality of the expansion of the program to include sectarian schools. (Three justices ruled that the expansion of the program violated the State Constitution, but did not reach the issue of whether it also violated the First Amendment. Three other justices found the program to be constitutional under both the Federal and State constitutions.)

The legal challenge then went back to a state circuit judge who continued the injunction against the expansion of the program until he ruled on the merits of the case. On January 15, 1997, the circuit court judge ruled that the expansion of the program violates the Wisconsin state constitution. Wisconsin Court of Appeals (Fourth District) upheld the lower court decision on 8-22-97.

3. Vermont-Towns without high schools provide for the education of its students by paying tuition to various public and independent secondary schools approved by the State Board of education. When Chittenden approved payment to a religious high school, the State threatened to withhold state aid and litigation ensued.

Legal Status-The Vermont Superior Court ruled that it would violate the Federal and state constitution for a school district to pay tuition to a religious school. The case is being appealed to the Vermont Supreme Court.

Vouchers / Coverdell

**DRAFT**

The Honorable Ron Paul  
203 Cannon Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-4314

Dear Congressman Paul:

President Clinton has asked me to respond to your letter regarding the education-related tax provisions in the budget agreement. First, let me say that we appreciate your support for the HOPE Scholarship Tax Credit. As the President stated in his radio address this past weekend, this provision will open the doors to college for many, many Americans, with the potential to make the 13th and 14th years of education as universal as high school is today.

With respect to the Coverdell Amendment, the President's opposition is consistent with this Administration's long-standing position on private school vouchers. The Coverdell provision would have undermined public schools, where the vast majority of the nation's students attend. In contrast to the HOPE Scholarship, the Coverdell Amendment would have little practical benefit for families with students in public elementary and secondary schools. Instead, the Coverdell provisions would have primarily subsidized private school tuition. Furthermore, the revenue lost from the amendment would be much better spent on efforts to improve our public schools, such as repairing crumbling buildings. Finally, the Coverdell amendment would have covered almost any expense even remotely connected to the costs of K-12 education. This would open the door to abuse, as some would try to claim a subsidy for items not truly necessary or directly related to education. For all these reasons, the President remains strongly opposed to the Coverdell approach, or similar voucher-type schemes.

The President believes that we need to work together to raise standards, improve our public schools and widen choice within public education, such as through publicly accountable charter schools that only stay open as long as they succeed. When this Administration came into office only one such school existed; today there are approximately 500, and we hope to reach 3000 by the year 2000. These schools can help inject innovation and energy into our public school system without undermining the public schools.

Again, thank you for your support on the HOPE Scholarship. We look forward to working with you on future projects of mutual interest.

Sincerely,

Michael Cohen  
Special Assistant to the President  
for Education Policy

**THE WHITE HOUSE**

**WASHINGTON**

Bill Kincaid,

Draft response for  
Mike Cohen.

**July 31, 1997**

THANKS



**MEMORANDUM FOR BRUCE REED  
PAUL WEINSTEIN**

**FROM: SUSAN BROPHY SD  
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS**

**SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE**

Enclosed please find a copy of the letter that was sent to the President from Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX).

I do not believe this letter requires a Presidential response at this time. Please review the attached material and respond directly to the Member(s) of Congress, forwarding copies to the Office of Legislative Affairs, attention Chris Walker.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this matter. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Chris at 456-7500.

Enclosure

RON PAUL  
14TH DISTRICT, TEXAS  
  
BANKING AND  
FINANCE COMMITTEE  
  
SUBCOMMITTEES:  
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS  
AND CONSUMER CREDIT  
  
DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL  
MONETARY POLICY  
  
EDUCATION AND  
WORKFORCE COMMITTEE  
  
SUBCOMMITTEES:  
WORKFORCE PROTECTIONS  
  
EARLY CHILDHOOD, YOUTH  
AND FAMILIES

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-4314

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200 WEST 2ND STREET  
SUITE 210  
FREEPORT, TX 77541  
(409) 236-0900  
  
MOBILE OFFICE  
(512) 753-5653

President William J. Clinton  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20500

JUL 29 PM4:26

July 29, 1997

Dear Mr. President:

I'm writing today to express my pleasure with your support for the inclusion of a provision allowing parents to establish Education IRAs to help pay for their college education in the final tax and budget reconciliation package. This is a major step forward in making the dream of an affordable college education a reality for millions of Americans.

However, I must also express my disappointment in your position not to allow parents use of education IRAs to defray costs of elementary and secondary education. While I differ with you on many issues, I have always supported your efforts to allow Americans to spend more of their hard-earned funds on education. In fact, I am one of the few Republicans to publicly support your HOPE Scholarship proposal.

Given your public commitment to improving America's elementary and secondary education, I am baffled as to why you have chosen to turn your back on America's parents in not allowing parents to use funds deposited in an IRA for elementary and secondary education expenses, such as that contained in the amendment to the budget agreement offered by Senator Paul Coverdell of Georgia. As you know, the Coverdell amendment passed overwhelmingly in the Senate.

The Coverdell amendment is an important step toward our shared goal of providing parents with the ability to devote a greater percentage of their income to their children's elementary and secondary education.

Senator Coverdell's amendment allows parents to contribute up to \$2,000 a year to education savings accounts without having to pay taxes on the interest earned by that account so long as the funds are used for educational expenses such as tuition, fees, books, supplies, or home computers. Additionally, parents could use the savings to pay for K-12 educational expenses at a private, parochial, public, or home school. Parents could also use the IRAs to save for college. The choice of how to use these funds is, as it should be, solely up to the child's parents.

Mr. President, limiting the use of Education IRAs limits their effectiveness and limits parental freedom to choose how best to educate their children. Some parents may wish to devote more resources to K-12 education than to higher education. Furthermore, since not all children pursue higher education, not all children would benefit from education IRAs limited to higher education. Why should the parents of a 19-year old college freshman be eligible to use an education IRA when the parents of a non-college bound 18-year old high school senior are forbidden to take advantage of an education IRA?

Education IRAs would dramatically benefit all parents and children. A parent who puts aside \$2,000 a year would have over \$14,000 to devote to their child's education by the time the child is ready for first grade. Imagine how much stronger America's schools would be if parents had thousands of dollars to spend on their children's elementary education.

Few proposals considered by this Congress will do as much to benefit all Americans as an education IRA for all levels of schooling. This proposal will allow parents to save and invest in their children's future and begin to provide more equitable opportunities for children to receive the best possible education.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I once again thank you for your leadership in returning more money to the American people to allow them to pursue higher education through Education IRAs and the HOPE Scholarship. I also respectfully urge you to reconsider your position and support allowing parents to use education IRAs for elementary and secondary education. Please help me and all members of Congress make quality education at all levels a reality for America's children.

Sincerely,



Ron Paul

1ST STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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AP Online

August 16, 1997; Saturday 11:06 Eastern Time

SECTION: Washington - general news

LENGTH: 379 words

HEADLINE: Clinton, Minn. Governor Trade Views

BYLINE: RON FOURNIER

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

President Clinton promoted his education program today, but his refusal to spend public money on private school tuition drew a stern Republican rebuke.

'We want every child in America to have the same choice as Chelsea Clinton,' Minnesota Gov. Arne Carlson said in the weekly GOP radio address. The president's 17-year-old daughter recently graduated from Sidwell Friends, a private prep school in Washington.

In his weekly radio appearance, Clinton advised parents to telephone the Education Department's toll-free hot line to find out how their children can take advantage of new school initiatives.

'In the new economy of the 21st century, what our children earn will depend more than ever on what they can learn. Almost 90 percent of the new jobs being created today require more than a high school level of literacy and math skills,' he said.

'Yet more than half of the people entering the work force are not prepared with these skills. So we still have a lot of work to do,' the president said.

He listed the administration's initiatives, including tax credits for college, access to Individual Retirement Accounts for tuition payments and more Pell Grants.

In the Republican response, Carlson said Democrats are not doing enough for the nation's schools.

'What are Democrats so afraid of when it comes to choice, competition and accountability in our schools? Democratic answers include a few national tests, a few more summits and a truckload of dollars which will not solve the problem,' he said.

The governor said Minnesota gives tax deductions for tutoring, summer enrichment camps, private or parochial school tuition and other educational purposes.

'Whether public, private or parochial, every family in America should have the right to send their children to the school that best serves their child's needs,' Carlson said.

AP Online, August 16, 1997

Clinton supports steps toward public school choice and charter schools but opposes using public money for private school tuition.

Carlson's comments reflect Republican strategy for the 1998 midterm elections: Try to undercut Democrats' strength in polls on education matters by making school choice a wedge issue.

The Education Department hot line is 1-800-USA-Learn (1-800-872-5327).

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: August 16, 1997

2ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

The Associated Press

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August 16, 1997, Saturday, AM cycle

SECTION: Washington Dateline

LENGTH: 398 words

HEADLINE: Clinton, Minnesota governor broadcast education views

BYLINE: By SANDRA SOBIERAJ, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

As President Clinton promoted new college scholarships and tax breaks on Saturday, his refusal to spend public money on private school tuition drew tartly personal Republican criticism.

"We want every child in America to have the same choice as Chelsea Clinton," Minnesota Gov. Arne Carlson said in the weekly GOP radio address. The president's 17-year-old daughter recently graduated from Sidwell Friends, a private prep school in Washington.

"What are Democrats so afraid of when it comes to choice, competition and accountability in our schools? ... a few more national tests, a few more summits and a truckload of tax dollars will not solve the problem," Carlson said.

His comments reflect Republican strategy for the 1998 midterm elections: Try to undercut Democrats' strength in polls on education matters by making school choice a wedge issue.

In his own broadcast, Clinton looked ahead to the new school year and urged parents to telephone the Education Department's toll-free hot line to find out how they can take advantage of higher education programs just signed into law as part of the balanced-budget package.

He, too, mentioned his only daughter. "From the day I took office, I have been working on a simple idea: when my child is my age, I want our country to be a place where every person who works hard has a chance to live out his or her God-given abilities and dreams."

He listed the administration's initiatives, including tax credits for college, access to Individual Retirement Accounts for tuition payments, new IRA's for tax-free college savings, and expanded Pell Grants.

In the Republican response, Carlson touted Minnesota's program of tax deductions for tutoring, summer enrichment camps, private or parochial school tuition and other educational purposes.

The Associated Press, August 16, 1997

"Whether public, private or parochial, every family in America should have the right to send their children to the school that best serves their child's needs," Carlson said.

The Clintons, he added, "chose private schools, and I believe they have that right. But we want every child in America to have the same choice as Chelsea Clinton, regardless of family income."

The president supports steps toward public school choice and charter schools but opposes using public money for private school tuition.

The Education Department hot line is 1-800-USA-Learn (1-800-872-5327).

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: August 16, 1997