

WEST VIRGINIA STANDARDS TOWN HALL MEETING
Thursday, May 22, 1997

Education Q & A's for the President

National Standards/National Tests

Question: **Standards:** Why is the development of national standards so important *now*?

Answer: Student achievement is not improving fast enough. Today's economy demands higher and higher levels of skill and education to succeed in all types of jobs and far too many children are not meeting the standards that will prepare them for tomorrow. High standards pull young people up and encourage them to work harder and create high expectations for themselves. They also provide a benchmark for parents and teachers for what children should know and whether they are learning it. Places that have set high standards have made progress in student achievement. I want that improvement for *all* our children.

Question: **Standards/National vs. Federal.** You say these are "national, not federal" standards and tests. What exactly does that mean, especially since the U.S. Department of Education is going to develop them?

Answer: It means that while the federal government will fund the development of the tests, it is not in charge of what the tests measure, when they are administered, or how they are used in schools and communities around the country.

The tests will be based on the existing National Assessment of Education Progress, which is already used in more than 40 states. The content for these tests -- the reading and math skills they measure -- has already been determined by outside groups of teachers, curriculum specialists and others, and by agreement of state education officials. These content frameworks for reading and math are widely accepted and are based on widespread input, and strong state involvement. They truly are national standards, built from the bottom up. And they are challenging for our youngsters. The new tests I have proposed will measure the same math and reading skills that NAEP already measures.

The federal government will pay for the development of these tests, just as it helps pay for other research and development in education and other policy areas, and just as it has paid for the National Assessment of Education Progress for almost 30 years. Providing good information and good tools to improve our schools has long been part of the federal government's role in education, and should remain so.

Question: ***Standards/Other National Standards.*** What about other national standards that have been developed in subjects like science and history? Do you support those? Why do you focus so much on reading and math?

Answer: There have been excellent voluntary national standards produced in several subjects, such as math, geography, and civics, that many states and districts are finding useful as they develop their own state and local standards. Other proposed standards, such as the controversial history standards, have not been as successful. At the national level we are focusing on reading and math because they are the first basics, and there is a grassroots, national consensus that every student needs to master these two core subjects.

Question: ***Standards:*** How are you going to ensure that all children can meet these high standards?

Answer: First, these tests, together with state and local tests, will help teachers and parents know which children need help and what help they need.

Second, these tests are about lifting our students up, not putting them down. We must make sure that our students have safe and orderly classrooms, well prepared teachers, access to good textbooks, computers and other technology that will connect them to the information superhighway.

I'm doing my part to help by making sure that the federal government makes a substantial investment in education. And Secretary Riley and the Education Department will continue to provide information on the best practices in each area. But the primary responsibility lies here with those of you in this room --

parents, teachers and principals, school board members, others in the community and state and local officials. You have the responsibility to come together and provide our students with the preparation they need, for these standards and for the future.

Question: ***National Tests/High Stakes.*** Do you believe students should be required to pass these tests in order to be promoted to the next grade level?

No state that participates will be required to use the math and reading tests for this purpose. However, I believe that if we set standards for students, they should be required to meet the standards in order to be promoted from elementary to middle school, from middle school to high school, and before graduating from high school. When I was Governor, we required students to pass an 8th grade test before moving into high school. While some students had difficulty passing the test the first time, almost everyone did ultimately. We gave extra help to students who needed it, including summer school. And over time, the percentage of students who passed the test on the first time increased, as students, teachers and parents came to understand how well the did mattered.

I believe every state should require students to meet standards before they move on. Every state gives their own tests, in addition to these national tests. Each state will need to decide what the best combination of tests would be.

Question: ***National Test/Students with Disabilities.*** What are you doing to support participation of students with disabilities in the 4th and 8th grade assessments you are developing?

Answer: We must expect more of all our children, including those with disabilities. The Department of Education, which is working with education experts to help develop the tests, will make the 4th grade reading and 8th grade math tests available to states and schools in formats accessible to students with disabilities. In addition, schools will be able to get technical assistance and other support to help ensure that students with disabilities are appropriately included.

Question: **National Test/Grade Levels.** Why 4th grade reading and 8th grade math?

Answer: Reading and math are two of the most basic skills. Children can't move ahead in school in any subject if they can't read English by the 4th grade. And 8th grade math is a pivotal point in terms of making sure that a student has mastered the mathematics she needs to move forward in high school and go to college or into the work place.

Children go to school for the first three years of grade school to learn how to read, so they can spend the rest of their years reading to learn. There is a strong link between low reading skills, falling behind in school, disruptive behavior, and dropping out. Yet, about 40% of our children are not learning how to read well and independently by the end of third grade, decreasing their chances of succeeding in school and in life. We need to change this.

8th grade math is also a critical turning point for students. At that point, students need to have mastered the basics of math -- including the foundations of algebra and geometry -- so they are prepared to go on and take the harder math and science courses they need for college preparation or jobs right out of high school. In our high technology, international economy, our students will need to know more mathematics than most of us adults learned. And, having good math skills is increasingly a prerequisite for getting a good job, students who don't take algebra and geometry are much less likely to go to college than students who do.

Unfortunately, right now, the United States is below the international average in math at 8th grade. We can do better. Many more young people should be taking algebra by the end of the 8th grade so they can take more advanced course in high school. That is what most 13 year olds are doing around the world. Only 25% of our 8th graders have learned algebra -- as opposed to almost 100% of students in other industrialized nations. Having a national benchmark in math at 8th grade will show whether our students are where they should be.

Question: **National Test/Too Late?** Isn't 4th grade too late for a reading test?

Answer: No. Children are expected to have made the transition from learning to read to reading to learn by the 4th grade. This is the critical turning point -- and the point we should measure to see that all our students are making it.

Of course, a short national test in reading does not replace what teachers and parents have always done -- paying attention to children's progress in learning to read all through the critical early childhood years.

Question: ***National Test/Why Needed?*** How will these tests differ from existing tests? What will they tell us that we don't already know?

Answer: These tests will provide information to parents and teachers about individual student scores and how close a child is to reaching high national standards. Currently, there is no way of knowing whether your child's progress or your child's school is measuring up to national and international standards. Now, each state sets its own standards, and some are more difficult than others, so it is difficult for parents to tell how well their child is actually doing compared with tough, meaningful national and international benchmarks--the kind they will be judged against in the real world. These tests will give parents and teachers, wherever they live, an opportunity to know how their children are doing.

Question: ***National Test/Content.*** Who decides what is on the tests?

Answer: The tests will be based on the widely accepted frameworks of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). These frameworks are developed by nationally recognized teachers and other educators and community leaders, with input from thousands of interested parents, teachers and others interested in education.

At present 43 states -- including West Virginia -- participate in the NAEP and have agreed that the NAEP frameworks in reading and math are good standards for what students should know in these critical subjects.

Question: **National Test/Privacy.** Will the federal government have my child's test score? Will it be private?

Answer: The federal government will not be collecting individual student scores. It will be up to states and communities to do that, if they choose to and they will have to keep individual student scores confidential.

Question: **National Test/Cost.** How much will it cost to give the tests?

Answer: The total cost of developing the new tests will be between \$10 - 12 million per year in 1997 and 1998. The cost of administering the new tests is estimated to be \$10 - \$12 per student, and I've proposed that the Department of Education reimburse these costs for the first year. This investment is more than worth it to make sure we are doing all we can to help students master the basics.

Question: **National Test/LEP Students.** Will children with limited English proficiency be included in these tests?

Answer: Yes. We want to make sure that students with limited English will be able to take the test whenever possible. This means that we will provide the math test in Spanish. It also means that when the test is administered, schools would provide accommodations that students need such as access to an English dictionary.

Question: **National Test/English and Spanish.** Why is the math test being given in English and Spanish but the reading test is only being given in English?

Answer: Developing the ability to read in English is a basic skill that every child must have to succeed in American schools and society. However, there are many recent immigrants at the 8th grade level who may not speak English well but who can do advanced math and should be asked to show what math they know. We are providing a bilingual math test in Spanish and English because Spanish is the most common language other than English among students.

Question: **National Test/Calculators.** Will you allow kids to use calculators on the new tests? Shouldn't kids know their multiplication tables on their own and not rely on calculators?

Answer: Kids should learn the basics. They should know how to add, subtract, multiply and divide without using a calculator. However, after a child has mastered the basics of arithmetic, calculators can be useful for solving complicated math problems. As part of the test development process, an advisory committee of outstanding math teachers and other experts will be considering this issue.

Question: **National Test/Teachers.** How will you ensure that teachers are prepared to help students meet these high standards?

Answer: Making sure that our teachers are prepared to teach to these high standards is a shared responsibility, primarily among school systems, colleges and universities, states, and the teachers themselves.

We must do a better job of preparing teachers before they get to the classroom, and helping them in their first several years. And we have to help teachers keep learning while they are on the job.

We also need standards of excellence for teachers and we've got to reward excellence. That's why I support the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which has developed tough teacher standards. Today they are only about 500 nationally board certified teachers in the country, and none in West Virginia. I think we need at least one master teacher in every school. I hope West Virginia will take steps to do this and I have put money in my budget to help.

Question: **National Test/Home Schooling.** How will these tests affect students who participate in home schooling?

Answer: In a legal sense, it will not affect those students at all. No student in a home school will be required to take these tests, though they will be able to if they want to. Every parent will have access to the tests on the Internet each year, so if they want to see for themselves how well their students are measuring up against these

standards, they can find out.

Budget-Related Questions

Question: **School Construction.** Why doesn't the budget plan include help for school construction?

Answer: This is a critical need, and I have proposed a plan for jump-starting State and local school construction and renovation efforts. Unfortunately, there was considerable resistance in the budget negotiations to including it in the agreement. I am disappointed that it could not be included.

- We should remember that if we failed to reach agreement on a balanced budget plan, that would have made local school construction efforts more difficult, by raising interest rates.
- On balance, the agreement was a tremendous success on education overall.
- Within the context of the agreement, I will continue to look for opportunities to address this problem.

Question: **HOPE/Tuition Increases.** Won't Your HOPE Scholarship plan cause college tuitions to go up even more than they already have been?

Answer: Actually, Federal aid does not seem to have much of an effect on tuition costs. When Federal college aid was rising in the 1970s, real college tuitions remained fairly steady. But when real Federal aid dropped slightly during the 1980s, that is when tuitions rose most sharply. One study suggests that is partly because colleges are trying to provide aid to the lowest-income students, and to do that they increase tuition for everyone else. By restoring the Federal government's commitment to financial aid -- for both low-income and middle-income families -- we are helping to reduce one of the pressures that increases tuition and fees.

Question: **HOPE/IRS.** Will the IRS be looking at my grades to see if I'm eligible for the HOPE Scholarship?

[NOTE: On Sunday, Frank Raines told CNN that “we think that having the IRS trying to enforce grades may be going a little too far, and we’re going to try to find a way to simplify the program.”]

Answer: The IRS would not be looking at student transcripts. But I do want to make sure that we are not only helping people pay for college, but also that they have an incentive to work hard once they are there. A new study from Georgia State University suggests that the grade requirement in Georgia’s HOPE Scholarship plan has helped some of the borderline students, those who started out very close to the B average, to perform better in college.

I have gotten some feedback about the grade requirement in my HOPE Scholarship plan, and Secretary Riley and Secretary Rubin will be working closely with Congress to make sure that we encourage students to work hard, but that we do it in a simple way, without imposing any undue burdens on taxpayers or colleges.

Question: **Student Loans.** Does the budget agreement cut student loans?

Answer: No, it will not affect student loan borrowers in any way. There are some savings to taxpayers that we can achieve by making government more efficient and reducing subsidies to middlemen -- something that I proposed in my Budget in January -- and the negotiators agreed to some of those changes to help bring the deficit down by \$1.7 billion. But the agreement makes it clear that there can be no cuts in benefits or availability of loans. (And colleges may continue to choose to participate in the Direct Loan program or the guarantee system).

Question: **Education Investments.** With the tax cuts, will there be any money left for education programs?

Answer: The budget agreement includes ***the largest increase in our investment in education in 30 years, and the largest single boost in college aid since the G.I. Bill.*** It includes:

- **Roughly \$35 billion in tax cuts for higher education,** consistent with the HOPE Scholarship and \$10,000 tax deduction.

- **Pell Grant Expansion.** The largest increase in two decades -- a funding boost of 25%. The maximum award will reach \$3,000, an increase of \$300. In the 1998 budget alone, an additional 348,000 students will receive grants: 130,000 young people from moderate-income families, and 218,000 low income students over the age of 24.
- **Technology Literacy.** Double funding to help ensure that computers are in every classroom, every classroom is connected to the Internet, all teachers are trained, and that high quality software and on-line resources are available to help schools integrate technology into the curriculum so that students can become technologically literate.
- **Head Start.** Continued expansion toward my goal of 1 million kids in 2002.
- **America Reads.** A child literacy initiative consistent with the America Reads Challenge, to mobilize volunteers to help every child learn to read well and independently by the end of third grade.
- **Job Corps and other Job Training.** A 12% increase for job training programs, including continued expansion of Job Corps.

Question: **Reading.** What is the reading program that was including in the budget deal?

Answer: The agreement includes my plan to help make sure that every child learns to read well and independently by the end of third grade. Secretary Riley and Harris Wofford, the CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, will be working with Congress on some of the details. What I have proposed includes:

- **America's Reading Corps:** 25,000 reading specialists and 11,000 AmeriCorps members serving as recruiters and coordinators, to enlist an army of one million volunteer tutors.
- **Parents as First Teachers:** Grants to foster effective programs that help parents help their children to become

successful readers (e.g. HIPPY).

- **Head Start expansion.**

General Topics and Issues

Question: **College Costs.** Why has college tuition been going up?

Answer: Between the 1990-91 academic year and the 1995-96 academic year, overall price inflation was only 17 percent, but the average tuition and fees at public colleges increased by 31 percent and at private colleges increased by 33 percent. Some of the increase is the result of research and staffing costs that increased faster than inflation. At the public colleges, funding from State legislatures did not grow as fast as costs did. And at private colleges, while tuition went up, so did financial aid that the college was providing (in other words, not everyone was actually paying the full tuition and fees).

Question: **Goals 2000 Controversies.** Aren't these tests just another version of your Goals 2000 program, in which the federal government promotes outcomes-based education, politically-correct history, and a federal takeover of our schools?

Answer: These tests are not a part of Goals 2000, but let me say that I'm very proud of Goals 2000. Goals 2000 provides federal support for state and local efforts to raise academic standards in the basic skills and core academic subjects, and for local, bottom up efforts to improve teaching and learning. There are no federal standards or curriculum, and no requirement for outcomes-based education or any other particular approach.

With regard to a "federal takeover" of local schools, that simply isn't accurate. Goals 2000 supports local control, not federal control. You don't have to take my word for this. Harrison County and some 40 other school systems in West Virginia have received Goals 2000 funds. You should ask teachers, principals, school board members or parents in those communities if Secretary Riley and the U.S. Department of Education have come in and set their curriculum or otherwise tried to tell them what to do.

The national tests we are discussing today are focused on basic

reading and math skills that all students should master. They are not part of Goals 2000 in any way, and you don't have to give the tests in order to keep receiving Goals 2000 funds. However, I believe every states should participate in Goals 2000 and in these tests. They are both ways of helping our students reach for the highest possible standards.

Question: ***School-to-Work Controversies*** The School-to-Work program has been somewhat controversial in West Virginia. Is it true that School-to-Work tracks kids into inferior programs of study with low academic standards and requires them to make job decisions in elementary and middle schools?

Answer: No. The School-to-Work Program is designed to give students the academic and on-the-job training to prepare them for high skill jobs and further education. School-to-Work does not in any way track students into certain career paths, nor limit their options. It gives students and parents information and opportunities to explore a wide range of career options, and it helps make sure that students learn basic and advanced academic skills that will prepare them either for work or for college.

Question: ***IDEA and Discipline.*** I am concerned about keeping our schools safe and disciplined. I understand that the new special education law (IDEA) just passed by Congress still makes it difficult to discipline disruptive students who are disabled. How can the other students learn if teachers can't maintain order?

Answer: First, let me point out that the federal special education law, first passed in the 1970's, has been essential for providing education opportunities for children with disabilities. Before that law was passed, many children with disabilities were denied an education. Since the law was passed, educational opportunities for children with disabilities have increased dramatically, because the law guarantees an education to these children. This is a good thing, because the education of every child is important, because education is the way for all of our people to become productive and independent citizens. I am proud to be able to sign, next month, the bill continuing this law in effect.

Second, I agree that it is very important for all children that

classrooms be orderly places where children can learn and teachers can teach. While maintaining the responsibility to provide children with disabilities with a free and appropriate education, this new bill strengthens the ability of teachers and principals to deal with disruptive or dangerous students, including those with disabilities. It does this by:

- making it easier for principals to remove from the classroom children with disabilities who bring a gun, weapon or drugs to school, or who pose a danger to themselves, their teachers or their classmates, while continuing to provide them with an education in another setting.
- making it easier to address a child's behavior problems early on -- before they get out of hand -- by requiring that these be considered in the development of an Individual Education Plan, and by making the regular classroom teacher a part of the team that develops the plan.

Finding the right balance between the protection of individual students and the needs of a larger group is often difficult. I am pleased that the Congress, with an overwhelming bipartisan majority, has found a way to strike that balance.

Question: **Safe Schools:** There are stories all the time about people walking into schools and shooting kids, fights, drugs, etc. What is the government doing to stop it?

Answer: I have challenged all schools to put in place high standards of discipline and behavior along with tough measures to keep guns and drugs out of schools. Last year I protected the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program that supports school security, and drug and violence prevention programs in 97 percent of our country's school districts. I also support school uniforms as one way to deter school violence, and have encouraged communities to enforce truancy laws.

Question: **Teacher Salaries:** I'd like to become a teacher and I think I'd be a good one. But I can't afford it. Is there anything the government can do to make teacher salaries greater?

Answer: You set the salary for teachers here in West Virginia, just as states

and local school districts do across America. In this state you have made substantial progress on teachers' salaries during the 1990s. Through income-contingent student loans, I have worked to make it easier for college graduates to enter teaching or pursue other service-related professions where starting salaries are relatively low.

Question: **Vouchers.** I think voucher programs provide an opportunity to some parents they otherwise would not have -- to send their child to a private or parochial school. What is your position on school vouchers?

Answer: I believe there are better ways to provide greater school choice to students and their families. One very good way is to have every state pass a charter school law that allows parents and teachers to start new public charter schools that stay open only as long they do a good job. In fact, I have proposed nearly doubling the charter school start-up program (to \$100 million next year) to help start 3,000 charter schools over the next several years.

While I support public school choice, I oppose federally funded tuition vouchers for private elementary and secondary schools. I also oppose state funded and locally funded vouchers. Vouchers take money away from public schools, and controversy over vouchers distracts communities from the hard work of improving our schools.

Family and Community Involvement

Question: **Parental Responsibility:** What can you do to make sure parents understand what they need to do to make sure their children are ready to start school, and how they can help their children as they go through?

Answer: Over thirty years of research shows that family involvement in children's learning is critical to their child's success. There are lots of things parents can do to help their children start school ready to learn. I strongly urge parents to read to their children starting in their earliest years. Schools can provide a welcoming atmosphere

for parents, while local employers can help by giving paid leave for employees to be involved in their children's schools, or provide other means for employees to attend parent-teacher conferences or volunteer as tutors or mentors. Some of the best employers do it.

Question: **Parental Responsibility.** What about parents who can't read and write, or have other limitations? How can they help their children get ready for and successfully proceed through school?

Answer: Every parent can help, from the first days of a child's life--by talking and singing to them, paying attention to them, and helping them learn their colors and shapes. All parents can help their kids in other ways by showing up at school events, asking kids if they need help and getting it for them, being active in school activities, and giving them a place to do homework and making sure they do it. Through programs like Adult Education and Even Start family literacy we support local initiatives that assist parents to gain the skills they need to help their children and build a better life for themselves and their families.

Question: **Business Community Partnerships:** More and more, we are finding the need for employees with higher levels of training than we are seeing coming into the workplace. How can employers like me help ensure that more highly qualified candidates will enter the workforce?

Answer: The business community knows as well as any how important high standards are in educating our youth. All over the country, businesses have successfully forged partnerships with their local school communities to provide resources like apprenticeship and mentoring programs, after school programs, etc. Last month, over 200 high-tech industry leaders who hire graduates from across the country endorsed my standards and testing initiative because they know first hand how important it is to have highly skilled graduates entering their workforces. You can help by partnering with your local school community.

Question: **School to Work.** How do I open my business up to the school to work program?

Answer: Business supports school-to-work partnerships because they represent an investment in people which yields access to highly trained, versatile workers who are certified and knowledgeable in all aspects of an industry. I would urge any employer interested in getting more involved to talk with their local school system and community colleges about how to participate.

Question: **Local School Systems.** What can local school systems do to help implement the goals set by the education summits and your national initiatives?

Answer: There are lots of things that local schools can do:

- Use the national tests and set high standards.
- Help prepare teachers to become national board-certified and reward them when they do.
- Develop and enforce fair standards of conduct for all students.
- Get the whole community involved in helping young children learn to read. Pediatricians should prescribe reading to parents of infants and preschoolers. College students and others should volunteer to tutor.
- Keep working, as you are in West Virginia, to make sure every 12 year old can log onto the Internet.
- Start early in letting students and families know that they will need at least 2 years of postsecondary education.

Question: **After-School Programs:** Both of my parents work. Will there be any money to have after-school programs at schools like mine?

Answer: My budget includes a new initiative to provide safe havens and to extend learning opportunities for children and their families at schools across the country. The initiative will help after-school, summer and weekend programs get started as Community Learning Centers and foster community involvement.

America Reads

Question: **Reading.** How can we become a nation of readers?

Answer: My America Reads Challenge is pursuing several essential strategies to help our children learn to read: creating more learning opportunities to supplement classroom reading instruction; encouraging parent involvement to help children develop readiness skills for reading beginning at birth, as well as involvement throughout the school years; and bringing best teaching practices into classrooms.

Question: **Reading/Tutoring.** Does Tutoring make a difference? Aren't teachers most important?

Answer: Even the best teachers will tell you that some children need extra help outside the classroom hours in order to catch up. And the research shows that tutoring programs that provide consistent help, with trained tutors, can make a big difference. For example:

--In Simpson County, Kentucky, 25 AmeriCorps members helped second graders jump 3 reading levels in one year

--At Hands on Atlanta, in the first three years of AmeriCorps involvement, the schools have seen an 11 percent increase in performance on national standardized tests in reading and in math, and 25 percent fewer discipline problems.

--At Reading One-to-One in Texas, with just a semester of tutoring, children improve one full reading level.

The America Reads Challenge legislative proposal specifically would build on groundwork laid by classroom teachers, librarians, and reading specialists by drawing upon the invigorating spirit of community volunteers in tutoring. The proposal encourages family and community involvement in the education of America's children by linking AmeriCorps members, trained and qualified reading

professionals, and volunteer tutors to community and school-based literacy efforts.

America Reads also calls for the expansion of Head Start to reach one million 3- and 4-year-olds; the strengthening and expansion of Title I and Even Start Programs to enhance teaching and learning during the school day, as well as family literacy efforts; and finally, challenging the private sector and community groups to work with schools and libraries.

Right now, each of us can do our part and get involved in the America Reads Challenge:

- 1) Instill a love of reading in your child. Parents are their child's first teachers and learning begins at home. By reading aloud to their children regularly and using TV wisely, parents can empower their children with the lifelong habit of reading and learning.
- 2) Call a local school or literacy program and volunteer as a reading tutor. Many community and civic groups already sponsor tutoring programs and always welcome volunteers.
- 3) Call 1-800-USA-LEARN and ask to get involved in READ*WRITE*NOW, a summer reading component of the America Reads Challenge.
- 4) Call the college or university nearest you, or your alma mater, to see if it has joined the America Reads Challenge. The best office to begin with may be the Financial Aid Offices.

Technology

Question: **Internet Access.** With the emphasis on connecting classrooms to the Internet, how can our public school children be protected from the harmful aspects of the Internet?

Answer: I am committed to ensuring that our children do not get exposed to indecent material and will take all constitutional measures to make sure that they don't. I signed the Communications Decency Act and we are currently defending that law in court. If the Act is

invalidated, I will carefully consider alternative routes to the same goal. I also support industry efforts to develop and market technology, including Internet screening software--a V-chip for the Internet--that will give parents and teachers the ultimate control over what material is available to children.

Question: **E-rate.** E-rate funds for communications and Internet connection schools and libraries are being made on a first-come, first serve basis. Will the funds be available again and how will you ensure equity in distribution of funds?

Answer: Over the next several months, the Federal Communication Commission will work with the Department of Education and the education community to develop an easy application process for schools and libraries to follow. I have asked Secretary Riley and FCC Chairman Reed Hundt to work with local educators, communities and parents on how to help them understand the E-rate and upgrade their schools to take advantage of it. The level of the discount will be higher for the schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods and in rural schools with higher costs of connecting to the Internet.

Question: **Technology.** What can the business community do to help the educational community to stay up to date with the major technological advances that are occurring today?

Answer: The business community has been one of the biggest supporters of our education technology initiative and West Virginia is a national leader in the use of technology in the classrooms. Some 85% of West Virginia's schools will be connected to the Internet by the end of this year and 14,000 educators have been trained to use computers for basic skills instruction. I applaud Bell Atlantic-West Virginia for its commitment to wiring schools, IBM for its support of technology innovation, and Ashland Oil and others for their work on behalf of education reform here in the state.

MAY 20 1997 3:42PM

OFFICE OF SECRETARY

NO. 1006 P. 1



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Q/A

FAX TRANSMITTAL

TO: Bill Kincaid

ORGANIZATION: _____

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TO: Leslie
FROM: David
DATE: May 20, 1997

Bill Rimer for

I Question: Why are college costs increasing more rapidly than inflation?

Answer: Between 1990-1 and 1995-6, college costs, in the form of tuition and fees, and room and board charge increased at public colleges from \$4,757 to \$6,252 (31 percent) and at private colleges from \$12,910 to \$17,207 (33 percent). Over the same period, the consumer price index rose by only 17 percent.

College costs have increased as a result of rising expenditures and declining state aid. *Private colleges:* Rising expenditures have resulted from technological improvements, institutional financial aid, and faculty salaries and benefits. *Public colleges:* Increase in tuition and fees occur when the economy is doing poorly and state funding is more limited. Between 1980 and 1994, these subsidies declined as a percentage of total revenue, from 42 percent to 36 percent while tuition rose 16 percent of revenue to 23 percent.

II Question: What is the Department doing to address rising costs of college?

Answer: The President and the Department are concerned about the impact of rising costs, and we are committed to making college more affordable for all qualified students and their families. The President's 1998 budget includes some \$4 billion in new tax benefits to help families meet college costs, including:

- The America's Hope Scholarship -- a tax credit of up to \$1,500 to first-year students and for second-year students who have attained a "B" average; and
- The Middle Class Bill of Rights tax deduction -- up to \$5,000 (increasing to \$10,000 in 1999), for an unlimited number of school years.

The Department's 1998 budget would make more than \$47 billion in student aid available to some 8 million students -- the largest amount in history, and an increase of 10 percent over 1997.

- Raise the Pell Grant maximum award by \$300 (from \$2,700 to \$3,000) to help over 4 million students from the lowest income families.
- Increase Work-Study program to help almost a million needy students "earn while they learn", while funding the SEOG and Perkins Loan programs to support 991,000 and 810,000 students respectively.
- Support both the FFEL and Direct Loan programs
- Create a new, merit based Presidential Honor Scholarship to reward the top 5 percent of the graduating class of every high school in the Nation -- an estimated 132,000 students -- with \$1,000 for the first year of college.

Question: *How does the U.S. educational system compare with the rest of the world?*

Answer:

That's a big question! When we compare ourselves to our international "peers" -- other developed countries like France, Germany, Canada, and Japan -- we see a complex picture. We look good on some measures; not so good on others. Here are some of the facts:

- **Our graduation rate from secondary school is just about average.** We have the highest rate of entry into postsecondary education of any comparable country, and **a greater proportion of our population completes postsecondary education** than in any comparable country except Canada.
- **We spend more per pupil on education** than most countries.
- **In student achievement**, the evidence is mixed. In **mathematics**, most international assessments show us scoring **below average**. For example, on the recent Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the United States scored below average in mathematics and just slightly above average in **science**. Our mathematics performance particularly concerns us, since math provides the base for so many good careers in our technologically advanced society. In **reading**, on the other hand, the most recent international tests showed our nine- and thirteen-year-olds scoring high.
- The fact that so many foreign students continue to seek **undergraduate and graduate study in the United States** is testimony to the high regard with which our colleges and universities are held in much of the world.
- Regarding the **structure of education systems**, the **U.S. system is more decentralized** than most. Many other countries fund their schools largely from the national level, as opposed to our strong emphasis on local funding and control. In addition, unlike the United States, **many other countries have a national curriculum and national standards** of what students should know.