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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

Through: Kitty Higgins, Cabinet Secretary
From: Richard W. Riley *Dick Riley*
Date: December 6, 1996
Subject: Department of Education Accomplishments and Vision for Your Second Term

INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this information age and technological era, education must be a priority for the American people if we are to compete in the international economy and keep our democracy vibrant in a diverse nation. One of the major successes of your Presidency has been to raise education to the top of the nation's agenda.

The impact of your leadership was demonstrated quite dramatically in an exit poll after the 1996 election. Education was one of the four top concerns -- and on education, voters gave you an extraordinary 62% margin, 78% to 16%.

You have led by articulating and committing resources to a positive school improvement agenda of raising standards, improving teaching, making schools safer and drug-free, preparing students for school-to-career transitions, providing more choice in public education, and expanding access to technology in every classroom in America. You have also issued an important call for streamlining and improving student financial aid for college. At the same time, you have addressed some of the most deeply held values and concerns of our nation's parents and grandparents, through your advocacy of school uniforms, your support for family friendly businesses, and your commitment to protecting religious expression.

Since January 20, 1993, the Department of Education has worked to carry out your vision of building a firm foundation for nationwide progress in improving education.

During the first two years of the Administration, the Department enjoyed unprecedented success in Congress, building a powerful framework for elementary and secondary education improvements through passing:

- The Goals 2000: Educate America Act

- The Improving America's Schools Act
- The School-to-Work Opportunities Act

The Department also began to reform a cumbersome and costly student financial aid system, with the enactment of Direct Lending in the Student Loan Reform Act and the reduction of the student loan default rate. During the second two years, the Department played a pivotal role in the budget battle with Congress, fostering strengthened public support for investing in improvements in K-12 education and in better student financial aid for college. All of this was accomplished through a less regulatory, more flexible federal role in education.

- The Department has worked diligently to implement needed reforms passed during the 103rd Congress and to demonstrate leadership on non-legislative matters that go to the heart of American education, such as increasing family involvement in learning. Throughout the first term, the Department has sought to ensure equal access to education for all Americans, and has taken to heart the Vice President's charge to reinvent itself, providing greater flexibility, reduced burden, and better customer service at less cost to taxpayers.

While progress in education in this vast, decentralized country takes time, we have seen some promising improvements over the past four years. Our focus on higher standards is starting to take hold, with 48 states developing common standards in core academic subjects. More high school students are taking core academic and AP courses, and the percentage of high school graduates ages 18-24 enrolled in college is at an all-time high. In a single year -- from 1994 to 1995 -- the percentage of schools connected to the Internet increased by 43 %, and since 1992, the number of charter schools has grown from 1 to over 400.

Moving into the second term, the Department will build on this groundwork, drawing on the momentum of your campaign emphasis on improving education, to challenge states and school districts to significantly intensify their efforts to provide a world-class education. The Department will help build a bridge to the 21st Century by:

- **Helping Students Master World-Class Skills**
 - Make it possible for every eight year-old to read independently
 - Raise standards to internationally competitive levels
 - Foster high-quality teaching
 - Expand public school choice and charter schools

- **Helping Communities Develop 21st Century Schools**
 - Make it possible for every child to log on to the Internet by age 12
 - Assist communities to build new schools or repair old ones
 - Increase options for moving from school to careers
- **Strengthening the Best of Our American Values and Traditions in Education**
 - Support greater family and community involvement
 - Make schools safe and drug-free
 - Keep school open in the afternoons and summers
- **Widening Access to Postsecondary Education and Lifelong Learning**
 - Make the first two years of college universally accessible
 - Make postsecondary education more affordable for all Americans
 - Make it possible for all Americans to strengthen their skills and improve their earning power throughout their lives

As I travel around our nation, as I visit our schools and colleges and meet with parents, students, business people and citizens from every walk of life, I continue to grow more firmly convinced that education is truly the key to our nation's future. As you recently stated:

Let us pledge to give our children the best education in the world, and the support they need to build strong futures, higher standards in our schools, more choices, and the opportunity for all Americans to go on to college.

The Department of Education is eager to continue working with you to take on this vital challenge. Working together with the American people, we believe we can succeed.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I. Improving Elementary and Secondary Education

Raising Standards for America's Schools: Grassroots Reforms to Improve Teaching and Learning

Throughout the past four years, the Department of Education has built upon the bipartisan consensus of the 1989 Education Summit in Charlottesville, refashioning federal education programs and policies to support state and local school improvement efforts and to place greater emphasis on helping all students achieve to much higher educational levels. Along with the focus on higher standards, the Department has upgraded its programs to provide for more flexible use of federal education funds, more accountability for performance, more public school choice, and greater grassroots involvement in school improvement programs. In this way, we ended the old model of top-down, one-size-fits-all federal programs and replaced it with a new model of local partnership and citizen involvement. And we passed more good education legislation than at any time in the past quarter of a century.

Goals 2000: Educate America Act

Passed with strong bipartisan support and signed into law by you on March 31, 1994, the **Goals 2000: Educate America Act** adopts the National Education Goals and supports states and communities in their efforts to improve academic achievement by raising academic standards, supporting high-quality teacher professional development, expanding the use of technology in classrooms, and increasing parental and community involvement in education. With its focus on a comprehensive approach to raising student achievement, including student assessments, teacher training, and accountability aligned with challenging standards in core subjects, the Goals 2000 Act provides a solid framework for other federally funded education programs.

At the heart of the Goals 2000 Act is a grants program that provides seed money to help states and communities develop and implement their own approaches to education reform. No new regulations have been issued to implement the program, and the application for first-year funds was only four pages long, with state funding awards granted, on average, less than a month after submission of the application. In addition to seed money, Goals 2000 also expands flexibility in other federal education programs by providing me -- and some states -- with the authority to waive many federal rules and regulations if they interfere with local or state education reform strategies.

Goals 2000 is already making its mark across the U.S. Despite heated debate in some statehouses across the country, and the threat of cuts in Congress, thousands of school and communities in 49 states have received Goals 2000 funds. According to a recent study, 48

states are developing common academic standards for their students in core subject areas, with 38 states developing new or revised standards documents in the last year. Likewise, 42 states either have or are in the process of developing assessments linked to their standards. With respect to urban districts, more than 75% report that they are writing content standards, with 85% changing their assessment systems to bring them in line with standards.

Improving America's Schools Act

Goals 2000 has accelerated the pace of state and local reforms. The **Improving America's Schools Act (IASA)** complements and supports that effort. IASA, signed by you on October 20, 1994, fundamentally restructured the existing Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 to improve instruction and achievement for all students. The new ESEA gets rid of the old, watered-down curriculum found in too many previous federal education programs and places less reliance on narrow categorical programs. It emphasizes the use of federal funds to expand or "speed up" state and local reforms, and helps to ensure that those traditionally served by federal programs -- disadvantaged students, minority and limited English proficient (LEP) students, and migrant students -- make progress toward the same challenging standards as other children, rather than separate, minimum objectives.

The centerpiece of the reauthorized ESEA is **Title I**, which directs about \$7 billion to strengthen teaching of basic and advanced skills to approximately seven million children attending the highest poverty schools in all 50 states. The new Title I places the focus on teaching and learning rather than rules and requirements, with students who receive services expected to make progress toward the same challenging academic standards as other students, measured by the same state assessments -- rather than low expectations, remediation, and separate testing for Title I students. The revised law also focuses on schoolwide reforms instead of isolated programs, and targets more funds on high-poverty districts and schools.

The new Title I is complemented by changes made in the **Eisenhower Professional Development program**. Before, the Eisenhower program focused exclusively on funding math and science professional development activities, with too little attention given to the scope and quality of these activities. Now, under the new ESEA, depending on appropriations levels, Eisenhower can fund intense and sustained professional development geared to helping teachers teach to high standards in all core academic subjects, according to the needs of states and school districts.

The **Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act** was a centerpiece of the Administration's first-term efforts to reduce violence and drug use among the nation's youth. The Administration expanded the Drug-Free Schools Act into the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act in 1994, making violence prevention a key part of that program. The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program now provides school security, drug prevention and education programs in 97% of America's school districts, thanks to our successful fight against attempted Republican cuts. In October 1994, you also signed into law the **Gun-Free Schools Act**, and issued a

Presidential Directive later that month to enforce “zero tolerance” in our schools -- if a student brings a gun to school, he or she does not come back for a year.

The Administration has also provided strong national leadership in providing students and their families with more choice in public education and in helping communities to create publicly accountable charter schools. You have called for states to enact charter school laws, and for the creation of 3,000 charter schools over the next several years. To that end, you proposed a new **Public Charter School Program**, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act, that is providing start-up funding to help teachers, parents, businesses, museums and others create high-quality charter schools in 19 states. The Administration pushed through an increase in the start-up fund from \$6 million in FY 95 to \$51 million in FY 97.

With the Administration's leadership, the number of charter schools has grown from 1 to over 400 since the 1992 election, and the number of states with charter school laws has grown from two to 25.

Creating Learning Opportunities of the Future

School-to-Work Opportunities

In 1994, with bipartisan support, the Congress passed and you signed the **School-to-Work Opportunities Act**, which embodies your vision that today's schools must prepare all students for high-skills careers. School-to-work systems can improve student learning by connecting what goes on in the classroom to future careers and to real work situations, and by connecting students to a range of opportunities for postsecondary education and advanced training. The School-to-Work Act, jointly administered by the Departments of Education and Labor, is helping states and communities to design and put into place their own systems for improving work-based education.

All 50 states have received planning and development grants under School-to-Work, and by late 1996, 37 states had made sufficient progress in their planning efforts to receive 5-year grants for implementing their plans. The states, in turn, are responsible for allocating funds to local partnerships within their states. In addition, 47 local school-to-work partnerships, 53 urban and rural partnerships, and 20 Native American partnerships have received implementation funding directly from the federal government. Data from states that received grants in 1994 and 1995 show that over 500,000 young people in 1,800 schools throughout the nation participate in school-to-work systems that integrate academic and vocational instruction and provide work-based learning. Over 135,000 employers have been involved in school-to-work systems.

To support efforts to build school-to-work systems, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education initiated a **New American High Schools** project to showcase distinguished secondary schools in which students achieve high levels of academic skills, learn in the context

of a career major, and benefit from strong links between their schools and postsecondary institutions.

Technology Initiatives

In 1995, the Administration initiated **Technology Learning Challenge Grants** to foster partnerships among local schools systems, colleges, universities and private businesses to develop creative new ways to use technology for learning. Nineteen grants were awarded in FY 95 involving 134 school districts in 23 states demonstrating innovative uses of computers, networking and multi-media across the curriculum. In FY 96, the Department received 586 applications and awarded 24 new five-year grants.

The **National Technology Plan**, *Getting American Students Ready for the 21st Century*, was submitted to Congress in June 1996. In developing the plan, the Department galvanized the efforts of hundreds of state and local educators, citizens and industry leaders in seven regional forums, two national conferences, and an on-line discussion over the Internet to address the important issues in educational technology. Four major elements of the plan include: (1) providing teachers with the training and support needed to help students learn through educational technology; (2) developing effective software and on-line learning resources as an integral part of the school curriculum; (3) providing access to modern computers for all teachers and students; and (4) connecting every school and classroom in America to the Internet.

At your and the Vice President's urging, the Department was the lead agency in designing and representing the Administration's position in implementing the Snowe-Rockefeller Amendment to the 1996 Telecommunications Act, which for the first time allows schools and libraries to receive discounts on telecommunications services. As a result of our efforts in supporting the **E-rate**, the FCC Federal-State Joint Board has recommended \$2.25 billion in annual funding to provide discounts for all telecommunications services, including access to the Internet. The average discount will be about 60 percent, and one-third of all schools will receive discounts of 80 to 90 percent.

The Administration also initiated the Department of Education's **Regional Technology Consortia** to help states, local education agencies, teachers, administrators and others to integrate advanced technologies into K-12 classrooms, library media centers and other education settings, including adult literacy centers. The six regional consortia provide professional development, technical assistance, and on-line and other innovative resources.

The Department and others within the Administration are working actively with Congress, states, local governments, private industry, public interest groups and concerned individuals to achieve the goal of connecting all classrooms to the Internet by the year 2000. In March 1996, you and the Vice President worked with more than 20,000 other volunteers to wire 3,000 California schools in an "electronic barnraising." Companies contributed wiring kits,

more than six million feet of cable, technical assistance, free Internet access, and free or discounted hardware and software. This sparked considerable nation-wide interest, and over 40 states organized **NetDays** in the fall of 1996, wiring over 25,000 schools with the help of over 250,000 volunteers.

Improving the Nation's Report Card

Under this Administration's leadership, the National Assessment Governing Board has committed to long-term changes to improve the **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)** -- also known as the Nation's Report Card -- and make it more useful to citizens, educators, researchers, and policymakers across the U.S. Among other changes, the Board has committed to testing students annually according to a publicly released schedule and providing state-level results in reading, writing, math and science at grades 4 and 8.

Preserving and Expanding Federal Resources for Improving Education

From January 1995 through September 1996, Congressional Republicans proposed education cuts in every piece of education-related **budget and appropriations** legislation, in addition to proposing the outright elimination of the Department. Overall, Republicans sought the largest education cuts in the nation's history -- a 1/3 cut in the federal investment in education over seven years. Republicans tried to eliminate both Goals 2000 and School-to-Work funding, sought drastic cuts in Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities programs, and initially proposed no funding for the new Technology Literacy Challenge Fund. However, the Department, with your leadership, worked hard to remind the public and the Congress of the long-term importance of investing in our nation's schools. Amidst a strong public backlash, threats to the Department were dropped and, in the negotiations for fiscal 1997 spending, Congressional Republicans agreed with your priorities and recommended greater investments in almost every elementary and secondary program. The total education investment amounted to \$3.5 billion more than the level for fiscal 1996, an historic investment in our nation's future and a remarkable change from original Congressional proposals.

Increased funding under the FY 1997 appropriation will allow the number of schools receiving Goals 2000 awards to rise by an estimated 3,500 to 12,000 nationally, will expand School-to-Work implementation grants to nearly all the states, and will help an additional 470,000 disadvantaged children learn to challenging academic standards through Title I. Moreover, expanded Eisenhower funding will help 375,000 teachers and other educators teach to higher standards in core subjects, while a nearly 20% increase in Safe and Drug-Free Schools funds will assist communities to address youth drug use and school violence. In addition, the Department's investment in educational technology will quintuple, from \$48 million in 1996 to \$267 million in 1997.

Non-legislative Leadership: Restoring Community and Enhancing Safety, Discipline and Family Involvement in Education, and Improving the Quality of Teaching

Supporting Family Involvement in Education

Through our initiation and support for the **Partnership for Family Involvement in Education**, the Department of Education has played a critical role in helping schools to be more welcoming and inviting to families; encouraging employers to provide ways for parents and employees to be involved in education, including volunteering in their local schools; and expanding the support that youth, community, cultural and religious groups are giving to back greater family involvement in education. Over 2,000 employers, schools, religious, and community groups have joined the Partnership and have pledged to be more family-friendly.

Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning, developed and released by the Department in September 1994, helped provide a research base for the initiative, as well as ideas for effective activities to involve parents. The Department's **America Goes Back to School** initiative in each of the past two autumns led parents, employers, citizens, and groups across the country to get involved in education in their communities, homes, and schools. This initiative has been endorsed by the PTA and every major education organization and has generated support from prominent business, community and religious leaders. Over 500 special back-to-school events were held in August, September, and October of 1996.

*Getting America Reading in the Summer: Read*Write*Now!*

In 1995, the Department of Education, in partnership with 40 reading organizations, launched "**Read*Write*Now!**" During the summers of 1995 and 1996, Read*Write*Now! focused on encouraging libraries, youth groups, and schools to assist families and caring adults to read with young children for 30 minutes each day to prevent the summer fall-off in reading skills that often occurs. In 1996 alone, the initiative reached almost one million children through an estimated 300,000 reading tutors and partners. Read*Write*Now! can be a good prototype for the "America Reads" challenge.

Finding Common Ground: Religion and Schools

Another important example of your efforts to build common ground for improved schools was the directive on **Religious Expression in Public Schools**. Developed in July 1995, as part of the Department's efforts to bring together leaders of religious groups across the entire spectrum, this directive clarified allowable religious expression in schools, and has gone a long way toward ending 30 years of confusion over the issue. According to the National School Boards Association, the guidance caused a dramatic decrease in the number of inquiries regarding how schools can address holidays such as Christmas. Other education groups agree that the guidelines have reduced tension and divisiveness based on religion.

We have made a concerted effort to begin an ongoing relationship with America's religious community. This includes a statement of purpose signed by over 33 religious leaders and two ground-breaking regional summits between religious leaders and public school educators.

In addition, with your full support, the Department has joined the City of New York in a vigorous effort to have the Supreme Court reverse its 1985 ruling in Aguilar v. Felton that severely limits our ability to serve Title I students in religiously affiliated schools. The Justice Department has recently filed a petition on my behalf asking the Court to rehear the case.

Promoting Orderly and Safe School Environments

In addition to strong academics, the Administration has promoted a quality education that stresses discipline, hard work, respect and responsibility, where guns, violence and drugs are not present. You successfully elevated the issue of school safety and discipline through your encouragement of curfews, school uniforms, and strong truancy prevention programs. For example, the Department of Education and the Department of Justice developed and distributed a **Manual on School Uniforms** in February 1996. The manual provides examples and discusses common elements of the best local uniform policies. The response to the uniform manual was so positive that we followed with a **Manual to Combat Truancy**. These efforts helped contribute to a climate supporting the dramatic reduction in juvenile crime during your Administration -- including a 2.9% decrease in the juvenile crime arrest rate -- the first decline in seven years -- and a dramatic decline in the juvenile murder rate.

Expanding Flexibility and Improving the Federal-State-Local Partnership

Waivers of Federal Program Requirements

Even with a more flexible ESEA and many fewer regulations, schools, school districts, and states may encounter federal program requirements that interfere with their strategies for improving teaching and learning. Now, for the first time ever, under Goals 2000, School-to-Work, and the reauthorized ESEA, the Department can provide **waivers** of the vast majority of statutory and regulatory requirements for major federal education programs. The Department has aggressively implemented this authority, forming a cross-Department Waiver Action Board, mailing guidance to all local school districts, establishing a dedicated Waiver Assistance Line, and putting waiver information on the Department's web site. As of November 1996, the Department had considered 162 requests for waivers and approved 139, the majority of which covered requirements of Title I, with another 113 waiver applicants able to implement their plans for school improvement without the need for a waiver.

Delegating Waiver Authority to States: The Ed-Flex Demonstration

One of the most dramatic examples of the Department's new flexibility is the Education Flexibility Partnership Demonstration Program (**Ed-Flex**), a part of the Goals 2000 Act.

Under Ed-Flex, I can delegate my waiver authority to up to twelve state educational agencies. As a result, the states can waive a range of federal statutory or regulatory requirements affecting them, their districts and their schools, in order to remove barriers to better teaching and learning. Those affected by the waivers agree to be held accountable for the academic performance of their students. The first Ed-Flex state, Oregon, was designated in February 1995. Thus far, nine states have been selected, and we expect to name the last three participants shortly.

Schoolwide Programs -- Using Federal Funds for Whole-School Reform

The new Title I dramatically expanded the number of schools eligible to operate **schoolwide programs**, opening this option to an additional 12,000 Title I schools with greater than 50% poverty. Schools operating schoolwide programs can combine all of their federal education funds -- including Title I -- with state and local resources in order to upgrade teaching and learning throughout the whole school. Participating schools no longer have to conform to specific statutory and regulatory requirements of each separate program as long as the intent and purposes of the programs are met.

Consolidated Program Plans

To help promote a coherent approach to school improvement planning, the ESEA now permits states and local school districts to develop a single **consolidated plan** covering several ESEA programs and federal vocational education grants, instead of separate plans for each program. Forty-nine states have submitted consolidated plans to the Department, describing their general goals for all students and strategies for designing and integrating ESEA programs to further these goals. States can also consolidate funds for state administration received under various ESEA programs and Goals 2000; with state approval, local districts may consolidate their ESEA administrative funds as well.

Improved Assistance and Program Management

The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education has refocused its monitoring efforts on technical assistance rather than narrow compliance issues. Moreover, it has reorganized into 10 **regional service teams** that will be more responsive to the needs of states. In a significant departure from prior practice, each regional team has begun conducting **integrated reviews** of all of a state's major ESEA programs during a single visit rather than conducting multiple, separate reviews. In addition, the Department has initiated its first ever cross-Department integrated review teams, including staff from special education, bilingual education, and vocational education programs.

The Department has undertaken the **Cooperative Audit Resolution and Oversight Initiative (CAROI)** which seeks to improve oversight techniques, such as audits, monitoring and technical assistance. The initiative brings officials from across the Department into

partnerships with state and local officials to promote a better understanding of program requirements, further streamline audit procedures and audit resolution steps, and reduce or eliminate unnecessary disputes and litigation. The Department has issued a new guide for auditors of ESEA programs and has already reached an agreement with the Florida Department of Education on a jointly developed, less burdensome record-keeping system.

Ensuring Access to A Quality Education for All Students

Civil Rights: Ensuring Equal Educational Opportunity for All Students

Since 1993, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has proactively and effectively enforced the nation's civil rights laws to protect America's most vulnerable students from illegal discrimination in education. By initiating compliance reviews, receiving and resolving complaints, providing technical assistance, and developing guidance documents clearly describing the civil rights obligations guiding federal funding recipients, OCR has taken the lead on such critical civil rights issues as affirmative action, Title IX, higher education desegregation and testing and assessment.

For example, the Department has been a leader in the fight to maintain appropriate **affirmative action** programs, following your charge "to mend, not end." In 1994, the Department published its race-targeted aid policy, which helped establish a legal framework upon which colleges and universities could rely in their sponsorship of scholarship programs. This policy, which was the Administration's first policy statement on affirmative action, confirmed that both remediation of past discrimination and diversity are sufficiently compelling justification for using race and national origin in awarding scholarships.

In the area of gender discrimination under Title IX, OCR has addressed the two issues of **under-representation of females and minorities in math, science, and other challenging courses and sexual harassment**. This has included clearly recognizing that peer-on-peer harassment and same-sex harassment are covered by Title IX. OCR also reaffirmed and clarified principles relating to issues of **gender equity in intercollegiate athletics**. For the first time, OCR also developed a statement of legal principles to guide its work in the area of **testing and assessment**, and through an ongoing relationship with the National Academy of Sciences, has further developed the Department's ability to address problems of discrimination related to various testing practices. Among the most significant cases in 1996, OCR resolved allegations against the Educational Testing Service and the College Entrance Examination Board. As a result, beginning with the October 1997 administration of the PSAT, a test that measures writing skills will be added, with the expectation that the disparity between males and females qualifying for the semifinalist pool in the National Merit Scholarship competition will be significantly reduced, if not eliminated.

In the area of Title VI, in 1994 OCR published a Federal Register notice advising colleges and universities that it would reexamine their obligations to **desegregate formerly racially**

segregated systems of higher education to ensure consistency with the Supreme Court's decision in Fordice v. Ayers. Florida, Pennsylvania, and Ohio are working with OCR to address not only desegregation compliance standards under the Supreme Court's decision but also issues of access to educational excellence.

In addition to demonstrating leadership, OCR activities under this Administration have been far more efficient and effective. For example, OCR resolved 139 agency-initiated actions in FY 1996 alone (up from 82 in FY 1993). By restructuring its cumbersome process for complaint resolution, OCR resolved over 5,500 cases in FY 1995, in, on average, under 120 days -- with almost 100 fewer staff than in FY 1993. This represents a record for OCR and translates into greater access to education for many thousands of additional students facing illegal discrimination.

Improved Educational Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

In providing a voice for students with disabilities in the nationwide debate on school reform over the past four years, the Administration has reinforced its commitment to educational opportunities and higher standards for all children. The Department of Education's **strengthened enforcement of IDEA**, consistent with the goal of improved educational results for children with disabilities, has complemented its legislative efforts. For example, the Department improved its monitoring process through such changes as obtaining input from the public and parents before developing a state's corrective action plan, focusing those plans on requirements most directly influencing educational results for students, visiting certain states to ensure they have taken corrective actions, and documenting both improvement and any remaining non-compliance.

Strengthened Bilingual Education Programs

The Department successfully proposed the broadest overhaul of federal bilingual education programs in 25 years, culminating in passage of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994. The new act changed the focus of federal bilingual education programs from small-scale, classroom-based projects to whole-school and whole-district reform that holds LEP students to the same high standards expected of all children. The proportion of funding for bilingual education projects awarded to whole-school and whole-district reform efforts has increased from virtually none to 51 percent in FY 96, and is expected to reach 80 percent in FY 97. The new law also enhanced programmatic flexibility, strengthened the state administrative role, improved research and evaluation, and emphasized professional development. The number of LEP students served by federal bilingual education programs has increased over 50 percent, reaching more than half a million children in FY 96.

Defeating Harmful Immigration-Related Restrictions on Access to Educational Services

The Department worked extremely hard, together with the White House, the Department of Justice, legislative leaders, and a coalition of education, immigration, and law enforcement organizations, to defeat extreme legislative proposals to kick undocumented alien children out of schools and onto the streets. One particular proposal, the Gallegly Amendment, would have explicitly authorized states to exclude such children from public elementary and secondary schools, threatening the Supreme Court's landmark 1982 decision in Plyler v. Doe. You took a courageous stand, making clear that you would veto the immigration bill if it contained the Gallegly Amendment, and Republicans dropped the provision in conference. In the face of opposition by the Department and others, Republicans also dropped misguided "deeming" provisions that would have unwisely reduced the eligibility of legal immigrant students for student financial assistance and their ability to contribute to the U.S. economy.

II. Expanding Access to College and Improving Services for Students and Postsecondary Institutions

Expanding Access to College

Because the challenges of today's economy make education after high school more important than ever, the Department has been working hard to ensure access to postsecondary education for all students. In order to help students and their families pay for college, the Department has focused on two major efforts: creation and implementation of the Direct Loan program, and increases in funding for the grant, loan, and Work-Study programs that comprise federal student financial aid.

Direct Loans

The **Direct Loan** program, proposed and signed into law by you in the **Student Loan Reform Act of 1993**, has revolutionized federal student loan delivery by providing borrowers and participating schools with a simple, more automated and accountable system while saving taxpayers billions of dollars. In this, its third successful year, the program will provide \$10 billion in loans at over 1,600 schools. More than 2.1 million student and parent borrowers have received direct loans since the program began. During the 1996-97 academic year, it is expected that Direct Loans will make up approximately 36 percent of federal student loans.

The Student Loan Reform Act has resulted in savings for students who borrow under either of the federal student loan programs. Borrowers who have direct loans can better manage their student loan debt by repaying loans as a percentage of their income under the pay-as-you-earn repayment plan, one of a range of repayment options available through direct lending. This income-contingent option helps students to choose the careers they want.

Even the millions of students who borrow through the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program benefit from the Direct Loan program. The competition and choice created by Direct Loans have forced the FFEL industry to improve its services to students, and savings generated by reductions in government subsidies to banks and middlemen in the FFEL program are passed along to all borrowers in the form of lower fees and interest rates.

Increased Aid Available to Students

The Administration has striven to increase funding for student financial aid programs. Aid available to students increased by \$10 billion between 1993 and 1995 -- an impressive increase of 40 percent. With the enactment of the fiscal year 1997 appropriations bill, aid available to students will increase by an additional \$3.6 billion for a record total of \$36 billion benefiting an estimated 7.7 million students in 1997.

Pell Grants are the most important form of student financial aid for the nation's neediest students, but appropriations that have not kept pace with inflation have seriously eroded the grants' purchasing power. To address this problem, you have called for increases in the Pell Grant maximum award, to reach \$3,128 by the year 2002. Toward this end, you requested and won an increase in the Pell Grant maximum award from \$2,300 in 1993 to \$2,700 in fiscal year 1997. Pell Grants will provide a total of 3.8 million low-income students the opportunity to attend college in fiscal year 1997. This increase will also assist 126,000 more students than in 1996 to receive a postsecondary education.

The Administration also is committed to the **Work-Study** program and has proposed incremental annual funding increases so that one million students will be served by the program by the year 2000. Work-Study earnings complement grant and loan assistance. The amount appropriated for this program increased from \$583 million in 1993 to \$830 million in 1997 -- and because this federal commitment leverages additional funds from schools, more than one billion dollars in financial aid will be available in 1997 to an estimated 960,000 students through the program.

Ensuring access also requires additional support for at-risk students, encouraging them to apply to college and complete their educational programs. For this reason, the Administration has pushed for increased funding for federal **TRIO** programs; in FY 97, these programs won an increase of \$37 million. The \$500 million appropriation will permit institutions of higher education and other organizations to provide outreach and support services as well as information about postsecondary education opportunities, to approximately 685,000 low-income and first-generation college students.

In addition, the Administration played a key role in preventing changes in the student financial aid programs that would have eroded access. The Department vigorously opposed proposals in Congress that would have eliminated the in-school interest subsidy for student loan borrowers;

eliminated the six-month grace period; imposed a fee on colleges based on their student loan volume; and eliminated a large number of students from the Pell Grant program.

Decreasing Loan Defaults and Improving Student Financial Aid Services Through Better Program Management

Loan Servicing and Default Collection

In addition to expanding access, the Administration has made a commitment to improving services to students and postsecondary institutions through better management of student financial aid programs in a number of key areas. For example, the Department has transformed its loan servicing and collection efforts. Since the start of the Administration, the Department of Education has doubled total defaulted loan collections to \$2.5 billion in fiscal year 1996.

Reengineered Institutional Oversight

The Department also has refocused its oversight of the postsecondary institutions that participate in the student financial aid programs. At the heart of this effort is the reorganization of the Office of Postsecondary Education's Institutional Participation and Oversight Service (IPOS) into regional case management divisions. These divisions are responsible for all core oversight functions for their respective portfolio of schools. The reorganization will allow the Department to monitor schools' compliance with requirements of the student financial aid programs more efficiently while relieving administrative burden on schools.

Removing Ineffective Schools from Student Financial Aid Programs -- and Cutting the Default Rate by Nearly One-Half

As a result of the Department's efforts to target its monitoring resources on schools that pose the greatest risk to students and taxpayer funds, a total of 672 institutions have lost eligibility to participate in Title IV programs, with 381 institutions having been terminated from all Title IV programs for poor performance and 291 institutions having lost their eligibility to participate in the student aid programs through the on-going recertification process. In addition, 203 institutions are no longer eligible for participation in the loan programs because of high default rates. These aggressive accountability and oversight efforts remove ineffective schools from the student financial aid programs, both protecting students and ensuring accountability for taxpayer funds.

The Department's efforts, along with new statutory controls and lender and guarantor efforts, have cut the student loan default rate by nearly *one-half*, from 22.4 percent in FY 90 to 11.6 percent in FY 93. The rate is expected to be even lower for FY 94.

Cutting Red Tape -- Experimental Sites

The Department also has made a concerted effort to reduce the administrative burden on institutions. Under the Department's Experimental Sites initiative, over 600 experiments have been approved at 135 higher education institutions. These projects exempt schools from certain regulatory and statutory requirements so that they can innovate to better meet their students' needs without sacrificing accountability. These experiments not only reduce the burden on participating schools, but also will be used to evaluate how the Department might monitor institutions of higher education more flexibly in the future.

Improved Systems for Greater Efficiency and Accountability

The Department's use of the latest technology further improves services for students and schools in the federal financial aid programs. The National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) is in the final stages of implementation, providing schools and the Department with information in an electronic format on student aid recipients. Schools' jobs are made easier, and improved data integrity helps to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse in the programs. Institutions also receive a number of free EDEXpress software packages that allow them to administer the delivery of student aid electronically. The new technology also benefits students, who now can apply for financial aid using Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Express software.

III. Reinventing the Department to Improve Services, Reduce Burden and Save Taxpayer Dollars

Over the last four years, the Department has reinvented itself to improve services and save taxpayer dollars. Since 1993, the Department has reduced its paperwork burden to customers, increased program flexibility, improved customer service and access, created award-winning partnerships, and developed a Department-wide strategic plan. In recognition of our commitment to a government that works better and costs less, Vice President Gore has awarded the Department 10 Hammer Awards since 1993.

Improving Access to Information

The Department has dramatically improved customer access to its programs and materials. 1-800-USA-LEARN, the toll-free, one-stop shopping center, provides information and accurate referrals to approximately 5,000 callers each week. 1-800-4FED-AID, our student aid hotline, will assist over 3 million callers this year. The Department's World Wide Web site provides information to an average of 1.6 million requests each month and has received numerous awards for its useful content and customer-friendly access.

Providing Better Customer Service and Reducing Burden

Reducing the Burden of Regulation and Paperwork

The Department recognizes that serving customers better requires reducing regulatory and paperwork burdens. As part of the your Regulatory Reinvention Initiative, the Department committed to eliminate or reinvent 93% of all its regulations. The Department has already exceeded that ambitious goal by eliminating 39% and reinventing 55% of its regulations -- a total of 2,031 pages. By consistently applying a set of strict "Principles for Regulating," and consulting extensively with customers, the Department of Education has made significant practical changes that reduce requirements on school districts, state education agencies, colleges, student borrowers and their families, and grant applicants.

The Department has also cut more than 10% of the information collection requirements that were in place just a year ago. This translates into *5.4 million* fewer hours for schools, students, parents, states and other customers to complete required forms to get student loans, apply for education grants, or manage student aid systems.

Grants Reengineering

The Department is streamlining its discretionary grants process by eliminating unnecessary requirements and improving the timeliness of grantee notification. When fully implemented, this reform is expected to reduce the number of steps needed to make a discretionary grant by 50 percent, cut the processing time by 25 percent, and reduce the notification time by two to three months.

Improving Management and Efficiency

Improving Financial Management and Technology Systems

The Department is improving key financial management and technology systems. The Education Department Central Automated Processing System (EDCAPS), when completed, will serve as a central repository for all Department business transactions, providing single input of data and fast, easy access to information. The Monthly Electronic Expenditures Reporting System (MEERS), our new system for electronic filing of cash expenditures, eliminates manual and mail transfers of forms and provides accurate and timely data to more than 1,800 of the largest states and universities. FedWire automates the payment process to allow states, universities and large colleges access to the Education Payment Management System online, enabling customers to view their account history and balances, request payments, and edit or view payment requests up to 30 days in advance.

Increasing Employee Productivity

A new 360-degree performance appraisal system, linked to the Department's strategic plan, provides feedback on employee performance from customers, co-workers, and subordinates. In addition, the Department has reduced the average hiring time from 113 days to 61 days, increased the funding and quality of employee training, and made family-friendly and flexible workplace arrangements available to employees.

AGENDA FOR THE SECOND TERM

Building on the accomplishments of the first term, and your bold agenda for the future, we will use the next four years to make it possible for all Americans to acquire the education and skills needed for the 21st century.

We will help states and communities to make their schools safer and more engaging for students, places where skilled teachers teach world-class material, where technology expands learning opportunities, and where parents are more involved in their children's education.

We will also help students and their families realize their dreams of a college education, and continue their learning to develop new skills.

We will vigorously carry out your agenda to improve the teaching profession, make schools safer and fight drugs, support families and increase parent and community involvement, provide more choice in public education, assist students to make the transition from school to careers, and expand access to postsecondary education.

Four years from now, this Administration's legacy in education will be a nation in which many more children can read independently by third grade; a nation in which students are learning to clear, high academic standards; a nation in which schools are connected to the benefits of technology; and a nation in which Americans who are willing to work for it can go to college and can receive the training and skills needed over the course of their lifetime.

I. Helping Students Master World-Class Skills

Helping Every Child Read by Age 8

Today, 40% of American 4th graders cannot read as well as they should; until children master this essential skill, they will not meet their full potential as students and citizens.

In August 1996, you announced your **America Reads** challenge to ensure that all children can read independently and well by the end of 3rd grade. You called on all Americans -- parents, teachers, libraries, religious institutions, universities, college students, the media, community and national groups, business leaders, senior citizens -- to become the frontline troops in the battle to meet this challenge.

As part of this challenge, the new initiative will help mobilize one million tutors -- America's Reading Corps -- to provide individual attention to more than 3 million young children before and after school, during the summer and on weekends. It also will offer "Parents as First Teachers" grants to support effective and proven efforts that help parents help their children learn to read and expand Head Start to one million children in FY 2002. This new "America

Reads" initiative also builds on Administration efforts to work with the private sector in helping parents help their children learn to read, such as the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education and the Read*Write*Now! coalition. In your recent call for 100,000 college Work-Study slots for reading tutors, you moved to provide a unique opportunity for college students to serve their communities. Finally, strengthening Title I, bilingual, and special education programs to improve reading during the school day will also be part of our efforts to meet your reading challenge.

Raising Standards -- Challenging American Students

As the recent results of the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) underscore, the nation needs genuinely challenging state or local standards that translate into rigorous curricula, better professional development, and improved teaching and learning in the classroom. With the legislative framework of Goals 2000 and the reauthorized Title I in place, as well as solid FY 97 funding levels in federal elementary and secondary programs, the Administration is in a strong position to work even more closely with states and school districts to accelerate the process of **raising academic standards** in core subjects.

In order to ratchet up the pace and quality of reforms, the Department will take advantage of the opportunities presented by Goals 2000 and the reauthorized Title I, strongly encouraging states and school districts to take a critical look at the quality of their standards and assessments, and making resources available to states and districts that wish to compare their standards and assessments with outside benchmarks of excellence. In addition, the Department, working with the National Science Foundation and other partners, will sponsor a high-profile series of forums across the country designed to familiarize officials, educators, and the public with the findings and implications of TIMSS, especially with regard to improving math achievement. The Department will work with you and the Vice President to use the bully pulpit, encouraging parents, educators, the business community, state and local leaders, and the public to demand high expectations for students, matched with challenging curricula and teaching -- and an end to watered-down courses.

Expanding Public School Choice and Charter Schools

The Department will work with states, school districts, and potential charter school developers to encourage the continued expansion of accountable public **charter schools**, moving toward your goal of 3,000 such schools by the year 2000. We will actively take advantage of increased funding for the public charter school program, supporting local efforts to create high-quality charter schools. The Department will also sponsor a series of regional conferences for charter school developers, a World Wide Web site, and a number of guidebooks related to charter schools. In addition, the Department will work to familiarize the public with other **public school choice** strategies, such as schools-within-schools, magnet schools, open enrollment and postsecondary options, consistent with your call for all families to be able to choose what school their child will attend.

Fostering Better Teaching

To help speed the pace of improvements in classroom teaching, the Department will actively respond to your directive on **Promoting Excellence and Accountability in Teaching**, helping states and school districts to recruit, train, and retain talented teachers, and remove incompetent or burnt-out teachers from the classroom quickly and fairly. We will urge colleges and universities to reinvent teacher training and urge states to strengthen teacher licensing. The Department will continue its support for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, helping to Board-certify 100,000 high-quality teachers. We will disseminate to school districts, colleges, and states resources and information that can be used to meet your directive.

II. Helping Communities Develop 21st Century Schools

Helping Every Child Log on to the Internet by Age 12

In February 1996, we proposed a five-year, \$2-billion **Technology Literacy Challenge** fund that would support efforts at the state and local level to provide every student with modern computers, high-quality educational software, trained teachers, and connections to the Information Superhighway. \$200 million has been appropriated for fiscal year 1997. The fund will encourage and leverage efforts by states, communities, and the private sector to work in partnership with schools.

The FCC has until May 1997 to develop rules for implementing the recommendations of the Joint Board for an affordable **E-rate** for schools and libraries. The Department will continue to provide input to the FCC and other parties on implementation of the E-rate.

The Department will also continue to support grassroots **NetDays** to connect classrooms to the Information Superhighway. The next National NetDay effort is scheduled for April 1997.

School Construction

You have proposed a \$5-billion **school construction initiative** to construct new schools, repair or renovate existing schools, provide physical infrastructure necessary for computers and other educational technology, and help school systems meet the challenges of record-high student enrollment. This initiative would provide \$5 billion in federal funds to help schools and communities renovate existing schools and construct new ones. The federal funds would pay for up to half the interest that local school districts incur on school construction bonds. Over the four-year life of the initiative, \$20 billion in construction and renovation activity could be generated nationwide for a 25% increase in construction activity over current levels. As proposed, the states would administer the bulk of the subsidies, and approximately 100 of the largest school districts would be able to apply directly to the Department for funding.

Your school construction initiative is especially timely, considering the growing needs of America's schools. The Department has released a major report on the "Baby Boom Echo," which alerted the nation to the record-breaking number of students in our nation's classrooms. Today, there are 51.7 million students, and the number will continue to grow throughout the next 10 years. The report noted that the nation will have to build over 6,000 more schools, triggering a wide-ranging public discussion about how to meet the challenge.

Increasing Options for Moving from School to Careers

By the fall of 1997, almost every state will have developed comprehensive plans to build **school-to-work** systems and will have received their five-year grants. These grants will be used as venture capital to begin the development of school-to-work systems that are available to all students. However, these funds cannot support the full implementation of school-to-work systems. The support of state and local education funds, and the support and participation of the business community, will be vital. At the same time that school-to-work systems are expanding, states must ensure the quality of these systems. The federal government, through the national school-to-work office, has a key role to play by providing technical assistance and building national support for the initiative.

Vocational Education -- Reinforcing Access to School-to-Work Opportunities for All Students

The Perkins Act is the primary source of federal support to secondary schools and postsecondary institutions for vocational education. The Administration's proposal to reauthorize the Perkins Act will expand access to School-to-Work systems for all students. The proposal is driven by three themes: program consolidation, flexibility, and accountability. Funds would be targeted to schools and postsecondary institutions that serve large numbers of disadvantaged students.

III. Strengthening the Best of Our American Values and Traditions in Education

Keeping Schools Safe and Drug-Free

The Department will continue its efforts to make the **Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program** more effective and provide adequate resources to local school districts. As part of this effort, we are distributing to school districts a guide to promising strategies to help them run safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools. The Department will also hold one of its Satellite Town Meetings on successful practices in this area.

Keeping School Open in the Afternoons and Summers

The Department will support a new initiative to provide additional safe havens and extended learning opportunities for children and their families. The initiative will help highlight how after-school, summer and weekend programs in **Community Learning Centers** can get us

“back to basics” and foster active community involvement. Community Learning Centers can offer such services as after-school tutoring, adult education, parenting skills, drug and alcohol prevention, and violence prevention. The initiative will underscore the ties between home, school, and community and how current safety, reading, and learning policies support their success.

Promoting Family Involvement

The Partnership for Family Involvement has grown from 45 national organizations to more than 2,400 organizations representing families, schools, communities, employers, and religious denominations representing 75 percent of church-affiliated Americans. Efforts will be expanded to sign up partners, who will pledge to implement family-friendly practices that encourage greater parental involvement in learning. The Department will also continue efforts to increase the number of employers signing the “**Employers’ Promise for Learning**,” particularly by assisting with sign-up events and state and local conferences.

The Partnership will be central to the Department’s efforts to increase the number of parents and concerned Americans who are actively involved in their schools. It will also encourage more parents to enter into agreements -- or “compacts”-- with their schools, in which parents define what they want their children to learn. The Partnership can also support a nationwide initiative to help more middle-school-aged students prepare for college through mentoring and community involvement.

Supporting Families in Their Efforts to Find Time With Their Children

You have proposed an **expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act** to help more parents and family members take an active role in schools and in children’s learning. Specifically, family members would be allowed to take up to 24 hours of unpaid leave per year to attend parent-teacher conferences or PTA meetings, volunteer for school activities, take children to the doctor, or participate in other educational or child-rearing activities. Additionally, the Administration has proposed that family members who work overtime be allowed to choose between getting paid an overtime wage or taking time off for family matters. The Department is preparing to disseminate to every public school in America a “how to” guide for school principals and teachers to make their schools family friendly and encourage greater family involvement in education.

Reauthorizing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) -- Access Plus Higher Quality

The Department’s forward-looking **proposal for the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** has already influenced the thinking of Congress and the field on the future of special education services and the relationship of special education to regular education. A number of the proposal’s major ideas undoubtedly will be reflected in

the final legislation. Key principles include: students with disabilities should be included in general assessments and have access to the general curriculum; programs should focus on results and regular reporting to parents; requirements should be streamlined; and funding incentives to inappropriately identify children for special education services should be eliminated. The Department's proposal would improve the teaching and learning of disabled students throughout the U.S. and strengthen programs that will result in meaningful employment of working-age individuals.

III. Widening Access and Improving Services in Postsecondary Education and Lifelong Learning

Ensuring Students Can Attend College at 18 and Providing All Americans with Opportunities to Improve Their Skills

HOPE Scholarships and Tuition Tax Deductions

Your proposed **America's HOPE Scholarships** would guarantee that a college education is accessible and affordable to all Americans at any time in their lives. The HOPE Scholarship would make at least two years of college the standard for all Americans by providing a refundable tax credit of up to \$1,500 to full-time, first-year postsecondary students and to full-time, second-year students who earn at least a B-minus average in the first year. Students who attend at least half-time would receive a \$750 tax credit.

The tax credit could be applied to tuition and fees at any college. Students receiving tax credits would also be eligible for other federal student aid, including student loans, Pell Grants, and Work-Study. The maximum tax credit would be limited to \$1,500 minus any grants awarded to the student.

You have also proposed a **tax deduction** of up to \$10,000 per family for tuition and fees at colleges and other postsecondary institutions for full-time or part-time study. The deduction would be phased in, with a maximum deduction of \$5,000 in FY 1997 and 1998, and \$10,000 thereafter. Eligibility would be reduced by the amounts of both federal and non-federal student aid grants.

Students eligible for both the tax credit and the tax deduction would choose one or the other, although students benefiting from the tax credit in the first two years would still be eligible for the deduction later. Because the tax proposals are meant to help low- and middle-income students pay for college, eligibility for both the tax credit and the tax deduction would be phased out for joint tax filers with incomes between \$80,000 and \$100,000 and for individual filers with incomes between \$50,000 and \$70,000.

Presidential Honors Scholarships -- Rewarding Achievement

The **Presidential Honors Scholarship** program you have proposed further emphasizes the importance of student achievement. This program would award one-year, \$1,000 scholarships to the top five percent of graduating high school students in every high school in the nation.

Direct Lending, Pell Grants and Work-Study

The Administration is committed to the **Direct Loan** program because of the flexibility, efficiency, choice and competition that it adds to the federal student loan programs. The Department will further improve Direct Lending to attract more schools to the program.

The Department also will continue its expansion of the **Pell Grant**, **TRIO**, and **Work-Study** programs to further its mission of expanded access to postsecondary education. You have proposed an increase in the maximum Pell Grant to \$3,128 by the year 2002 to ensure that all students have the opportunity to attend college. You have also encouraged an increase in Work-Study funding to enable the program to serve one million students by the year 2000. In FY 97, the program received a 35 percent increase in program funding to \$830 million. As a result, approximately 960,000 students will find part-time employment and earn more than \$1 billion next year. In light of this large funding increase, the Administration is exploring ways to encourage Work-Study colleges and universities to employ more students in community service jobs, including serving as reading tutors for elementary school children.

To increase the amount of federal student aid available to students, and to strengthen the Direct Loan program, the Department is also developing its proposal for **reauthorizing the Higher Education Act**. The programs authorized under the HEA provide a strong foundation of support for higher education. As part of reauthorization, the Department will consider how to make these programs work better and ensure that they complement our other proposed initiatives.

Our reauthorization proposals will encourage access with responsibility shared by students, families, the federal government, states, and institutions; support high standards and high achievement; simplify program delivery and improve management; and improve outreach to potential students and linkages to employment opportunities.

Improving the Student Financial Aid Application Process

The Department is also working to improve the way students and families apply for and receive student financial aid. **Project EASI** (Easy Access for Students and Institutions) is a collaborative effort among diverse government, business and education leaders, initiated by the Department, to reengineer the country's postsecondary education financial aid delivery system. **Project EASI** will assist students and their families in planning for education beyond high school, choosing among alternatives and financing their choices.

Adult Education -- Expanding English Literacy to an Older Generation

The reauthorization of the **Adult Education Act** provides an opportunity to establish a core set of objectives for adult education and strengthen state accountability systems while consolidating or streamlining adult education programs. In addition, the proposal will expand the Administration's reading and technology initiatives to include the target populations of adult education programs (including speakers of English as a second language and older Americans).

III. Moving Ahead with Department Reinvention Efforts

Finally, in order for the Department's policy initiatives to fully take root and produce results across the country, we will also forge ahead with our efforts to transform the Department into a high-performance, customer service organization. The Department of Education will continue to enhance its one-stop shopping capabilities and improve customer service, improve its planning for technology, transform its relationship with states, and improve its data collection efforts through increased coordination. In addition, the Department will continue its efforts to consolidate programs, cut paperwork requirements (another 10% in FY 97), make the personnel system more responsive, manage technology systems, and strike the proper balance between providing more flexibility to states with the need to ensure accountability and fiduciary responsibility. Ultimately, the challenge for the second term lies in ensuring that system improvements become lasting and sustainable.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 4, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEFS OF STAFF

FROM: RONDA JACKSON *RJ*
SUBJECT: 8:30 A.M. CONFERENCE CALL

Phil
1. Weekly reports are due Thursday, December 5, at 12:00 p.m.

K. Seal
2. Accomplishments/Goals memos are due Friday, December 6, at 9 a.m. Please contact Ronda Jackson with any questions.

Ross
3. Holiday party lists are due by the close of business today. Please send via fax to Ronda Jackson.

- **Helping Communities Develop 21st Century Schools**
 - Make it possible for every child to log on to the Internet by age 12
 - Assist communities to build new schools or repair old ones
 - Increase options for moving from school to careers
- **Strengthening the Best of Our American Values and Traditions in Education**
 - Support greater family and community involvement
 - Make schools safe and drug-free
 - Keep school open in the afternoons and summers
- **Widening Access to Postsecondary Education and Lifelong Learning**
 - Make the first two years of college universally accessible
 - Make postsecondary education more affordable for all Americans
 - Make it possible for all Americans to strengthen their skills and improve their earning power throughout their lives

As I travel around our nation, as I visit our schools and colleges and meet with parents, students, business people and citizens from every walk of life, I continue to grow more firmly convinced that education is truly the key to our nation's future. As you recently stated:

Let us pledge to give our children the best education in the world, and the support they need to build strong futures, higher standards in our schools, more choices, and the opportunity for all Americans to go on to college.

The Department of Education is eager to continue working with you to take on this vital challenge. Working together with the American people, we believe we can succeed.

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