

NATIONAL

1. The Washington Post

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School Plan To Propose Urban Aid

Clinton, Advisers Focus '98 Education Initiative On Big-City Problems

By Rene Sanchez

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Clinton administration is drafting plans to expand its education agenda next year with initiatives that target the problems in urban public schools, many of which are overwhelmed with academic failure and are physically falling apart.

Final details of the plan have not been resolved, but a variety of ideas are emerging — from reviving an initiative to repair thousands of crumbling schools to creating a program that would reward urban districts that enact tougher academic standards and let parents choose whatever public school they want for their children.

The White House and the **Education Department** have been working all month on the proposals, which they expect President Clinton to unveil in January and which could ignite another round of important political battles with Republican leaders in Congress over a subject that he has vowed to make the defining priority of his second term.

Clinton already has a lengthy list of education initiatives making their way, with mixed results so far, through Congress. But some school leaders and lawmakers have criticized him for not putting more emphasis on urban public education. During budget negotiations with Republican congressional leaders earlier this year, Clinton shelved the proposal that urban educators wanted most: \$5 billion to fix dilapidated schools.

"Urban education has not been a very visible part of the administration's agenda so far," said Michael Casserly, the executive director of the Council of Great City Schools, which represents the nation's largest urban districts. "We're hoping what they're working on now will correct that and get help to schools that need it most."

Across the country, many urban school systems are attempting to address their dire predicaments with an array of new, and in some cases radical,

strategies. It is a period of growing upheaval: Districts are hiring business or former military leaders to take charge of their schools, revamping what they teach, turning to private companies for help in the classroom, and struggling to impose strict new academic standards on faculty and students who fall short of expectations. Administration officials said that Clinton wants to support some of that difficult and as yet unproven work.

"You've got a confluence of things starting to happen in many urban school sites that really make the time ripe to focus more special attention on them," said **Marshall Smith, acting deputy secretary of education**. "We want to help them move in the right direction."

The plight of urban schools is also receiving substantial new attention in Congress, where many Republican lawmakers, and some Democrats, are making it a top priority to pass legislation that would give the neediest students in some cities the option of using publicly paid tuition vouchers to escape bad public schools and attend private ones.

An attempt to start a federally funded voucher program nationwide was defeated in the House this fall. Republican leaders say that vouchers, which appear to be gaining support among minority parents, are necessary because so many traditional approaches to improving public schools in the nation's large cities have failed.

But Clinton adamantly opposes the idea. He favors a more limited form of school choice — letting parents pick any public school they want in their district, instead of being forced to attend a school in their neighborhood, no matter how bad it is. The administration is bracing for more political showdowns soon over that issue.

"We expect to see voucher proposals all year next year, in every possible guise," Smith said. "It will be a fight."

A key part of the plan the White

House and Education Department are developing is focused on that looming political conflict: Clinton wants to reward high-poverty urban school districts with new federal grants if, among other things, they give parents the freedom to enroll children anywhere within the public system. Some districts are moving in that direction, but most still rely on neighborhood schooling.

Clinton recently said he intends to designate a select number of troubled urban districts "education opportunity zones" and make them eligible for grants that they could use in many ways to improve schools.

But to qualify for the money, districts also would have to show that they are holding faculty accountable for performance and are requiring students to meet strong academic standards. Some especially poor school districts in rural areas across the country also would receive the new grants. The cost of the plan has not yet been determined, and none of the sites for it have been selected yet, administration officials said.

Clinton may have a difficult time getting Congress to support another expensive new education plan, however, if he is not willing to test vouchers even on a small scale.

"It sounds like the administration is missing the mark again," said Jeanne Allen, president of the Center for Education Reform, which supports vouchers. "Communities nationwide are recognizing that schools need severe changes, but Clinton is still doing only as much as he can without offending the teacher unions."

Another aspect of Clinton's plan is school construction. Earlier this year, the president caved to congressional skepticism about the \$5 billion he wanted to give school districts to repair their aging, tattered buildings. But administration officials now say Clinton intends to push the issue again early next year. Clinton also wants to give urban schools more money to recruit and train

better teachers. In many cities, finding good teachers is a chronic problem that is getting worse.

Urban school leaders have been pressing Clinton for additional aid ever since more than a dozen of the nation's largest urban school districts, including Chicago and New York, pledged their support a few months ago for the president's controversial plan to give students national tests in reading and math for the first time. Only a few states

have agreed to use the tests, which still face a tough fight for approval in Congress.

Urban officials also have complained that some of Clinton's other education initiatives have not yet had a significant effect in their classrooms.

Goals 2000, a loosely structured federal grant program to improve schools, is managed by states, and they are under pressure to give all schools a share of the money. The president's

reading initiative — he wants to recruit and train a nationwide army of volunteer reading tutors — is still being developed, although hundreds of universities have agreed to use work-study students for the project.

Clinton officials bristle at the criticism. "We think we've been aggressive on this. We're trying to make help for urban schools a constant refrain," Smith said. "Now we want to put it all together in a new program." ■

2. The Wall Street Journal

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Double Reverse: Scholarship Program For Whites Becomes A Test of Preferences

An African-American School Sees Gains in Diversity; Then Black Student Sues — A Different Spin on Merit

By June Kronholz

Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal
MONTGOMERY, Ala. — A few years ago, a federal judge concluded that Alabama's state universities still were largely segregated and ordered them to do more to bring diversity to their campuses.

That's how it happens that Jessie Thompkins, a black man who grew up attending segregated schools, is suing Alabama State University, a historically black university that was founded by freed slaves, over its \$1 million-a-year scholarship program. A program, as it turns out, that is open only to whites.

To Mr. Thompkins, the issue is a simple one: "They said I have to be white and I can't be." But as the courts and public opinion force affirmative action into steady retreat, America's dialogue about preferences is anything but simple. It ricochets from the inviolability of merit to the benefits of diversity, and from the desire to right old wrongs to the fear of creating new ones.

In Washington state, a white woman who comes from a one-parent household, worked her way through community college and earned a master's degree sued when she says she was denied a place in law school because preferential admission was given to blacks. But in California and Texas, minority applications and admissions to law school have plummeted since preferences

were ended this fall; new classes suddenly are overwhelmingly white.

In Prince George's County, Md., black parents are suing the school district because it reserves seats, at magnet schools with a majority of black students, for white children. In Buffalo, white parents are suing the school district because it reserves seats, at an honors school that already has a lot of white students, for black children.

It's illegal for a university that gets public funding to discriminate by race. But what about historically black public universities, which have been an avenue to success for generations of African-Americans? Can they be required to integrate themselves out of their historical mission? That, in part, is at issue in lawsuits in Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama.

Indeed, few cases put affirmative action in as stark a light as does the Jessie

Thompkins case. In a state where "whites only" signs hung over public facilities only a few decades ago, a whites-only scholarship turns history on its head. "It's strange," says Mr. Thompkins. "You have a historically black institution giving scholarships to whites to remedy discrimination."

The remedy that Mr. Thompkins is challenging had its start in 1981, when Clarence Thomas — then at the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights and now a leading opponent

of affirmative action on the Supreme Court — concluded after a long investigation that "vestiges" of segregation remained at the state's universities. Almost no one was surprised.

In 1963, Alabama's flagship university, the University of Alabama, was integrated with the help of federal troops in one of the most dramatic confrontations of the civil-rights movement. But two decades later, the state's 13 historically white public universities still were largely white — and continued to house the state's professional schools and most of its graduate programs. The two historically black universities still were overwhelmingly black.

In 1985, with the support of the Justice Department, a group of Alabama State students sued Alabama in an effort to force it to devote more money, and to direct new programs, to the black schools. After a decade of litigation, a federal judge did that and more: In an effort to attract more whites to Alabama State and Alabama A&M University, the judge ordered each to spend \$1 million a year in new state funding on scholarships for whites.

A General Accounting Office study in 1994 found that, nationwide, about 5% of all undergraduate grants were so-called minority-targeted or race-exclusive scholarships. But almost always, the race has been

African-American, Hispanic, Pacific Islander or Native American — not white.

Alabama State was founded as Abraham Lincoln Normal School in 1867 for training black teachers, and for the first 100 years of its existence, it was prevented by state law from enrolling whites. But more than that kept the school segregated: It wasn't accredited until 1966, it offered only one master's-degree program, and it was chronically short of money.

Alabama State was convinced that its future depended on enrolling more whites — otherwise, it risked a merger with a nearby historically white campus — so it decided to make the scholarship program even broader than that ordered by the court. It added \$229,000 of its own money, and offered scholarships even to out-of-state white students. In the 1996-1997 school year, after a year of struggling to get the program running, the university awarded 40% of its budget for academic grants to whites. That provided for 671 scholarships — one for almost every white on the campus of 5,419 students.

Mr. Thompkins, who is 38 years old, wasn't even born yet when Rosa Parks made Montgomery the epicenter of the civil-rights movement in 1956 by refusing to move to the back of a Montgomery bus. Still, he speaks of growing up in fear of the Ku Klux Klan; of the racial ugliness that accompanied the integration of Alabama's high schools; of the time his family fled their home in Marion, Ala., because of tensions over a visit to town by Ralph Abernathy, the civil-rights leader.

Small and wiry, Mr. Thompkins had the fastest time in the nation among high-school hurdlers in the 400-meters in his senior year, and went on to the University of South Alabama, a predominantly white college, on an athletic scholarship. In 1991 — after graduating from South Alabama, getting a master's degree in sports coaching, running on the track team of a gym-shoe manufacturer, and student teaching for a year — Mr. Thompkins enrolled in Alabama State's graduate program in education.

The university gave him graduate assistantships for three years and promised him, he says, that the scholarship would continue until he graduated. When he went to apply for the grant in 1995, though, Mr. Thompkins says he was told the only scholarships

available were reserved for whites. His recollection of the incident: "I said, 'Ma'am?' She said, 'You can apply, but you won't get it.' I said, 'Well!'"

Almost as galling, he says, was that the whites-only scholarships paid for tuition, books, fees, and room and board — about \$6,400 a year — and also included \$900 a year for "incidentals." In return for his grants, which varied from \$3,500 to \$5,000 a year, Mr. Thompkins says he helped coach the university track teams and clerked at the school tennis courts.

To qualify for some of the white scholarships, moreover, students need only a C average, and don't even necessarily have to have a high-school diploma; a GED certificate, for General Education Development, is acceptable, too. Brandon Tanksley II, editor of the university newspaper, talks of campus disquiet over the scholarships with the very words that conservatives are using to decry affirmative action at predominantly white universities. "It's not that they're minority students," — by which he means whites — "it's that they're not competitive," says Mr. Tanksley.

William Hamilton Harris, the president of Alabama State, won't talk about Mr. Thompkins' scholarship applications except to say that "he has had more scholarships than anybody, ever, in the history of Alabama State." (A lawyer for Mr. Thompkins says, "That doesn't matter. He was denied this scholarship because of his race.") And the academic qualifications of the whites is impeccable, he adds. The university even hints it may compare the grades of its white and black students in court.

Without a scholarship, Mr. Thompkins dropped out of school in 1995 and took a job sorting packages at United Parcel Service to support his wife and four young sons. In 1996 and 1997, he returned as a part-time student, applied for scholarships again, and again was rejected. A dozen black lawyers whom he contacted about filing a discrimination case all had been involved in the 1985 suit that ultimately produced the whites-only scholarships, and they turned him away because of conflicts of interest, he says.

Last summer, the Center for Individual Rights finally filed a suit on his behalf and three other Alabama State students. The conservative law group earlier forced the University of Texas law school to drop racial preferences in its

admissions; it also filed the University of Washington case and a similar challenge to affirmative action at the University of Michigan. Mr. Thompkins compares himself to Cheryl Hopwood, the plaintiff in the Texas case, even though she was a white woman seeking admission to a predominantly white school. "We were bumped aside, regardless of our qualifications, because of our race," he says.

Alabama State's president, Mr. Harris, agrees with Mr. Thompkins on the irony of white scholarships in a state long given to black exclusion. "It's a twist, a reversal," he says. But any agreement he has with Mr. Thompkins ends there.

Tall and elegant, Mr. Harris is a historian, has written three books on blacks in the labor force, and served as the president of two other colleges before coming here. Even so, he talks of his fear of being stopped some night on a traffic violation and finding his reputation and academic standing subsumed by racial stereotype. "It's still there in our country," he says, that meanness about color.

Civil-rights groups suggest that a common thread in recent federal-court rulings on affirmative action is that three decades of such remedies as preferences and diversity plans have overcome prejudice in schools, in contracting and on the job, so now they can be abandoned. But Mr. Harris sees less progress toward racial equity than do the courts — "I grew up in a segregated era in the South; I know," he says. He argues that if the country needs doctors and lawyers of every race, then it also needs affirmative action to help some of them get there.

No small part of his resolve to defend the white scholarships is the fear that if they are ruled unlawful, then minority scholarships at other schools could be vulnerable, too. "The need for set-asides for blacks hasn't run its course," he says. But there are other, subtler benefits of the grants: Bringing whites and blacks together on campus "will broaden the quality of education and the quality of life at Alabama State," he says.

Joseph King, a white student, perhaps proves the point. After his florist shop burned down, he enrolled at Alabama State, wanting to fulfill his lifelong dream of becoming a teacher. Only after he had been admitted did he learn of the scholarships. He applied and got one, noting that "only a fool would turn down money."

Mr. King, 34, graduated with a 3.98 grade-point average and now has applied for another scholarship to attend graduate school at Alabama State. "I made a lot of friends that I wouldn't have met otherwise," he says. He did his student teaching at an all-black elementary school, and if a job came open at another black school, well, "race doesn't matter,"

he says.

In his modest home just off the Alabama State campus, Mr. Thompkins clings to the same notion — that race doesn't matter — to argue the other side of the affirmative-action debate. "We don't need race-based quotas," he says. "I don't want anyone telling my children they're the wrong color. If you want

something, you work for it; you just work for it."

Mr. Thompkins expects to graduate from Alabama State this spring as a specialist in education, the highest education degree the university offers. His case, tied up in motions, still is a long way from trial. Next, he says, he's thinking of going to law school. ■

3. The Washington Post

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The Reliable Source

By Ann Gerhart and Annie Greer

Washington's Renaissance Revelers

It's difficult to imagine that people actually choose to ring in the New Year by attending a panel discussion called "Commentaries on War Crimes, Human Rights, and Refugees," but that's Renaissance Weekend for you.

The invitation-only wonk-a-thon in Hilton Head, S.C., is a favorite ritual of more than 1,000 achievers, social climbers and their progeny. It's also an annual New Year's getaway for President and Hillary Clinton and daughter Chelsea. This year it runs from Dec. 28 through Jan. 1.

Since its founding in 1981 by FOBs Phil and Linda Lader (he's now ambassador to Great Britain), the alleged objective of the affair has been "a family retreat of innovative leaders for personal and national renewal."

And although crass commercialism is strictly banned (so leave the resumes and the Carlisle clothing order forms at home), these are people who just can't help networking between panel discussions — all mind-numbing 352 of them. Our personal favorite is "Renaissance Whispers: What My Spouse Is Wrong About (3 Minute Maximum . . . For Your Own Good!!?)."

Expected revelers this year include Arianna Huffington (there have to be some conservative Republicans on hand), digerati doyenne Esther Dyson, linguist Deborah Tannen, **Education Secretary Dick Riley**, White House communications director Ann Lewis, Rep. Tony Hall (D-Ohio) and Sen. Fritz Hollings (D-S.C.). There will also be at least two doctors in the house: Ruth Westheimer and Joyce Brothers.

But don't look for Barbra Streisand (who, in her diva-ness last year, wouldn't wear her nametag at all times, as requested). She'll be elsewhere, her publicist said. ■

4. Associated Press

12-23 1:18a

Some high-schoolers to begin 1998 with college acceptance in hand

By ROBERT GREENE

AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - A growing number of high-school seniors will start the new year with a college acceptance in hand instead of waiting until spring for word.

There's no official count, but guidance counselors, educational consultants and admissions officials report higher numbers of fall applications from the high school class of 1998. Many seniors began hearing back from colleges and universities last week.

But the popularity of early options has also caused worry that many teen-agers, desiring certainty, may not make the best choice of college. The yearlong focus on

college admission distracts students from their classwork and extracurricular activities, and also interferes with the other work of teachers who must write countless recommendations.

"This has really diluted the senior year," said Mary Lee Hoganson, a college counselor at the highly competitive University of Chicago Laboratory High School. She said the number of early decision applicants, as they are called, rose to about 45 percent of this year's senior class from about 30 percent last year.

The idea of applying early to college has caught on for a number of reasons, analysts say. Ivy League colleges and other elite institutions offered it for top

students who had a clearly defined top choice. Competition for undergraduates helped the practice spread. Then came reports that some institutions were picking high numbers of their freshman class from the early pool, fueling the belief that early applications always gave students an edge.

Then there's youthful impatience.

"This generation wants early information," said Mary Consoli, a family educational consultant with offices in St. Petersburg, Fla., and Knoxville, Tenn. "These seniors, they're anxious, they want to hear."

Those who get an early seat at the school of their choice can celebrate early. But for those who are rejected, "it's a

34. Education Week

December 9, 1997

Clinton Plan Would Target Poor Schools

By David J. Hoff
Washington

While President Clinton's new proposal to help high-poverty schools played only a minor part in his first town meeting on race last week, it offered a revealing preview of his administration's 1998 agenda for poor urban and rural districts.

The program is the first piece of a plan to help such districts raise student achievement, administration officials said.

"We've obviously stressed [urban issues] before," Marshall S. Smith, the acting deputy secretary of education, said. "But this kind of ups the ante."

What else will fill out that package is still undecided, according to Mr. Smith and Michael Cohen, the president's education adviser.

So far, administration officials have a sketchy outline for Mr. Clinton's proposed "education opportunity zones"—the program he announced at the town meeting in Akron, Ohio—and for plans to revive a failed attempt to support school construction projects. But they don't know how much money they will request for those or any other initiatives in Mr. Clinton's fiscal 1999 budget.

Despite the lack of specifics, the focus on poor schools has heartened urban school leaders. They say it represents the Democratic administration's first attempt to make city schools a priority since Mr. Clinton took office nearly five years ago.

"It looks like a great first step and a quite promising one," said Michael Casserly, the executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, a Washington group representing the nation's 50 largest urban school districts. "I expect the whole issue of urban education will be much higher on the national agenda next year."

Limited Details

At the Dec. 3 town hall meeting, one of a series planned as part of Mr. Clinton's effort to heighten national discussion of racial issues, the president briefly mentioned the educational-opportunity-zones plan. It was the only addition to the racial-reconciliation agenda he endorsed in the two-hour event at the University of Akron.

The "proposal [is] to create

educational opportunity zones to reward school districts in poor urban and rural areas who undertake the kind of sweeping reform that Chicago has embraced in the last couple of years," Mr. Clinton said.

To qualify for aid under the proposed program, school districts would need to promise to offer students a choice of public schools to attend, adopt challenging student-performance standards, tie grade promotions to students' success in meeting them, and overhaul schools where students consistently fail to meet the standards.

Whether local districts would have the authority to take all such actions on their own is unclear, according to one expert on state education laws. Only 30 of the states, for example, have laws allowing public school choice, according to Chris Pipho, a spokesman for the Education Commission of the States, a Denver-based coalition of state officials.

While the program would reach rural schools as well, its premise is built around reforms already under way in Chicago, San Francisco, New York City, and other cities.

"School board members are on the same page, but are trying to find out what works best," said Katrina A. Kelley, the director of the Council of Urban Boards of Education, a division of the Alexandria, Va.-based National School Boards Association.

Others question whether the scope of project, which Mr. Smith of the **Education Department** said would not cost more than \$1 billion a year, would be great enough.

President Clinton is "essentially nibbling around the edges of what are some major issues that need to be addressed," said Milton Bins, a former deputy director of the city schools' group and the chairman of the Council of 100, a group of black Republicans. "It may be enough to keep you happy through the Christmas holidays, but come January 1 you're back to square one."

Voucher Link

To be enacted, the new initiative and any others must clear Congress, where Republicans have made school vouchers for impoverished children the top priority in their education agenda.

"Republicans have made it clear that

some shift [on vouchers] would be the ticket for entry," said William A. Galston, a former domestic-policy adviser to Mr. Clinton who is a professor at the University of Maryland school of public affairs.

Mr. Galston, a centrist Democrat, is urging the administration to support a small, structured private-school-choice program. If it were carefully designed, research would demonstrate whether choice boosts student achievement, he said. The results either would prove most Democrats and public school officials right—or force them to change their opposition, Mr. Galston believes.

But Mr. Galston's proposal would fall flat before the public school lobby and, probably, the administration. Both worked to help defeat a series of GOP private-school-choice proposals this fall. A bipartisan majority in the House stopped an attempt to allow districts to issue vouchers from their portions of a federal block grant. ("Voucher Bill Fails on Bipartisan Vote In House," Nov. 12, 1997.)

In the Senate, Democratic filibusters killed a proposed voucher program for the District of Columbia in a spending bill for the city and tax incentives to benefit parents of private school parents. Mr. Clinton and his team had threatened vetoes if either bill cleared Congress.

Such victories make Mr. Casserly optimistic that a GOP attempt to attach vouchers to any new school legislation would be defeated.

"You run the risk [of losing], but I hope it's an acceptable one," Mr. Casserly said.

While the opportunity-zones plan would serve impoverished rural districts, as well as urban schools, it clearly is intended to spur reform in inner cities.

As Mr. Clinton said, it is designed to help schools follow Chicago's lead in dramatic reforms that include putting schools on probation, requiring summer school on a massive scale, and firing employees in schools where student performance is dismal.

In addition, it is rural states that lack the well-defined standards that would be required to qualify for an opportunity-zone grant, Mr. Pipho said. That could leave schools in Iowa and Wyoming without a chance to compete

for the money, he said.

Urban Victory

The opportunity zones, and any plans that follow, mark a victory for the Council of the Great City Schools, which has had a rocky relationship with Mr. Clinton's administration.

In the 1993 debate over the administration's Goals 2000 school reform plan, for example, city schools complained because all of the money would be funneled through state education departments.

"When so much emphasis is put on states, cities tend to do poorly," Mr. Casserly said. As a result, urban centers haven't received grants from the program

that are proportionate to their school enrollments, "much less their need," he said.

City schools would have been winners under a new **Department of Education** formula for distributing \$8 billion in money for the Title I program for disadvantaged students, Mr. Smith said. But the 1994 effort failed when Congress decided to protect wealthier areas from cuts. In recent years, Congress blocked the compromise formula from being updated with the latest data.

Relations between urban advocates and administration officials improved in 1996 when Mr. Clinton proposed the \$5 billion school construction initiative.

They became strained again last spring when the president abandoned the program during the balanced-budget negotiations.

After 15 city school districts volunteered last summer to participate in Mr. Clinton's proposed new national tests, the administration started to consider an urban agenda, Mr. Casserly said. The city schools needed to prove that they are willing to take the risk of having poor test scores made public in order to win federal favors, he said.

Mr. Casserly said his group and other urban advocates are "kicking around" ideas to pitch to the administration. ■

35. LRP Publications

December 9, 1997

Clinton Announces Plan for Education Opportunity Zones

Building upon the Administration's recent emphasis on education-related initiatives, President Clinton recently announced plans to develop a program designed to expand educational opportunities for students in high poverty urban and rural school districts.

Using a Dec. 3 town hall meeting in Akron, Ohio, on racial issues as a forum, Clinton unveiled his Education Opportunity Zone initiative, a plan to provide challenge grants to high poverty school districts.

"A few weeks ago I announced that we were going to support scholarships for people who go out and teach in educationally deprived areas," Clinton said to those gathered at the Akron Town Meeting, the first of a series planned by the president. "Today, we are releasing a proposal to create educational opportunity zones to reward school districts in poor urban and rural areas who undertake the kind of sweeping reform that Chicago has embraced in the last couple years."

Chicago-area school reforms

mentioned by the president include the closing down of failing schools; the promotion of public school choice; students and teachers being held accountable; and an increased involvement of parents. Clinton also applauded Chicago for its efforts to provide learning opportunities for students with learning difficulties, but without "automatic social promotion and giving people high school diplomas that don't mean anything."

The Education Opportunity Zone initiative's challenge grant program calls for awarding additional federal funds to high-poverty school districts that hold administrators, principals, teachers and students "truly accountable for success or failure" before a grant is awarded, and that show "real improvement" in student achievement after the grant has been received.

Clinton will ask Congress for an unspecified amount to fund the initiative as part of his fiscal 1999 budget request.

In addition to the Education Opportunity Zone initiative, the Clinton

Administration has announced two other education-related programs in the last week.

During his Dec. 6 weekly radio address, Clinton directed Attorney General Janet Reno and **Education Secretary Richard Riley** to work together to produce a first-ever "annual report card" card on school violence (see D.C. Daily, Dec. 8).

While details of this effort remain speculative and no timetable has been set, a **Department of Education** spokesperson said the Education and Justice Departments appear to be in agreement on the project. The two agencies, with possible support from the Centers for Disease Control, plan to use a host of ongoing national surveys to produce one or two reports that will be distributed annually.

On Dec. 2, Secretary Riley announced that \$40 million in grants would soon be available to help set up new community-based after-school programs in rural and inner-city public schools (see D.C. Daily, Dec. 3). ■