



San Francisco
State University

Celebrating 100 Years of Opportunity

1899-1999

December 20, 1999

Office of the President

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The President
White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton:

Three years ago, you challenged the American people to help assure that all children can read independently and well by the end of the third grade. You particularly challenged higher education institutions to use a portion of their Federal Work-Study funds to engage students in this effort.

As chair of the Steering Committee of College and University Presidents for the America Reads/Counts Challenge, I am writing to give you an update on higher education's response to the America Reads Challenge.

In my opinion, America Reads may become one of your administration's greatest successes. To date, nearly 1350 colleges and universities have signed on to the America Reads Challenge, and these colleges have developed exciting and effective programs that are helping America's children learn to read. The enclosed study, "Reading Together," describes how colleges in one state, California, are conducting tutoring programs and highlights five institutions' exemplary programs.

Besides deploying so many college students as tutors, America Reads has given new life to the Federal Work-Study program, as evidenced by many institutions' rethinking of their use of FWS funds to concentrate more heavily on meaningful work for students in service positions. The Congressional addition of a requirement to raise the percentage of Federal Work-Study funds for jobs in community service and a requirement of a reading tutoring program on each campus has helped focus the emphasis on America Reads. In addition, the Department of Education's program for using reallocated FWS funds for community service has allowed numerous America Reads programs to expand.

I am very proud of my colleagues who represent higher education interests and my institutional peers who have embraced America Reads so enthusiastically. The associations, led by the American Council on Education, eagerly took on the task of recruiting colleges to America Reads as their part of the agreement to make this program voluntary. My steering committee colleagues also worked tirelessly to recruit institutions in their states and regions.

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I also am grateful for the commitment that the U. S. Department of Education, especially Secretary Riley and Carol Rasco, and the Corporation for National Service, under Harris Wofford, have made to America Reads. These agencies have provided leadership, support, and assistance to colleges and their programs in the form of workshops, conferences, and materials of the highest quality.

There also has been an outpouring of corporate involvement in America Reads that includes advertising, recruitment, books, supplies and other support to college programs.

While it is difficult to quantify the actual overall effects of tutoring through America Reads programs, we can relate several outcomes, based on the results of "Reading Together," and other evidence. First, college students are eagerly participating in America Reads for their campus jobs. Many are staying in the program for two or more years. Most importantly, their experiences as tutors are helping them think about becoming teachers after graduation.

The America Reads programs are being carefully crafted with significant cooperation from school partners. The colleges are preparing tutors well for their work with young children, presenting training before the tutors start and during their time with the students. The tutors also are creating long-term relationships with the young children--an added dimension.

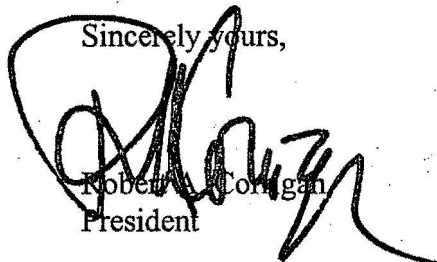
Finally, the colleges are developing America Reads programs that will last.

In November 1998, the U. S. Department of Education expanded the America Reads Challenge to encompass mathematics tutoring and called this new effort "America Counts." So far, nearly 400 colleges have signed on for this effort, and more institutions are expected to join. We hope that America Counts will be as successful as America Reads when it reaches its third birthday!

I remain committed to the America Read/Counts Challenge and look forward to more success in the future!

Best wishes for the holidays--and the 21st Century!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Corrigan". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert A. Corrigan
President

Enclosure