

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001, notes	Notes re: phone numbers (1 page)	n.d.	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Andrew Rotherham (Events)
OA/Box Number: 17351

FOLDER TITLE:

Blue Ribbons Schools Event

2011-0103-S

rc162

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

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Revised Final 10/28/99 9 a.m.
Paul Glastris

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS AT AWARDS CEREMONY
BLUE RIBBONS SCHOOLS
WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL
September 28, 1999**

Acknowledgments: Sec. Riley; Beaufort Elementary Principal Ruth Summerlin;

Before I begin, let me take a few moments to announce some new economic numbers, which show that America's economy continues to grow at a strong and steady pace. In the third quarter of this year, our economy grew at 4.8 percent, after growing at 4.3 percent last year, with the lowest rate of inflation in decades. This is good news for America's working families. There is no better sign of that than new housing numbers also released today, which show that more Americans now own their own homes than at any time in history.

The percentage of Hispanic and African-American families who own their own homes has also broken new records.

This good news follows on the heels of my announcement yesterday--that we have the highest budget surplus in history, and that America's debt is now \$1.7 trillion lower than it was projected to be when I took office. All this is further proof that the economic strategy that we began in 1993—of fiscal discipline, expanded trade, and investment in our people—is working. It proves that putting our fiscal house in order helps every American household.

The prosperity we now enjoy gives us an opportunity to truly shape America's future—and opportunity enjoyed by few generations since the dawn of our Republic. The people who founded this nation believed two things that were quite radical at the time. They believed democracy could be made to work, and they believed all citizens could and should be educated. In fact, their faith in democracy rested on their faith that all citizens could learn. "Educate and inform the whole mass of the people," Thomas Jefferson said, because "an enlightened citizenry is indispensable for the proper functioning of a republic."

I think Ruth Summerlin's story amply demonstrates the Founder's wise belief, that all Americans can learn. All 266 Blue Ribbon schools we honor today demonstrate that same truth.

Your schools are located in every region of America, and in every kind of neighborhood. Yet in each of your schools, students are learning—and learning at quite a high level. Getting every school in America to follow the path that the Blue Ribbon schools have paved, is one of the great challenges we face as a nation.

We have already made real progress in education. The idea of standards, which we championed with our Goals 2000 legislation, is now taking root around the country. In 1996, only 14 states had measurable standards for student performance. Today there are 50. That may be one reason why reading and math scores are up nationwide, including in some of our most disadvantaged urban areas.

More and more schools, including Blue Ribbon Schools, are reducing class sizes with the help of the initiative we began last fall to provide 30,000 of what we hope to be 100,000 new highly trained teachers. Greenwood Elementary in Newport News, VA, a Blue Ribbon winner, hired new teachers this fall, bringing class sizes down in 1st and 2nd grades from 27 children per teacher to 20.

Other Blue Ribbon schools are using the Vice President's E-rate program to connect their classrooms and libraries to the Internet. With the help of the E-rate, 7th graders at Whitebead school in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, are communicating directly with scientists who are conducting research in Africa, and the students are writing papers based on that research. Every 7th grader in America should have the opportunity to do challenging and interesting assignments like that.

All this represents impressive progress. But if our goal is to get every school in America to follow the path of our Blue Ribbon schools and attain your level of excellence—and that should be our goal—then we have a great deal more work to do.

That is why the budget debate we're having here in Washington is so important. To many Americans, it may seem like nothing but a lot of numbers and a lot of noise. But beneath all the rhetoric, there is an important debate going on, about values and priorities and the right way to provide all children with a world class education. It's a not just about how much we spend--but about how we spend it.

Last year, we reached an agreement with Congress to begin hiring 100,000 new, highly-trained teachers to lower class sizes in the early grades. It's common sense: smaller classes and quality teachers mean higher achievement. Congressional Republicans agreed to it; they went home and campaigned on it; they bragged about what a good, non-bureaucratic program it was. We disbursed the money and schools have gone out and hired new teachers. And now, suddenly, the Republicans in Congress have voted to abandon their commitment—and their common sense. So one of the key things this budget debate is all about is whether we will keep our commitments to help our schools hire 100,000 well-qualified teachers.

This budget debate is also about accountability--about making sure we get real results for our education dollar. When students and teachers and principals and elected officials are held accountable for meeting higher standards—and when they are given the resources they need to meet those standards, from smaller classes to afterschool programs--we have seen real progress. Whole schools can be turned around in relatively short order.

You heard Ruth Summerlin explain how her school was selected by the state, given more resources, and turned itself around in just a few years. This is no isolated incident. Two years ago, North Carolina drew up a list of the state's 15 worst-performing schools, and sent assistance teams to each school. One year later, 14 of those schools had improved enough to be taken off the list.

Last year, I went to one of the poorest neighborhoods in Chicago, near the large Cabrini-Green housing project, to an elementary school with terrible performance. In just two years, they doubled their math scores and tripled their reading scores. A few weeks ago, I visited a school in New Orleans that is just beginning this same process.

Our budget has a dedicated \$200 million fund set aside to help states and school districts all over America identify, turn around, or shut down the lowest-performing schools. Again, common

sense. Yet again, the Republican budget bill doesn't put a dime into the strategy of turning around low-performing schools.

I honestly do not understand this. We know accountability works—not based on what someone in Washington thinks works, but based on what you proved works at the grassroots level. We know that there are millions of disadvantaged children in this country whose future chances in life could be substantially improved if their schools are turned around, as you've proven they can be. We know that the nation's governors, most of whom are Republicans, support our \$200 million accountability initiative. Yet the Republican Congress refuses to put a dime into this effort. I never thought I would see the day that Republicans in Washington would be against accountability.

Can the Republican Congress possibly explain why they have yet to fund an accountability measure that we know can turn around failing schools and that they know their own Republican governors favor? Can they possibly explain why this year they're against more good teachers to reduce class sizes when last year they favored it and campaigned on it as if it was their idea?

The Republican Congress knows that many of our nation's schools are falling apart and are so overcrowded that children are being taught in trailers and broom closets. Why are they unwilling to fund our plan to build or fix 6000 schools? The Republican Congress knows we have the largest, most diverse group of student in our schools in history, and that we'll need to hire 2 million new teachers over the next decade.

Why are they against funding our Troops to Teachers program, to recruit potentially great teachers from among our nation's 2 million veterans? That's been a bipartisan issue for years.

Congress is about to consider a Labor and Education Budget Bill that not only shortchanges education, but makes across-the-board cuts in everything from education to the FBI to national defense.

If Congress passes that bill, I will veto it.

We need more teachers, more accountability, and more investment in education. Not fewer teachers, no accountability, and across-the-board cuts in America's priorities. We need a budget that hires 100,000 teachers, puts 50,000 more police on the street, and protects the environment. That's a budget I can sign.

We all agree that public schools are primarily a state and local responsibility. But we also know that they are a national priority. The federal government shouldn't micromanage the schools. In fact, under Sec. Riley, the Department of Education has scrapped more rules and regulations than all the previous administrations that railed about the federal government put together.

But what we have not done is to abandon our responsibility to target our limited resources on what you, at the grassroots level, have shown works: more quality teachers, higher standards and accountability, and the tools that you need to meet those standards.

So this budget battle is about more than dollars. It's about direction. It's about whether we have the vision and the will to adapt to the demands of this new information age, in a way that honors our oldest values.

For over 200 years, **the** bedrock American value has been equal opportunity. If we want equal opportunity to be a vital reality in America in the Information Age then we must make sure that every child in America receives a high-quality education.

We can make that happen. The Blue Ribbon schools have shown us the way. That's what this education budget debate is all about. And with your support, and the support of the American people, I believe we will prevail.

Thank you and God bless you.

Final 10/27/99 8:00 p.m.
Glastris

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BLUE RIBBONS SCHOOLS
WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL
September 28, 1999

Acknowledgments: Sec. Riley; Beaufort Elementary

Principal Ruth Summerlin;

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This good news follows on the heels of my announcement yesterday--that we have the highest budget surplus in history, and that America's debt is now \$1.7 trillion lower than it was projected to be when I took office. All this is further proof that the economic strategy that we began in 1993—of fiscal discipline, expanded trade, and investment in our people—is working. It proves that putting our fiscal house in order helps every American household.

The prosperity we now enjoy gives us an opportunity to truly shape America's future—and opportunity enjoyed by few generations since the dawn of our Republic. The people who founded this nation believed two things that were quite radical at the time. They believed democracy could be made to work, and they believed all citizens could and should be educated. In fact, their faith in democracy rested on their faith that all citizens could learn. “Educate and inform the whole mass of the people,” Thomas Jefferson said, because “an enlightened citizenry is indispensable for the proper functioning of a republic.”

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Our budget has a dedicated \$200 million fund set aside to help states and school districts all over America identify, turn around, or shut down the lowest-performing schools. Again, common sense. Yet again, the Republican budget bill doesn't put a dime into the strategy of turning around low-performing schools.

I honestly do not understand this. We know accountability works—not based on what someone in Washington thinks works, but based on what on what you proved works at the grassroots level. We know that there are millions of disadvantaged children in this country whose future chances in life could be substantially improved if their schools are turned around, as you've proven they can be. We know that the nation's governors, most of whom are Republicans, support our \$200 million accountability initiative. Yet the Republican Congress refuses to put a dime into this effort. I never thought I would see the day that Republicans in Washington would be against accountability.

Can the Republican Congress possibly explain why they have yet to fund an accountability measure that we know can turn around failing schools and that they know their own Republican governors favor? Can they possibly explain why this year they're against more good teachers to reduce class sizes when last year they favored it and campaigned on it as if it was their idea?

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Why are they against funding our Troops to Teachers program, to recruit potentially great teachers from among our nation's 2 million veterans? That's been a bipartisan issue for years.

The Republican's education spending bill will be debated and perhaps voted on as soon as this afternoon. I think the bill is irresponsible. It shortchanges too many of our education priorities, from reducing class size to increasing accountability for results. And it includes mindless and damaging across-the-board cuts not only in education, but in environmental protection, health and safety, and other key areas. It's wrong to shortchanging these vital priorities.

I sent Congress a balanced budget that makes these crucial investments; that makes the tough choices; that doesn't rely on gimmicks; that doesn't spend the Social Security surplus. A budget that in fact lengthens the life of Social Security and Medicare, and pays down the debt over the next 15 years for the first time since 1835. Now, Congress needs to send me a budget that lives within its means and lives up to the values of the American people. A budget that provides more teachers and more accountability for results, not fewer teachers, no accountability, and mindless across-the-board cuts that put environmental protection and health and safety at risk.

We all agree that public schools are primarily a state and local responsibility. But we also know that they are a national priority. The federal government shouldn't micromanage the schools.

In fact, under Sec. Riley, the Department of Education has scrapped more rules and regulations than all the previous administrations that railed about the federal government put together.

But what we have not done is to abandon our responsibility to target our limited resources on what you, at the grassroots level, have shown works: more quality teachers, higher standards and accountability, and the tools that you need to meet those standards.

So this budget battle is about more than dollars. It's about direction. It's about whether we have the vision and the will to adapt to the demands of this new information age, in a way that honors our oldest values.

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We can make that happen. The Blue Ribbon schools have shown us the way. That's what this education budget debate is all about. And with your support, and the support of the American people, I believe we will prevail.

Thank you and God bless you.



Andy Rotherham
10/27/99 09:31:02 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Paul D. Glasiris/WHO/EOP@EOP, glasiris@aol.com @ inet

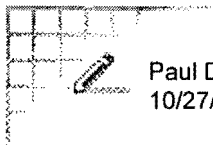
cc:

Subject: here it is

Paul: We are not wed to this language but you get this gist of what we want from this.

Andy

As soon as this afternoon Congress will debate an education appropriations bill that shortchanges national priorities such as reducing class size, increasing accountability, and includes a mindless across the board cut in education, environmental protections, health and safety programs and other national priorities. This is irresponsible. I sent Congress a balanced budget that allowed for investments in national priorities but [what's our boilerplate fiscal responsibility language here?] We need more teachers, more accountability, and more investment in education not fewer teachers, fewer environmental protections, less health and safety and needless across the board cuts.



Paul D. Glastris
10/27/99 08:36:15 PM

Record Type: Record

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

cc:

Subject: latest Blur Ribbon remarks

Draft 10/27/99 8:00 p.m.

Glastris

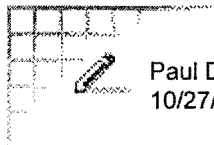
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The Republican Congress knows that many of our nation's schools are falling apart and are so overcrowded that children are being taught in trailers and broom closets. Why are they unwilling to fund our plan to build or fix 6000 schools? The Republican Congress knows we have the largest, most diverse group of student in our schools in history, and that we'll need to hire 2 million new teachers over the next decade. Why are they against funding our Troops to Teachers program, to recruit potentially great teachers from among our nation's 2 million veterans? That's been a bipartisan issue for years.

We all agree that public schools are primarily a state and local responsibility. But we also know that they are a national priority. The federal government shouldn't micromanage the schools. In fact, under Sec. Riley, the Department of Education has scrapped more rules and regulations than all the previous administrations that railed about the federal government put together.

But what we have not done is to abandon our responsibility to target our limited resources on what you, at the grassroots level, have shown works: more quality teachers, higher standards and accountability, and the tools that you need to meet those standards.

So this budget battle is about more than dollars. It's about direction. It's about whether we have the vision and the will to adapt to the demands of this new information age, in a way that honors our oldest values.

For over 200 years, the bedrock American value has been equal opportunity. If we want equal opportunity to be a vital reality in America in the Information Age then we must make sure that every child in America receives a high-quality education.

We can make that happen. The Blue Ribbon schools have shown us the way. That's what this education budget debate is all about. And with your support, and the support of the American people, I believe we will prevail.

Thank you and God bless you.

Message Sent To: _____

Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP@EOP
Cathy R. Mays/OPD/EOP@EOP
Anna Richter/OPD/EOP@EOP
Eric P. Liu/OPD/EOP@EOP
Joshua S. Gottheimer/WHO/EOP@EOP
Terry Edmonds/WHO/EOP@EOP
Linda Ricci/OMB/EOP@EOP
Karin Kullman/OPD/EOP@EOP
Glastris@aol.com @ inet
aedmonds1@home.com @ inet
markpenn@ps-b.com (markpenn) @ inet
Joel Johnson/WHO/EOP@EOP
Loretta M. Ucelli/WHO/EOP@EOP
Lindsay R. Drewel/WHO/EOP@EOP
Dominique L. Cano/WHO/EOP@EOP
Maria Echaveste/WHO/EOP@EOP
Marjorie Tarmey/WHO/EOP@EOP
Karen Tramontano/WHO/EOP@EOP
Janelle E. Erickson/WHO/EOP@EOP
Lawrence J. Stein/WHO/EOP@EOP
Melissa G. Green/OPD/EOP@EOP
Jason Furman/OPD/EOP@EOP
Patrick M. Dorton/OPD/EOP@EOP
John B. Buxton/OPD/EOP@EOP
Bethany Little/OPD/EOP@EOP
Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP@EOP
Terry Edmonds/WHO/EOP@EOP

October 27, 1999

REMARKS AT BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS NATIONAL CEREMONY

DATE: October 28, 1999
LOCATION: Washington Hilton and Towers Hotel
BRIEFING TIME: 9:15am – 9:35am
EVENT TIME: 9:50am – 10:45am
FROM: Bruce Reed, Thurgood Marshall, Jr.

I. PURPOSE

To honor the principals, teachers, and parents of the 1998-99 Blue Ribbon Schools, and to urge the Congress to make strategic investments in class size, school accountability and other initiatives to improve the nation's public schools.

II. BACKGROUND

Tomorrow you will address the 1998-99 Blue Ribbon Schools National Ceremony at the Washington Hilton and Towers. You will address approximately 900 participants representing 266 elementary schools who will receive the Blue Ribbon award, including 221 public schools and 45 private schools. This year's winners come from 37 states and the Department of Defense. 27 percent of the winners have urban characteristics, 54 percent are suburban, and 19 percent are rural and small town schools. For 12 of the past 15 years, Presidents have received representatives from the Blue Ribbon Schools. You have addressed this group on several occasions, and the First Lady made an appearance at the ceremony two years ago.

The Blue Ribbon Schools program was established by the Secretary of Education in 1982. Since then, approximately 3780 schools have been recognized. The criteria used to select award winning schools include demonstration of: strong leadership; a clear vision and sense of mission that is shared by all connected with the school; high quality teaching; an appropriate, up-to-date curriculum; policies and practices that ensure a safe environment conducive to learning; strong parental interest and involvement; and evidence that the school helps all students achieve, regardless of their abilities. Schools were nominated by state education agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Department of Defense, and the Council for American Private Education. Elementary and secondary schools participate in alternate years with middle schools participating in the program with secondary schools. This year's winners are elementary schools.

The purpose of tomorrow's speech is to emphasize two points:

To achieve excellence we must invest in excellence. Blue Ribbon Schools are tangible proof of the effectiveness of high standards, accountability and targeted investment. As you honor these schools, you will point out that targeting our education dollars -- on 100,000 highly-qualified teachers to reduce class sizes, and on turning around schools that are failing -- is the best way to achieve results.

The Republican education appropriations bill undermines these investments. The Republican bill guts your class size initiative and provides no funds to turn around failing schools. In fact, the Senate voted down your proposal to set aside \$200 million to fix failing Title I schools despite an endorsement of the proposal by the National Governors Association. You will emphasize that the Republican bill undermines precisely the strategic investments needed to improve public schools. You will also remind Americans that the budget debate is not just about how much we spend on education but how wisely we spend it.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Briefing Participants:

Secretary Richard Riley
Bruce Reed
Thurgood Marshall, Jr.
Gene Sperling
Andy Rotherham
Paul Glastris

Meet & Greet Participants:

Vincent Ferrandino, Executive Director, National Association of Elementary School Principals
Bill Ivey, Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts
Evern Cooper, Executive Director, UPS Foundation
Valerie Becker, Daimler Chrysler Fund
Ed Jerome, Principal, Edgartown School, Edgartown, Massachusetts
Kent McGuire, Assistant Secretary, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Department of Education
J. Stephen O'Brien, Blue Ribbon Schools, Department of Education
Garland "Will" E. Tanner, Department of Education
Frederick Edelstein, Liaison, Corporate Sponsors, Department of Education

Program Participants:

YOU

Secretary Richard Riley
Ruth Summerlin, principal, Beaufort Elementary School, Beaufort, South Carolina

Beaufort Elementary School serves a predominantly low-income population of 573 students in grades Pre-K through 5. Five years ago Beaufort Elementary School was classified as one of the worst 200 schools in South Carolina. After implementing a five-year school improvement plan Beaufort Elementary has now been named a Blue Ribbon School. Last year's test scores indicated that their students were above the district and state averages in both reading and math. Beaufort has both after-school and summer school programs for remediation in both reading and math. The school receives Title I funding, and their district received Goals 2000 funding. As part of a statewide effort, the school district is reducing class sizes in the early grades. Beaufort Elementary has reduced class size in grades 1-3 to a ratio of 15 to 1, although they did not receive federal class size funding. Beaufort was previously a 100% free and reduced lunch school, but with the recent improvements it is now attracting students from private academies and other suburban schools. Ruth Summerlin has been the principal at Beaufort for seven years, and was instrumental in the school turn-around.

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Open Press.

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To be provided by speechwriting.

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The Blue Ribbon Schools program was established by the Secretary of Education in 1982. Since then, approximately 3780 schools have been recognized. The criteria used to select award winning schools include demonstration of: strong leadership; a clear vision and sense of mission that is shared by all connected with the school; high quality teaching; an appropriate, up-to-date curriculum; policies and practices that ensure a safe environment conducive to learning; strong parental interest and involvement; and evidence that the school helps all students achieve, regardless of their abilities. Schools were nominated by state education agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Department of Defense, and the Council for American Private Education. Elementary and secondary schools participate in alternate years with middle schools participating in the program with secondary schools. This year's winners are elementary schools.

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Draft POTUS briefing memo—Blue Ribbon Schools

Today you will address the 1998-99 Blue Ribbon Schools National Ceremony at the Washington Hilton and Towers. This year 266 elementary schools will receive the Blue Ribbon award, this includes 221 public schools and 45 private schools. This year's winners come from 37 states and the Department of Defense. 27 percent of the winners have urban characteristics, 54 percent are suburban, and 19 percent are rural and small town schools.

The Blue Ribbon Schools program was established by the Secretary of Education in 1982. Since then, approximately 3780 schools have been recognized. The three primary purposes of the program are to identify and recognize outstanding public and private schools around the country; make research-based effectiveness criteria available to all schools so that they can assess themselves and plan improvements; and encourage schools, both within and among themselves, to share information about best practices based on common criteria of educational success.

To be a Blue Ribbon School, a school must demonstrate a strong commitment to educational excellence for all students. Winning schools must demonstrate sustained success over time or have overcome obstacles and made significant improvements. Each year, the program identifies a limited number of select emphases. These represent areas where school performance must be improved or where effective models of success are sought. This year, two winners in arts education and five winners in character education were selected.

Today's Speech

To achieve excellence we must invest in excellence. Blue Ribbon Schools are evidence of the effectiveness of high standards, accountability and investment. Your balanced budget invests in proven strategies to improve student performance such as reducing class sizes in the early grades, fixing failing schools, expanding after-school and summer school programs, improving teacher quality.

The Republican education appropriations bill undermines these investments. The Republican bill guts your class size initiative and provides no funds to turn around failing schools. In fact, the Senate voted down your proposal to set-aside \$200 million to fix failing Title I schools on a party line vote despite an endorsement of the proposal by the National Governors Association. You will use today's speech to emphasize that the Republican bill undermines precisely the strategic investments needed to improve public schools.

Reed

October 27, 1999

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To be provided by speechwriting.

BEAUFORT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

National Blue Ribbon Winner A Full Service School Exemplary Writing School
State Early Childhood Demonstration Site

Ruth Summerlin, Principal
Street
Samuel Carter, Assistant Principal
29902

1800 Prince

Beaufort, SC

Phone: 843-525-4282

FAX: 843-525-4288

TO: KAREN KULLMAN, WHITE HOUSE STAFF
FAX: 202-346-7431
FROM: RUTH SUMMERLIN
RE: TWO MINUTE SPEECH FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1999

SPEECH OUTLINE:

- Honored to speak before colleagues who share a vision of success for all children
- Story of the 5 year journey of Beaufort Elementary (a 500 student rural southern school within the city of Beaufort, SC)
- I began 6 years ago—after 6 months the school was placed on the dreaded State Department list of the worst 200 elem., middle and high schools in the State due to deplorable student achievement on standardized tests—community had written off our school
- Began a renewal by accepting help from the State, District and soliciting partnerships in the community
- Staff decided to accept responsibility, become accountable and begin a proactive plan for renewal
- Researched exemplary programs and visited many of them for replication
- Staff went to a weekend retreat for renewal, sole searching and team building—committed to stay the course and turn school around
- Developed a 5 year plan with community requesting site based responsibility
- High expectations for teachers with a focus on challenging reading and math standards with a commitment to continuous progress
- Track individual students and make projections for academic advancements each year
- Meet with parents, and support personnel to develop plans for children who do not meet standards
- Study of brain researched caused us to allocate money and time to exemplary early childhood intervention programs, visual and performing arts, movement and foreign language.
- Develop a flexible schedule for staff to remain open from 7:30-5:15
- Provide an extended year schedule for students needing additional time to master reading and math standards
- Integrated technology as a valuable instructional tool

"We Soar With Pride"

**TALKING POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT
1998-1999 BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS ELEMENTARY PROGRAM**

PROGRAM BACKGROUND AND STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- The Blue Ribbon Schools Program was established by the Secretary in 1982 and recognizes public and private elementary and secondary schools in alternate years. This year 266 elementary schools will receive the award. To date approximately 3784 schools have been recognized.

The three purposes of the Blue Ribbon Schools Program are that it

- 1) identifies and recognizes outstanding public and private schools across the nation,
 - 2) makes research-based effectiveness criteria available to all schools so that they can assess themselves and plan improvements, and
 - 3) encourages schools, both within and among themselves, to share information about best practices which is based on a common understanding of the criteria related to education success.
- To receive the award, a school must demonstrate a strong commitment to educational excellence for all students. Winning schools must demonstrate sustained success in achieving excellence and equity, or have overcome obstacles and can provide evidence of significant improvements.
 - Each year, the program identifies a limited number of special emphases. These represent areas where school performance needs to be greatly improved and where effective models are sought. This year, we are proud of two winners in arts education and five winners for character education.

PROFILE OF 1998-1999 WINNING SCHOOLS

- Pleased to honor 266 schools (221 public and 45 private) representing 37 states, and the Department of Defense Education Activity. Twenty-seven (27) percent of the schools have urban characteristics, 54 percent suburban, and 19 percent rural and small town.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Information on the program is available at the Blue Ribbon Schools Program homepage at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/BlueRibbonSchools/> Clicking on "winners" will provide a two-page summary of every school receiving the award this year, plus statistical information on all the schools.

The President may wish to mention excellent practices from the schools that are "turn around" schools, ones that were not so good in the past, but have done great things for their students in the last five years. These schools are:

Eastridge Community School
Dr. Robert Villarreal, Principal
11777 East Wesley Avenue
Aurora, CO 80014
(303) 755-0598
(303) 752-9899 FAX

Templeton Elementary School
Mr. Michael Castagnola, Principal
6001 Carters Lane
Riverdale, MD 20737
(301) 985-1880
(301) 985-1876 FAX

Vienna Elementary School (Made great strides, but test scores did dip some.)
Dr. Frederic Hildenbrand, Principal
4905 Ocean Gateway
Vienna, MD 21869
(410) 376-3151
(410) 376-3623 FAX

Beaufort Elementary School
Mrs. Ruth Summerlin, Principal
1800 Prince Street
Beaufort, SC 29902
(843) 525-4282
(843) 525-4288 FAX

Cannons Elementary School
Mrs. Donna Lipscomb, Principal
1315 Old Convers Road
Spartanburg, SC 29307
(864) 579-8020
(864) 579-8024 FAX

Hillcrest Elementary School
Mrs. Jean MacInnis, Principal
1701 Crozier Lane
Del Valle, TX 78617
(512) 385-1427
(512) 389-2760 FAX

A two-page summary about each of these schools is attached, along with summaries of the New York schools. Unfortunately there are no schools from Arkansas or Tennessee this year.

There is a school from Littleton, Colorado, Lois Lenski Elementary School. A summary information sheet to the school is attached.

The President might choose to highlight the schools that are receiving special honors in character education or arts education this year. The character education schools are:

- Belmont Elementary School, MI
- McCoy Elementary School, TX
- Patterson Road School, CA
- Walnut Hill Elementary School, TX
- West View Elementary School, SC

The ones for arts education are:

- Hillside Elementary School, NY
- Mills Lawn Elementary School, OH

J. Stephen O'Brien
Team Leader
Blue Ribbon Schools Program
U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20208-5643
202-219-2141
202-219-1407 (fax)
Steve_O'Brien@ed.gov

Blue Ribbon Schools: The Heart of the Community
1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Schools National Ceremony
The Washington Hilton and Towers
Washington, DC
October 28-29, 1999

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1999		
6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Registration	Front Terrace
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1999		
7:30 - 8:45 a.m.	Registration	Front Terrace
9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Opening Plenary Presentation of Colors Joint Armed Forces Color Guard The National Anthem Welcome C. Kent McGuire Assistant Secretary Office of Educational Research and Improvement U.S. Department of Education Acknowledgement of: Bill Ivey Chairman National Endowment for the Arts Vincent L. Ferrandino Executive Director National Association of Elementary School Principals Sue Swaim Executive Director National Middle Schools Association	International Ballroom Center

	Gerald N. Tirozzi Executive Director National Association of Secondary School Principals	
	Presentation of the Liaison of the Year Award	
	Darla Strouse Maryland State Liaison Maryland Department of Education	
	Richard W. Riley Secretary of Education	
11:00 -- 12:00 noon	Education Reform: Increasing Capacity Terry Dozier Special Advisor to the Secretary on Teaching U.S. Department of Education Linda Roberts Director Office of Educational Technology U.S. Department of Education	Jefferson/Lincoln
12:00 -- 1:30 p.m.	Lunch on own	
1:30 -- 2:30 p.m.	Teachers and Principals Working for Kids Mary Beth Blegen Teacher in Residence U.S. Department of Education Carole Kennedy Principal in Residence U.S. Department of Education	Jefferson/Lincoln

2:45 -- 3:45 p.m.	Panel Discussion: The Secretary's Regional Representatives Jan Paschal, Region I (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont) <i>and</i> John Mahoney, Region II (New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands) W. Wilson Goode, Region III (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia) <i>and</i> Stanley Williams, Region IV (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee) Stephanie J. Jones, Region V (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin) <i>and</i> Sally H. Cain, Region VI (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas) Sandra V. Walker, Region VII (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska) <i>and</i> Lynn O. Simons, Region VIII (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming) Loni Hancock, Region IX (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, American Samoa, Guam, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands) <i>and</i> Carla Nuxoll, Region X (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington)	Monroe Room International Ballroom West International Ballroom Center Jefferson Room Lincoln Room
	Concurrent Sessions on Arts and Character Education	
4:00 -- 5:15	Arts Education <i>The Arts Have It</i> Michael Rubino Chair of the Fine Arts Hillside Elementary School Hastings-on-Hudson, NY <i>Tales of the Green Fire:</i> <i>A Portrait of Arts in Education</i> Dan Mecoli Principal	International Ballroom West

	Mills Lawn Elementary Schools Yellow Springs, OH	
4:00 -- 5:00	Character Education <i>Developing Character: A Schoolwide Approach</i> Bob Bush Principal Paterson Road School Santa Maria, CA <i>Character Is What You Are When No One Is Looking</i> Jayné Anthony K-1 Mixed Age Teacher Walnut Hill Elementary School Dallas, TX	International Ballroom Center
6:00 -- 7:30 p.m.	Reception Hosted by C. Kent McGuire Assistant Secretary Office of Educational Research and Improvement U.S. Department of Education	Crystal Ballroom
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1999		
8:00 -- 9:15 p.m.	Breakfast: Salute to Leadership in Blue Ribbon Schools Sponsored by NAESP, NASSP, NMSA In partnership with VALIC Lynn Babcock President, NAESP Curt Voight President, NASSP President, NMSA	International Ballroom Center

9:45 -- 10:45 a.m.	What the Web Can Do for You Kirk Winters	International Ballroom Center
12:00 -- 3:00 p.m.	Awards Luncheon Music Presentation by School Peirce Hammond Director Office of Reform Assistance and Dissemination OERI, U.S. Department of Education Address: Judith Johnson Acting Assistant Secretary Office of Elementary and Secondary Education U.S. Department of Education Presentation of Special Honors Awards Arts Education Doug Herbert Director of Arts Education National Endowment for the Arts Character Education Esther Schaeffer Executive Director Character Education Partnerships Presentation of Blue Ribbon Schools Awards	International Ballroom Center



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND
INTERAGENCY AFFAIRS**

Date: 10/22/99

No. of Pages (w/ cover):

To: Sean O'SHEA

From: WILL TANNER

Deputy Director, Community Services

202-205-7993 (phone) 202-205-0676 (fax)

Will_Tanner@ed.gov (e-mail)

Comments:

U.S. Department of Education, Room 5E229
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20202

MEMORANDUM

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL
RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

Office of Reform Assistance and Dissemination

TO: Will Tanner

FROM: Stephen O'Brien *Steve* 20 pages

SUBJECT: Blue Ribbon Schools Principals

DATE: October 22, 1999

Please remember that we have never met any of these people. We are only going by the written document.

Here are six schools from which we think the White House might choose the person to introduce the President:

Roanoke Avenue School, NY

Washington Irving, NY

D.T. Cox Elementary, MS (principal is African American woman; Dr. Jerry Rogers who visited the school for us said she is very articulate.)

Eastridge Community, CO

Beaufort Elementary, SC (principal is white woman)

Cannons Elementary, SC (principal is white woman)

Hillcrest Elementary, TX

Kathy and I suggest that you also take the principal(s) to go to the White House from the above group.

Here are our suggestions for the pool for the other people:

Lynn Johnson, Title I Reading Teacher, Abney Elementary, Slidell, LA (504-643-4044)

Kay Bolle, Teacher, Festus Elementary, Festus, MO (214-937-5720)

David Woods, 5th Grade Teacher, Indian Lane Elementary, Media, PA (610-627-7100)

Michael Maffoni, Teacher, Willow Creek Elementary, Englewood, CO (303-773-1765)

Marilyn Wheeler, Superintendent, Coronado, CA (619-522-8915) Also has New American High School in district.

Lynne Rauch, Superintendent, Elk Grove Village, IL (847-301-2150)

Heidi Dziendziel, Parent, Greenfield Elementary, Greenfield, NY (518-893-7402)

Patricia Wilcox, Parent, Union Center Elementary, Valparaiso, IN (219-759-2544)

Roanoke Avenue School

Address:
549 Roanoke Avenue
Riverhead, NY 11901

Phone:
(516) 369-6813

Principal:
Ms. Dorothy Moran

Location:
Suburban

Grade Levels:
K-3

Enrollment:
395

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	49.0%
African-American:	45.0%
Hispanic:	6.0%
Asian:	0.0%
American Indian:	0.0%
Other:	0.0%

Mobility Rate:	29.0%
Limited English:	8.0%
Low Income:	0.0%
Special Education:	17.0%

Roanoke Avenue School is located in Riverhead, New York. A drive down Main Street in Riverhead reveals the beauty of the Peconic River, the historic presence of the County Court House, and colorful Polish Town. Amid the densely populated neighborhood stands a majestic seventy-six-year-old, three-story brick building called the Roanoke Avenue School. We think of it as a community school and safe haven for 400 children and their families, affectionately known as the "Roanoke family."

Roanoke is an inner city school and one of the most diverse of four K-3 schools in the district. Sixty percent of our students are on free or reduced breakfast and lunch. Approximately 45 percent of the students are African-American, 49 percent are Anglo, six percent are Hispanic, Polish, Vietnamese Chinese, or Indian. Roanoke has a high transient population. Families move in and out of the district as they seek jobs and affordable housing. Between 30 and 40 percent of our parents struggle with poverty and have significant problems with substance abuse and other poverty related ills.

Despite the fact that between 40 and 50 percent of our incoming kindergartners score in the first to fourth stanines on the incoming kindergarten screenings, all of our nonclassified students score on or above grade level on the third grade New York State DRP and PEP tests. Thirty-eight percent scored in the sixth-grade mastery range on the 1997-98 New York State testing.

The Suffolk County Reading Council has recognized Roanoke Avenue School as an Honor School for the last six years. Roanoke has also been recognized by Title One as a Schoolwide Project since 1996 and an exemplary model to which the State Education Department has sent many school districts to visit.

Through team building of staff and community, our shared vision for all students is based on high performance standards, a collaborative program design, ongoing staff development, parent and community involvement, cultural inclusiveness, and constant monitoring of student progress. Our academic and social programs individualize education through a modified "Success for All" program that focuses on the research of Robert Slavin's "Best Evidence Synthesis on Grouping." Our curriculum is based on the premise that every child is capable of learning. Reading, math, and "habits of the heart" are our highest priorities.

Our unique reading program uses parallel block scheduling to reduce class size with two hours of concentrated, flexible group reading and writing each day. Resource room and remedial reading teachers work together with nine reading aides to provide 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3 intense, accelerated remediation so that all students are challenged.

Our Assured Readiness for Learning (ARL) Program provides developmentally appropriate readiness and phonemic awareness activities that are integrated with literature and thematic units. The emphasis is on writing and authentic assessment for all students. Many students select their own work to be included in portfolios. They are directly involved in developing rubrics, demonstrating their strengths, and designing goals for improvement during student led conferences with parents and teachers.

Our student progress related directly to the high quality of communication among teachers. Grade level teams meet weekly to identify problems and solutions and develop new strategies. There is a cooperative, collegial relationship among children, teachers, and parents as they plan classroom and building theme units that integrate the disciplines. Our thematic units emphasize activities that help children solve problems through the use of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Creating responsive, caring classrooms where teachers model and students role-play cooperation, assertive talk (Brave Talk), responsibility, empathy, and self-control has combated violence in our school. As a result of our strong social skills and character education curriculum, there is a noticeable, positive difference in the language, spirit, and behavior within our walls. Students help each other with their words and actions as we help to fulfill our responsibility to diminish the violence in the streets around us.

Professional development is ongoing and coordinated with State standards, district, and building goals. It is centered on high academic achievement and authentic activities with performance assessment including portfolio assessment. Inclusive classrooms, interdisciplinary and multicultural curriculum, and cooperative learning reflect our collaborative atmosphere between teachers and students. Teachers use a variety of learning styles and state-of-the-art methods to ensure that students "get" what has been taught as they motivate students to want to learn. Our Assured Readiness for Learning Program is multisensory and child centered. Our Math emphasizes problem solving and self-initiated learning as recommended by the math standards. Last year we developed instructional units that reflect the State standards as teachers train to integrate technology into our curriculum. Technology consultants are working with us to install sophisticated wiring and hardware which will enable teachers and students to conduct research, communicate with scientists in laboratories, and share with peers in other cities and countries via the Internet.

Our success has depended on the great support we have received from parents, businesses, and our community. We have networked with the community we serve through the shared decision making model of our site-based team. Our parents and community have gotten involved in all facets of education from laying sod on our school playground to wiring our building, bringing technology into the classroom and getting Roanoke onto the information highway.

In order to help students make better choices we are proud to have the Riverhead police bring D.A.R.E. to our school. We have an ongoing project with Alternatives, a social service agency in our community, to work with our children in helping them to make better choices with drugs and alcohol.

Roanoke is proud to be a collegial, collaborative, multicultural school community. Children, parents, staff, and principal collaborate and cooperate in the quest of excellence for all. Teachers have become architect designers of curriculum with ongoing, embedded assessments in their lessons. Teachers talk concretely about teaching as they observe other teachers. They share expertise and ask for and provide assistance to each other as well.

The emphasis is on critical thinking and New York State standards. Students are encouraged to solve problems, assess their own goals, and reflect upon their own work as they set goals for improvement.

Everyone who enters our historic building recognizes our family-like atmosphere where parents, teachers, and children feel welcome. We have seen increased parent involvement in the classrooms and sustained high student achievement on the Metropolitan Achievement Test and the New York State DRP and PEP. tests with many of our third graders achieving mastery level.

Our PTO sponsored a sign in front of our beautiful building conveying the message, "Roanoke Avenue School, An Honor School. Welcome Parents." We are truly one world and one family, the Roanoke family.



1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools

This page last modified May 21, 1999 (saw).

D. T. Cox Elementary School

Address:
304 Clark Street
Pontotoc, MS 38863

Phone:
(601) 489-2454

Principal:
Mrs. Phyllis High

Location:
Small city/town

Grade Levels:
3-4

Enrollment:
356

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	67.42%
African-American:	32.31%
Hispanic:	0.0%
Asian:	0.28%
American Indian:	0.0%
Other:	0.0%

Mobility Rate:	17.0%
Limited English:	7.0%
Low Income:	45.0%
Special Education:	13.0%

D. T. Cox Elementary School is a third through fourth grade school in the small, rural town of Pontotoc, Mississippi. Pontotoc is located in the northeastern part of the state which is legally classified as Appalachia. The school is one of four schools in the district. In the poorest state in the nation, our district is in the bottom five percent of the state in per pupil expenditure, as reported by the Mississippi State Department of Education. Our students are not from affluent families; almost half receive free or reduced lunches. Over one third of our population in Pontotoc County did not graduate from high school. The community environment is unable to provide many of the essential cultural experiences that prepare students for successful competition in a global society.

The population of the community is homogeneous in nature. The majority of the citizens are lifetime residents of the area. An excellent work ethic has attracted major industries, and unemployment is low. The industry in Pontotoc consists primarily of low technology furniture manufacturing, with most of the citizens being blue collar workers. Agriculture remains a vital part of the economy, though of lesser importance than in the past.

There are approximately 2200 students in the school district. The student enrollment at D. T. Cox is 356. The students proceed from D. T. Cox (3-4), to Pontotoc Junior High (5-8), and then to Pontotoc High School (9-12).

The building was erected in 1960 and includes an additional facility with classrooms and a science lab. Continuous renovations, additions, and the reorganization of the grades at Pontotoc Junior High to include the fifth grade has provided for increasing student population and changing educational needs. The buildings are well maintained, and the school has traditionally served as a meeting place for various school and community activities. The campus and building are used by the community for many of the after school soccer, baseball, softball, and T-ball practices. The gymnasium is used for high school cheerleader practice, indoor tennis practice, and various organization meetings.

D. T. Cox is both a unique and successful learning institution. We are successful because of our commitment to excellence and our willingness to recognize and rectify our shortcomings. We are unique because of our bond with the community. As our school continues to prosper, it is the community that becomes the ultimate beneficiary. Not only is our school enmeshed in all facets of the community; but it is the very success of D. T. Cox Elementary and the other schools in the district that have been a catalyst for attracting business and industry. As our school continues to prosper, it is the community that becomes the ultimate beneficiary. Business wisdom adopts the theory that an enterprise operating in the top five percent of its field while meeting the needs of the

bottom five percent of its customers will result in wealth. D. T. Cox Elementary demonstrates this same principle, but the end result is success not wealth. Our business is teaching, and it is through the application of practical principles of learning and effective decision making by faculty and administration that D. T. Cox has become a successful learning environment.

Over the last five years several significant challenges were identified: - provisions for problem solving and application skills in all curricular areas to all students through an ongoing program of high order thinking skills - involvement of all students in activities which promote good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility - enhancement of the instructional program through the addition of computers in all classrooms.

Community support for the school has been a key factor as evidenced by the Endowment for Excellence in Education, an ongoing facilities improvement program for the district, and community volunteer services. We attribute much of our success to the restructuring of the teaching-learning process. Teacher decision making skills have become a focal point. Curriculum management requirements have been reduced which has resulted in an increase in student contact time (time on instruction), learning expectations, and cooperation among teachers. As with other schools and other school districts across the nation, D. T. Cox has faced many challenges; but we have also accomplished many milestones. Specific examples are:

- National Blue Ribbon School recognition in 1989-90
- National Redbook Magazine recognition in 1993
- Statewide recognition in 1993
- Increased parental involvement
- A change in district wide grade spans which established D. T. Cox Elementary as a grade three-four school, rather than a three-five school as reflected in our 1989 application
- The incorporation of music into the curriculum
- The hiring of an assistant teacher to coordinate the science lab and implement more "hands on" activities for students
- Renovation of the school to increase space for the students in the cafeteria, provide an office for the counselor, and a workroom for teachers
- The construction of an outdoor classroom
- Renovation of the playgrounds with additional playground equipment
- The implementation of technology in each classroom and media center
- The restructuring of the instructional organization of fourth grade teachers.

D. T. Cox Elementary has created a highly focused learning environment for all students. Innovative efforts have promoted our success toward accomplishing National Education Goals through the improvement of our professional staff and their perseverance with limited monetary resources. Our resources of faculty and community support, under the guidance of a principal whose focus is on learning, equips our most valuable resource, our students, for

Washington Irving Intermediate School

Address:
103 South Broadway
Tarrytown, NY 10591

Phone:
(914) 631-4442

Principal:
Mr. Sal Tricamo

Location:
Suburban/urban

Grade Levels:
4-6

Enrollment:
450

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	44.0%
African-American:	8.5%
Hispanic:	45.0%
Asian:	2.5%
American Indian:	0.0%
Other:	0.0%

Mobility Rate:	6.94%
Limited English:	18.0%
Low Income:	51.0%
Special Education:	10.6%

Washington Irving School (WI) is an elementary school serving approximately 450 children in grades four, five, and six from the villages of Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow, New York. We are an ethnically diverse school located in the lower Hudson River Valley (Westchester County), about 20 miles north of New York City. Our district, the Public Schools of the Tarrytowns, has instituted the Princeton Plan, which organizes our elementary program around four schools serving different grade levels: a kindergarten building, one for first grade, a second-third grade building, and of course, Washington Irving School. In this way, all of our children are educated together, regardless of their socioeconomic status or address. Contrary to the common perception of the "affluent Westchester suburban school," socioeconomically our population runs the spectrum from upper class to very poor. Many of our parents work two jobs or double shifts to make ends meet. Approximately 20% of our school's population receives public assistance; 51% of our children receive free or reduced lunch services. The ethnic background of our students is as follows: 2.5% Asian or Pacific Islander; 8.5% African American; 44% White (non-Hispanic); and 45% Latino. Thus, the majority of our school is actually minority. Many are struggling with a new culture, language, and school system. Many of our new entrants come from areas of the Caribbean or the Americas where they had little, interrupted, or impoverished schooling. They may be illiterate in their native language as well as English. We have been classified in the past as a "suburban district with characteristics typical of an urban school," but have recently been reclassified as an urban district.

Our mission, as developed by our staff, parents, and community members, reflects our commitment to our children.

The community of faculty, administrators and parents of the Washington Irving School will create a learning environment which will meet the needs of our children. Our mission is for all youngsters to learn and to strive for academic excellence through the cooperative efforts of the school community. We are committed to democratic values which will foster responsible citizens.

The Washington Irving School is dedicated to the development of a well-rounded child who will work cooperatively with others; who will cultivate a variety of artistic and special interests; who will develop a positive self-image; who will make prudent decisions and choices; and who will develop an understanding and an appreciation of the diverse cultural traditions and differences that make WI a unique community.

A key feature that must be understood about WI is that we are not

1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools: Washington Irving Intermediate School Page 2 of 3

a typical elementary school; we are an intermediate school, educating children in grades four, five, and six to bridge the gap between primary and middle school. While early literacy is not usually an issue for us, literacy development is still essential in these intermediate grades. Each grade level is organized to meet the specific developmental needs of our children. In grades four and five, our classes are self-contained; grade six is departmentalized. Our heterogeneous grouping policies teach students to respect and appreciate differences and to work cooperatively in groups. Each of the three grades provides a strong academic program, supplemented by grade-appropriate activities, special events, and exposure to a variety of special area subjects such as art, health, computers, music, library skills, and more. Thus, we teach to the whole child, taking into account his or her physical, intellectual, emotional, and social needs.

Our staff is deeply committed to providing the best educational experience possible for our children. We have a record of innovation, creativity, and high standards that is recognized and supported by the community. Through constant professional development, ongoing research, and extensive efforts in planning and implementation, we have created a well-rounded program designed to meet the needs of all our diverse students. Teachers assume leadership roles as we train each other during team and faculty meetings. As we continue to align ourselves to the new, higher New York State Learning Standards for all subject areas, we are developing innovative teaching strategies and performance-based assessments. We have created exciting new programs for bilingual, special education, and gifted and talented children. In addition, we have established extensive collaborations with colleges and universities, cultural institutions, community organizations, and local corporations and businesses, which have allowed us to extend our curriculum into the "real world." Because of the rich cultural and historical heritage of Tarrytown, Sleepy Hollow, and our surrounding communities, the Hudson River Valley has become our classroom. Our efforts and creativity have been recognized and supported through a large number of grants, including a \$250,000 Title VII grant for our innovative bilingual program.

We pride ourselves on our academics, but also on our extensive co-curricular programs. Some of these activities include a Superstars Homework Club, hands-on science club, chess club, newspaper club, computer club, yearbook club, and geography club. Our music program is a particular source of pride, involving more than 64% of our students. This past year, fourteen band students and one orchestra student were accepted into the All-County Music Festival. Our physical education program includes after-school sports and school-wide events that involve all our children and teaches them good sportsmanship and teamwork.

As noted, at WI we are all aware of the importance of addressing the needs of the whole student. Often, a child's academic success is inextricably interwoven with their personal and social wellbeing. We have extensive pupil support services available for our children, including a bilingual social worker, a school

psychologist, a speech/language teacher, a bilingual family outreach worker, a full-time nurse, and special programs ranging from D.A.R.E. and Juvenile Law to Junior Achievement.

Another important strength of WI is the active involvement of our parents. Teachers, parents, and children form a three-way partnership, which is a key component of student success. Regardless of their language or cultural background, parents feel welcome at our school and know that there is never a language barrier; we have many bilingual staff members who are always available to help. Parents teach after-school programs, work with teachers to find ways to bring their expertise into the classroom for special projects, and participate in our school's leadership by serving on various committees. The Elementary PTA is very supportive of the school's efforts, sponsoring Cultural Arts programs, book fairs, and student scholarships for special activities. The EPTA honors the staff at an annual Faculty Appreciation Lunch, preparing home-cooked specialties reflecting the diversity of our community.

Another key partnership for us is our relationship with the Foundation for the Public Schools of the Tarrytowns, a private, not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to raise funds to help our schools in a variety of ways. The Foundation is administered by a group of community members who may or may not have children in the school system, as well as teachers and administrators. Through their efforts and those of our Elementary PTA, our school has acquired up-to-date technology. Teachers are also encouraged to apply for grants sponsored by these groups for classroom projects and materials; our school has won many of these grants.

These partnerships between the school, the family, and the community allow us to work together to help our children succeed. No school operates in a vacuum; the tools our children need can be best taught through this triad. We strive to build a culture of inclusiveness, respect, consideration, and academic excellence for all, and we enlist the support of parents and other members of the community.

Washington Irving School is an exciting place for students, parents, and teachers. We pride ourselves on our accomplishments and look forward to meeting the challenges of the 21st Century together.



1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools

This page last modified May 21, 1999 (saw).

Eastridge Community Elementary School

Address:
11777 East Wesley
Avenue
Aurora, CO 80014

Phone:
(303) 755-0598

Principal:
Dr. Robert Villarreal

Location:
Urban

Grade Levels:
K-5

Enrollment:
738

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	64.18%
African-American:	19.73%
Hispanic:	8.5%
Asian:	6.53%
American Indian:	1.06%
Other:	0.0%

Mobility Rate:	34.0%
Limited English:	9.0%
Low Income:	36.0%
Special Education:	12.0%

Eastridge Community Elementary School was built in the early 1960's to serve the residents of a newly developed subdivision in southeast Aurora, Colorado. The school opened on September 3, 1963, with 12 classrooms and 300 walk-in students. The school was extensively remodeled in 1968 to add four open-space learning areas accommodating 100 students each. In 1988, the school was again remodeled to add nine classrooms.

Over the past three decades, the Eastridge community has undergone profound change. A predominantly middle and upper-class community of single-family homes has given way to a more socially and ethnically diverse community that includes a large number of multi-family dwellings as well as government-subsidized low-cost housing units. Over the years, the student population at Eastridge has more than doubled from 450 to 730, necessitating the transition to a year-round four-track calendar in 1994.

Today, Eastridge has a minority enrollment of 37%, an average mobility rate of 40%, 73% of the students are transported to school by bus, 37% qualify for a federally subsidized free or reduced lunch program, 12% qualify for special-education services, and fifteen foreign languages are spoken by a 10% ESL population.

Despite many changes, Eastridge has not only maintained an effective educational program, but has transformed itself into one of the liveliest and most innovative K-5 learning environments in the state. Student outcomes continue to meet or exceed district and national grade-level averages, particularly in reading comprehension and in minority student achievement. Among major distinguishing features and accomplishments:

- Multi-age, straight-grade, team-taught, self-contained classrooms and looping are designed to address the diverse instructional needs and learning style of students.
- Proficiency-based curriculum, instruction and assessment.
- Assessment practices that drive instruction via the teaching-learning cycle (assessment, evaluation of assessment, planning for instruction).
- A nationally recognized, student centered library/media center.
- An instructionally effective teaching staff (70% with Master of Arts degrees) who has a high level of expertise and understanding in: reading instruction, math manipulatives, technology, standards-based curriculum, multicultural curriculum, and performance assessment.

- Staff-initiated professional development activities, which include on-site study groups, mentoring, peer coaching, hands on workshops and the award winning Eastridge Literacy Project.
- An extracurricular program offering high-interest activities ranging from intramural sports to Odyssey of the Mind.
- A full array of family-centered programs and services, off-track child care, kindergarten enrichment, off-track Inter-session enrichment classes, before and after school child care, a breakfast program and family counseling and assistance services.
- Partnerships with colleges and universities, the lower business community, education reform organizations and school networks.
- Classroom-based computer network and a high level of teacher-student access to multi-media technology.
- Full inclusion of special-education students.
- Shared decision making and accountability that requires a high level of teacher, parent, and student involvement.
- Numerous awards and honors, including a DeWitt Wallace Library Power Grant, 1996 Colorado Conservation School of the Year, CCIRA Exemplary School Reading Program of the Year 1997, and Milken Award winner, principal, Dr. Villarreal.

At Eastridge, our mission is "to inspire every student to think, to learn, to achieve, to care". The teaching and learning environment at Eastridge is vibrant, engaging, and firmly grounded in the concept of the "Helping Relationship". It encourages a strong sense of partnership, connectedness, responsibility and collective purpose.

The faculty and parents are strongly committed to high personal and academic standards for all students. We strive to ensure that each child is well prepared for the challenges of living, working and learning in a changing world.



1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools

This page last modified May 21, 1999 (saw).

STALL OF FANFENCULT

101 SEATS

Spanish, International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program, Full Service School concept, Family Literacy Projects (adult education with day care at the school for parents improving their education at BES), Well Baby Plus (Duke Endowment Grant Program for early intervention health care), Early Childhood initiatives (ABC voucher programs for children ages 6 weeks to pre-kindergarten providing an enriched early start), family involvement (Pre-School Club, Family Reading, Family Math, Science Nights, Family Fun Fests, Fall Fling, Sidewalk Art Contests, etc.), Exemplary Writing Award initiatives, technology networking and training, Student Study Teams, Portfolio and Criterion-Referenced and Computer Assisted Assessment, Go for the Gold Schoolwide Discipline Plan, Student Council, School Ambassadors, Academic and Artistic Gifted and Talented Programs, Student News Staff for monthly publications, Video Club for morning announcements, Ecology/Science Club, Flow Room (to identify learning strengths), Booksharp (computerized assessment of novels to monitor independent reading), Principal's Reading Challenge, Read-a-Thon (buddy reading), Reading Recovery, Student of the Month, Author's Tea, Meet a Writer Day, Safety Patrol, Odyssey of the Mind and Academic Challenge competitions, Science Fair, Invention Convention, and Professional Development and Evaluation plans worthy of putting these initiative into practice in a logical and manageable fashion.

Their mission statement is to ensure the highest quality educational outcomes providing a challenging, multi-cultural curriculum that develops the unique abilities of each child, frees each person to pursue opportunities, incorporates advanced technologies and engages the full commitment of the staff, parents, students and community. Since this mission statement was written in 1995, the school staff has focused untold energy and commitment to make this a continuing reality for students at Beaufort Elementary. Overcoming the stigma as a low performing school has been a challenge. By including the community and parents and making them part of the solution, partnerships, relationships and trust have been the foundation upon which this dream has been built.

Beaufort Elementary is a large, beautifully maintained two-story facility located next to Northern Beaufort County's only housing project and most of their subsidized housing. Beaufort Elementary staff and students have risen to a coveted academic status in the district and state. Numerous editorials and newspaper articles tell of their success story and challenge other schools to, "Play follow the leader." They have been asked to discover the Beaufort Elementary secret of success and to replicate it because test results reveal that our students are performing well above expected norms. This previously 100% free and reduced lunch school is now attracting other students from private academies and other suburban schools as parents and teachers have taken note of their inventive and non-traditional approach to education. Allowing students to advance at their own pace supports innovative programs and flexible schedules (7:30AM-5:00 PM for 200 days a year) making this Full Service School concept a successful reality for our 573 eager students age six weeks to adulthood.

Quality national, state and local awards that Beaufort Elementary School has received in the past four years are numerous. National recognition includes the Project Arts program for outstanding development of artistic talent and appreciation for cultural diversity and Well Baby Plus for early intervention efforts. South Carolina honors include the Exemplary Writing Award; State Incentive Award; Early Childhood Demonstration Site; Department of Education Volunteer Organization of the Year, Family Literacy Initiatives Award and Learn and Serve America Grant. Locally we won the Beaufort County District Incentive Reward for Academic Progress; Sea Island Science Fair first, second and third place winners for the last three years and the Red Ribbon Week Award given by the Beaufort County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program. Our principal received a Paul Harris Fellow from Sea Island Rotary for her commitment to excellence in education. Grant monies awarded include: \$60,000 Bell South Grant for collaboration; \$360,000 Duke Endowment grant for Well Baby Plus; and \$10,000 Target 2000 Arts in Education grant for performing arts.

The Beaufort Elementary School family has successfully refocused on guiding all children through their personal journeys of discovering and maximizing their unique gifts and talents. They leave no opportunity to chance.



1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools

This page last modified May 21, 1999 (saw).

Cannons Elementary School

Address:
1315 Old Converse Road
Spartanburg, SC 29307

Phone:
(864) 579-8020

Principal:
Mrs. Donna Lipscomb

Location:
Rural

Grade Levels:
PreK - 5

Enrollment:
398

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	62.0%
African-American:	35.0%
Hispanic:	1.0%
Asian:	2.0%
American Indian:	0.0%
Other:	0.0%

Mobility Rate:	25.0%
Limited English:	2.0%
Low Income:	60.0%
Special Education:	27.0%

Bright lights, strong colors, and a cacophony of sounds punctuate Cannons Elementary. It's a place of love, a safe place for children threatened by circumstances. The children provide the music: the sounds of active learning, the silence of concentration, and the laughter of friendship. The teachers provide the steady beat of love, knowledge, and acceptance. Spring in South Carolina is bright--mercifully low humidity and gentle breezes--creating beauty and expectation. Children respond with enthusiasm. Even on testing day, they are excited. But it hides the dark side that over 1/3 of the children at Cannons contend with daily. "I didn't sleep last night, Mrs. Lipscomb." "Why not?" "Lots of noise. Shooting. Police. We hid in the closet all night." "Who's we?" "All of us." The children, 118 of them residing in Lakeview Manor, have borne silent, terrified witness to a drug territory battle between two dealers. The police were called when the shots came, and continued. But they come to school this morning and rush to surround their principal and tell her of the happenings of the night. Stability is important to them. Cannons is their fortress. Even the children who move, continuously in and out--49% (227) in a cyclic pattern to find a place to live, a pattern established because the parents cannot pay the rent--move in, be evicted, move out--are excited to return to Cannons, some such as Debra as many as four times during one school year.

Despite the transient population and a rapid increase in lower socioeconomic rates as measured by free/reduced lunch counts (an increase from 48% in 1995 to 60% in 1998), Cannons' test data reflect steady gain in student achievement, a testament to the use of innovative pedagogy and instruction. The school serves primarily lower middle-class, rural children. 51% of our students live in impoverished, neighborhoods. The school population is diverse, both in skills the children possess when they walk through the doors and the language and customs of their native countries. In spite of these circumstances, by the third grade 20% of the children are identified as academically and/or artistically gifted and receive services in Atlas (Action Team for Leading Accelerated Students).

Cannons Elementary School, originally constructed in 1939 for fewer than 100 students, moved into a new facility in 1995. A collaborative group, representing a cross-section of the population, worked on design and features for five years. A theatre for musical and dramatic productions, an art gallery featuring a different artist each month, and a state of the art computer infrastructure that includes a Local Area Network connected to the district Wide Area Network were included.

Located in the center of the new structure is the media center. Natural light from the cathedral ceiling's skylight floods the open space filled with computers and materials for research, preschool toys for parents to check out, and thousands of books that include: books written by students, books written by students in

collaboration with senior citizens: books that incorporate every stage, every level, and every interest. The media center is also home to the broadcast studio, the publishing center, and the hardware for the school wide computer network. Each classroom has two or three multimedia computers with direct access to the Internet through a T1 line.

Other needs are met through an English as a Second Language teacher and the Therapeutic Preschool for high-risk three and four-year-olds. Grant writing is encouraged as a way to meet the diverse needs of students. In what was described by the Department of Education as their most competitive grant competition in history, Cannons was awarded a 2.6 million-dollar grant, The Three Faces of Need, to transform Cannons into a community learning center. The school now provides after-school programs for first through fifth graders, Saturday activities for children and parents, and summer classes for children that integrate the visual arts, physical education, music, and technology into the basic academic curriculum. Children receive an additional 33% more instruction in reading and mathematics in the after school program. In the first summer program through the grant, 80 third through fifth grade students attended the academic acceleration classes offered through grant funding. Adult education, parenting, and pre-employment skills training are available during the day with babysitting, a meal, and transportation provided. Cannons is proud to house two district-wide, self-contained, emotionally handicapped classes, a learning-disabled class, and a preschool handicapped class. Our entire building is handicapped accessible. We offer inclusion education to enhance the academic skills and social skills of our learning disabled students. Cannons makes every effort to eliminate barriers to education, be they tangible structures, intangible attitudes, or basic needs such as quality childcare or a hot meal.

Cannons understands that stress is a fundamental cause of failure and violence, and we are taking steps to lower distress in families and in school. Violence prevention workshops are given on the district level, and Cannons will host a county wide two-day workshop on the subject in November of this year. Fifty-eight percent of the highest risk families of preschool children receive home visits through the Therapeutic Preschool, the Preschool Handicapped Program, and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten. Children and parents are able to receive counseling on a regular weekly basis, and the guidance counselor has collaborated with area businesses and churches to ensure every child has a warm coat, shoes that fit, and a present from Santa. Every teacher is mentor to a small group of students in the Family Ties Program that emphasizes respect for others and conflict resolution. Other programs that emphasize social and behavioral skills are the CARE (Care and Respect for Everyone) group, CHAMPS (Champs Have And Model Positive Peer Skills) peer mediation program, Student Council and CHOICE (Choosing Helpful Options in Coping and Education) summer program for children with emotional problems.

The usual dread of a "trip to the office" isn't found among students at Cannons. Good citizenship is rewarded by an "office sucker"

and students who master the Accelerated Reader tests are encouraged to bring their test scores to the office to be signed by all present. The principal spends Friday afternoons socializing with the "Principal's Pals," and student work is displayed in classrooms, in the halls, in the principal's office, and in the teacher's lounge. Support staff play an important role in this feeling of family. The head custodian acts as "Papa Bear" to the Therapeutic Preschool, providing a positive male role model to the children. The Parent Teacher Organization provides over 2,000 volunteer hours annually in tutoring children, working in the Publishing Center, answering phones, and providing support service for teachers.

Cannons has won the South Carolina Exemplary Writing Award two consecutive years. Students write in journals, write books in the publishing center, and learn the elements of creative verse as well as expository prose. The multimedia format of Hyperstudio helps students make their presentations come to life, and students are encouraged to use approved Internet sites for maximum up to date information for research.

Recent honors and grants awarded Cannons and her teachers include 'Write' Way Publishing Company, Project COMPUTE, Coping Skills for Successful Living, and Care and Respect for Everyone. Three Learn and Serve America grants as well as grants from the Greater Arts Partnership have been awarded. Our school has been a School Incentive Award Winner for the past four years. Reading programs, math programs, and technology for impaired students have all been subsidized through grant monies.

We have a motto among our family that states, we care because Children Are Really Everything to us. This is not only a motto, but also a way of life, which is evidenced by all who enter our school. The Cannons' family feels that every child deserves a safe, compassionate place to learn. Each child is accepted as a unique individual with potential, and teachers view themselves as promoters of the child, the school, and the community. One fifth grade student wrote the following in an essay about our new school: "The most important and special part of my school is the people. All the teachers, all the janitors, everyone is loving and kind. I would love this school even if we had class in a doghouse. Even if it were that way, one thing would still stay the same - there would still be love!"

Cannons Elementary School is steeped in history and focused on the future. The focus is real and the results are measured with a test found in our hearts. Cannons can be summarized by one elegant sustained note - the universal "A" of success.



1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools

This page last modified May 21, 1999 (saw).

Hillcrest Elementary School

Address:
1701 Crozier Lane
Del Valle, TX 78617

Phone:
(512) 385-1427

Principal:
Mrs. Jean MacInnis

Location:
Suburban/urban

Grade Levels:
3-6

Enrollment:
726

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	14.0%
African-American:	14.0%
Hispanic:	70.0%
Asian:	1.4%
American Indian:	0.6%
Other:	0.0%

Mobility Rate:	27.0%
Limited English:	40.0%
Low Income:	84.0%
Special Education:	16.0%

Hillcrest Elementary School (HES) sits amid a shaded cove of towering 100 year old oak trees on a bluff overlooking the Colorado River and the Austin, Texas skyline, in the Del Valle Independent School District. It serves a diverse population of 726 students from four separate communities: Garfield, a rural community on the eastern edge of Travis County; Williamson Creek, a community on the western edge of the school district; Montopolis, a poor, largely Hispanic inner-city community with large housing projects; and within walking distance, three apartment complexes which previously served off-base military housing needs before the closing of Bergstrom Air Force Base.

Besides the meshing of four communities, Hillcrest serves students as diverse as their neighborhoods; 70% of the students are Hispanic, 14% are African American, 14% are White, and the remaining 2% are Asian and American Indian. Hillcrest serves 86% of its students hot meals through the federally funded free- and reduced-lunch program, while teachers continually adjust their programs to support a very mobile population of 27%. Five years ago, Hillcrest Elementary was experiencing the same frustrations as many other Texas schools with challenging demographics. Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) scores were as low as 28% of Hispanic children passing math. The school was concerned about being identified as low performing by the Texas Education Agency. This concern was channeled into action by a new principal and staff who would not consider anything but high achievement for all students. Today, Hillcrest has been identified as a "Recognized" campus by the Texas Education Agency, and only missed the Exemplary status by the scores of two students. A research team from Texas A&M University cited the district as one of the most successful in Texas for educating African American students. A great number of African American students in the district attend Hillcrest, and their progress has been significant--in 1994, 40.9% passed the math TAAS and in 1998, 87.1% passed; a 42.2 point gain.

Hillcrest serves Del Valle's limited English speakers in the district bilingual program and English as a Second Language program. HES believes that these children need extensive exposure to both formal and informal English to accelerate their progress toward language competency. Hillcrest teachers have made a conscious effort to gradually bring limited English speakers into regular classes as soon as they demonstrate they are capable of assimilating successfully. The multisensory approach to instruction for all students has helped the bilingual students make the leap -- math results: 1994, 43.4% passed; in 1998, 96.1% passed. The principal was the catalyst for change in creating this model of success for special populations, but the teachers were the instruments of change. The district dyslexia program opened at Hillcrest 10 years ago and has served as a model program for other campuses. Students identified as gifted are served on a daily basis

with special services provided by a visiting teacher. Students with other special needs are served in regular settings with small-group instruction in reading, writing, or math. There are also specialists to support children with special behavioral and emotional needs, as well as supporting students with severe mental and physical disabilities. Although there appears to be a program for every special need that may arise, Hillcrest works to provide a challenging and enriched program stressing literacy, communication skills, and problem solving for every student.

Hillcrest teachers devote a significant amount of effort and personal time to improve their teaching skills, making learning more meaningful and enjoyable. A support system of instructional teams have brought teachers closer together to brainstorm, share strategies, and plan. Over the last five years, Hillcrest has undergone intensive staff development to restructure its instructional delivery system. This restructuring has been achieved incrementally. In 1993-94 TAAS writing scores were 68.1% passing. Teachers focused on improvement of writing through training in the New Jersey Writing Project in Texas and the teaching of process writing. They also implemented the teaching strategies of differentiated instruction for diverse learners. Today, writing scores are above 95.2% overall. The focus on improving mathematics instruction was initiated by the realization that Title I remedial math students were outperforming all other student populations. This sparked a staff development initiative which includes teaming a master teacher of mathematics with one teacher at grades 4, 5, and 6. After a year with these teachers, the master teacher begins a new school year with three other teachers, and the process continues until all teachers are trained in hands-on, highly interactive methodology for the delivery of mathematics instruction. This master teacher also runs the math demonstration lab where students come for lessons involving games, literature, and manipulatives. Since the implementation of this staff development model, TAAS scores have improved over 40 points in mathematics. Last year, 100 percent of all African American students in grades 5 and 6 passed the math portion of the TAAS.

The comprehensive Reading Renaissance program stresses the importance of daily silent, sustained, reading practice. Computerized reading tests taken by students encourage individual and collective goal setting. The Hillcrest library circulation last year was 65,000, nearly 100 books per child! Reading scores have climbed from 70% to 93% in the last five years. Teachers who are trained in particular programs and content present on-campus model lessons with students. These same trainers are available for consultation to those teachers who are implementing these newly learned math techniques, technology training, and reading improvement strategies. These efforts of both the trainers and the teachers seeking improvement have raised the level of expertise in instruction on the Hillcrest campus. Test results confirm a focused instructional program. Just as innovative strategies are necessary to improve performance of at-risk students, aggressive efforts are necessary to involve their parents.

Parent and community partnerships continue to show growing

support for students through personal involvement. Family Fun Nights bring parents to the campus to learn reading and math along with their children. The Science Fair involves over 300 parents, not only as projects are displayed for recognition, but also in helping their children research and report their findings in a scientific manner. Hillcrest continues to prepare more and more communications in both English and Spanish. A campus liaison provides parents transportation to school for necessary meetings. The community demonstrates its support of Hillcrest's successful efforts through gifts of human resources and funding. Sematech, an Austin computer company, contributes funding and professional staff to conduct Science Day, a project that engages and excites students about science. The Eckrich Fun house, a van shaped like a colorful playhouse, arrives to supply snacks for after-school tutorials. The University of Texas participates in a cooperative with Hillcrest to train teachers in a three-year program to improve math and science instruction. The program, which stresses hands-on activities and experiments, is open to all Del Valle ISD teachers, and is housed on the Hillcrest campus.

With all of the work required in the last five years, it might appear that Hillcrest Elementary would be a very serious, no-frills place to visit. Actually, the opposite is true. The principal, the staff, and the students are inspired by success and love the process of learning as it occurs at Hillcrest. The day begins with a rousing cheer of "Hooray for reading at Hillcrest!" led by the principal in the library hallway. As students work in small groups, three different activities may be taking place in the library, and learning rarely occurs while quietly working alone at a desk. Students mentor other students, and teachers facilitate independent learning. When students investigate Colonial America, one student might use the Internet to learn about blacksmiths, while another interviews the art teacher about weaving, and a third may be reading a novel about the period. The students collaborate on a finished product, just as their parents do in the world of work. It is a public school's responsibility to prepare students for this world at every grade level. When students leave Hillcrest, they are confident, able learners seeking new methods to attain even higher levels of student achievement. These challenges will be similar to those in many parts of Texas. Hillcrest can be a model to schools that are experiencing the challenge of educating students with the dual obstacles of low socioeconomic status and limited English proficiency. Hillcrest sends the message that these are obstacles, not barriers. "Pride in Progress" is the campus motto, and it is an ongoing creed. Visit Hillcrest to see a campus where the statement that all students can learn is not a goal, but a reality.



1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools

This page last modified May 21, 1999 (saw).

BEAUFORT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

National Blue Ribbon School

A Full Service School

Exemplary Writing School

State Early Childhood Demonstration Site

Ruth Summerlin, Principal

Samuel Carter, Assistant Principal

1800 Prince Street

Beaufort, SC 29902

Phone: 843-525-4282 322-2600

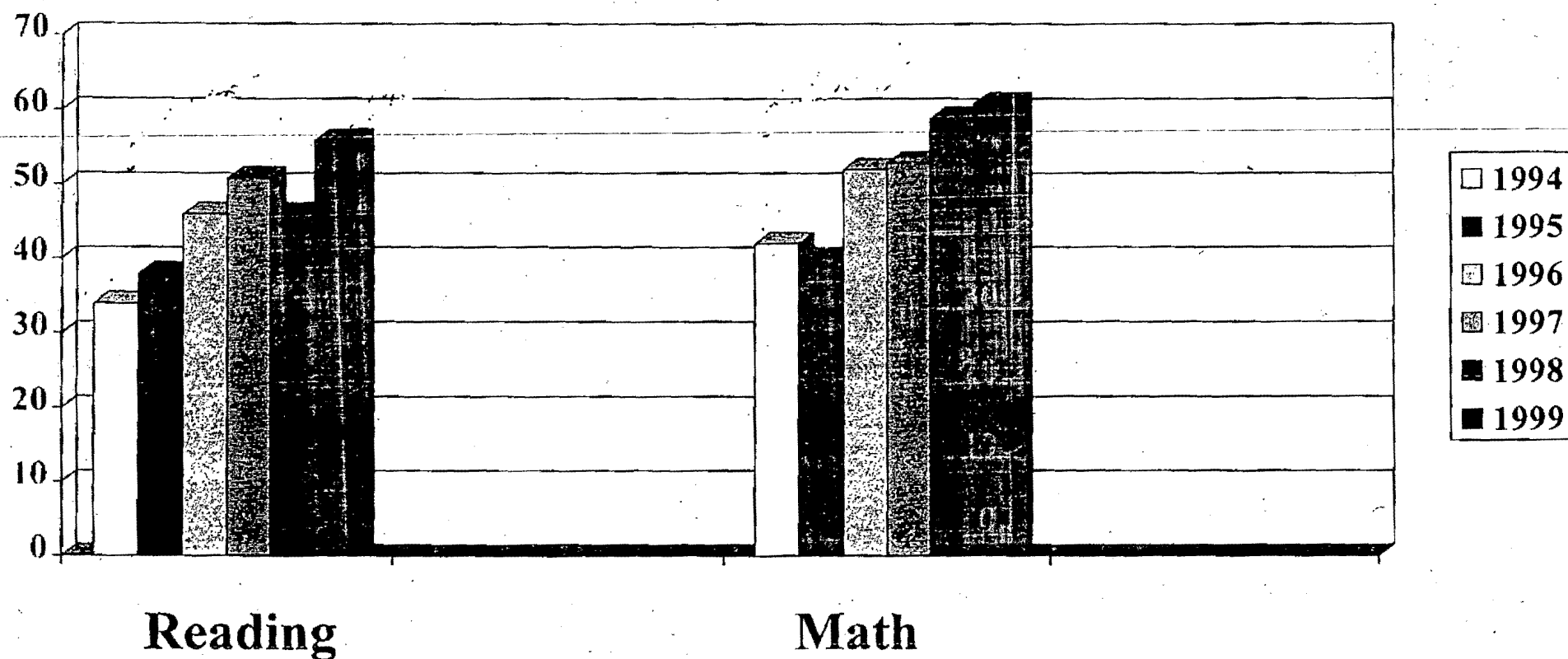
FAX: 843-525-4288

322-2685

★ FAX TRANSMITTAL ★ Date: 10-26-99
To: Andrew Rotherham Fx:
Fr: Ruth Summerlin # Pages: 4
Beaufort Elementary Ph 843-525-4282 322-2600
School Fx 843-525-4288
RE: 322-2685

National Percentile Rank

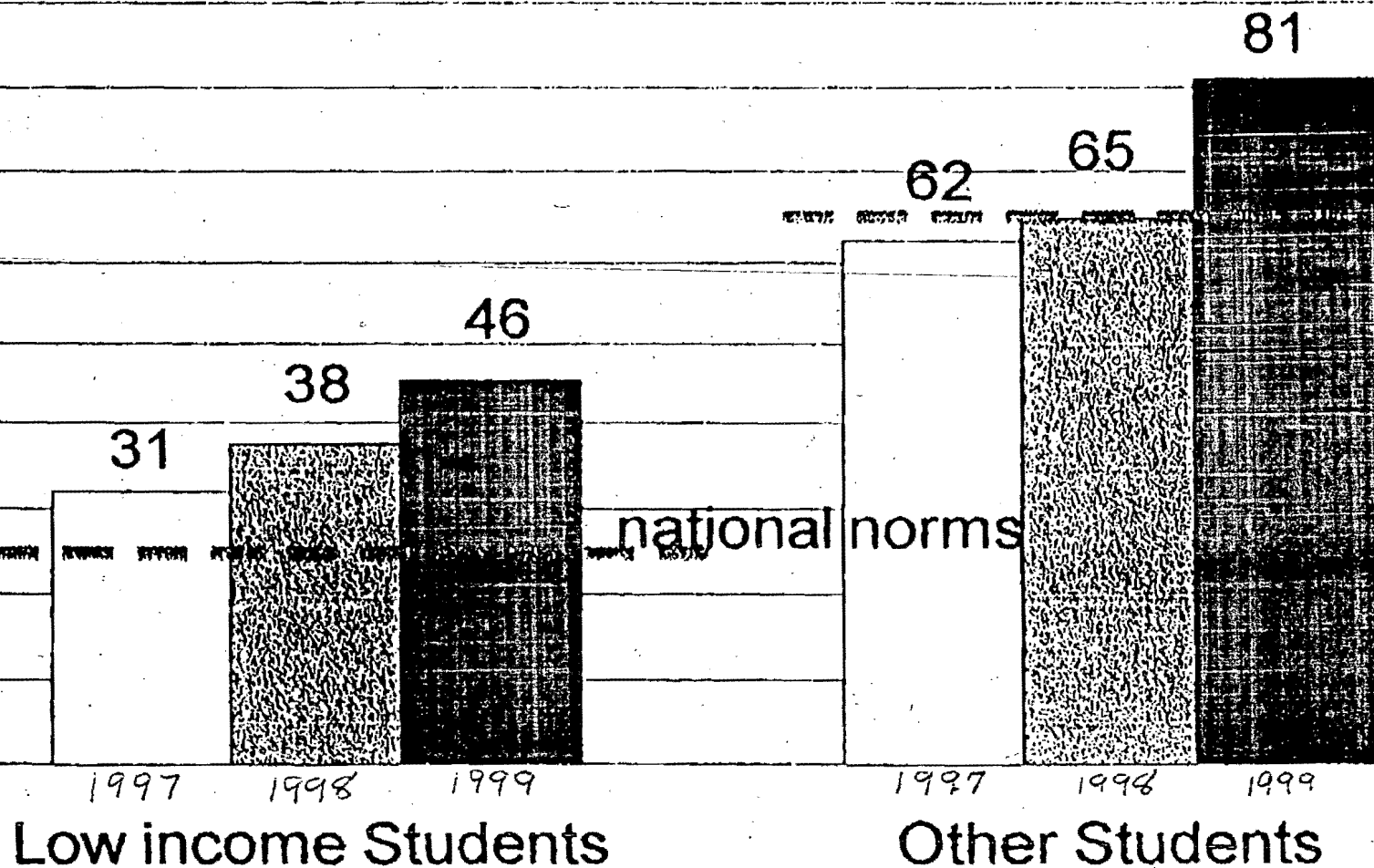
Standardized Testing Grades 2-5, 1994-1999



MAT-7 Reading

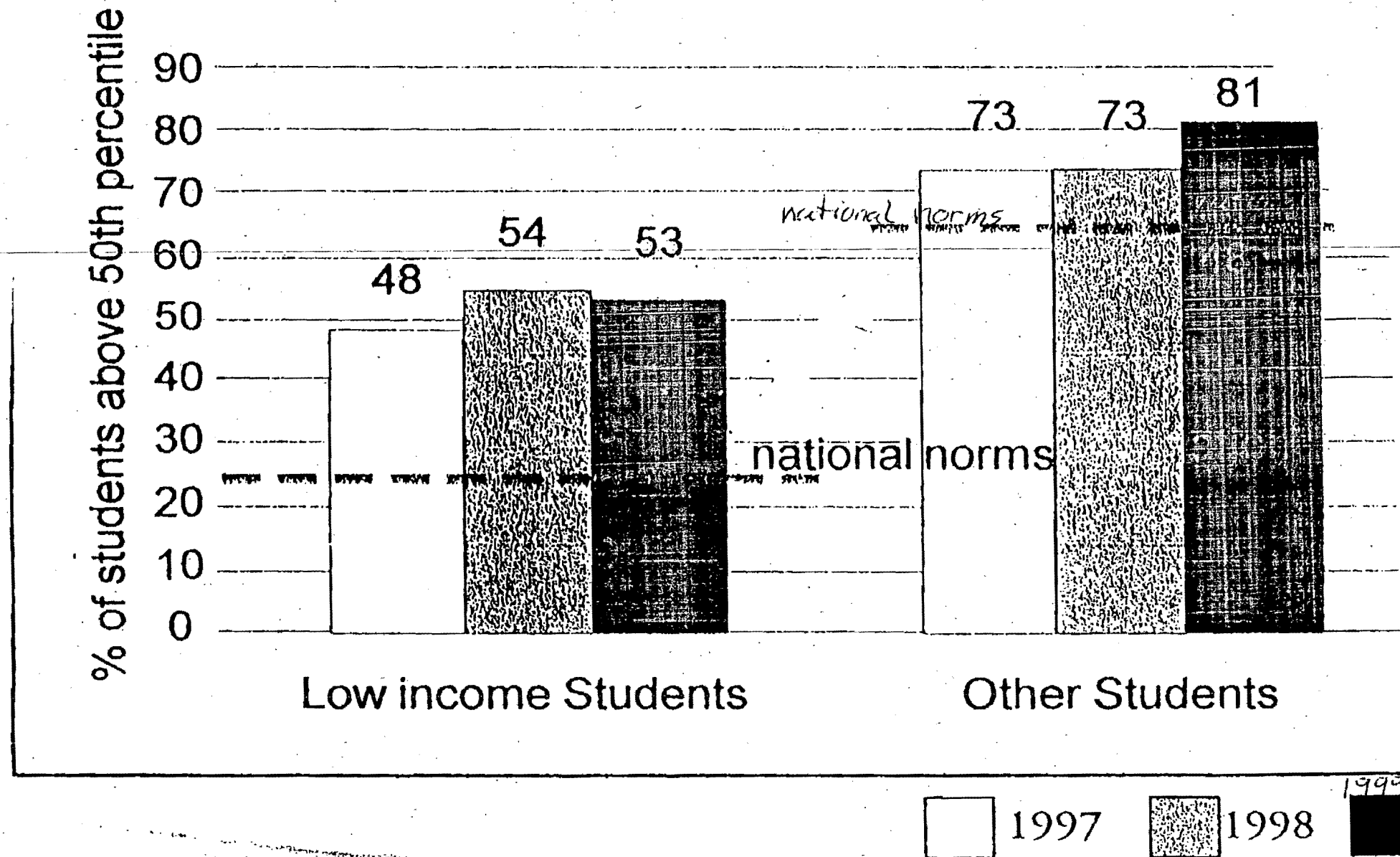
% of students above 50th percentile

90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0



1997 1998

MAT-7 Math



PRESIDENT CLINTON HONORS BLUE-RIBBON SCHOOLS AND CALLS ON CONGRESS TO INVEST IN TARGETED STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE PUBLIC EDUCATION

October 27, 1999

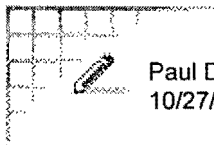
In a speech today to parents, teachers and principals from award-winning elementary schools, President Clinton will underscore the Administration's strategy for improving public education by reducing class size, turning around failing schools and making other targeted investments in our children. Pointing to the world-class education that Blue Ribbon Schools provide, the President will remind Americans that the budget debate is not just about how much we spend on education but how wisely we spend it. Finally, he will emphasize that the current Republican appropriations bill undermines the improvements our nation's public schools need.

EXCELLENCE THROUGH SMALLER CLASSES AND MORE ACCOUNTABILITY. President Clinton today will call on Congress to support excellence in public education by investing in proven strategies for reform. As he honors the winners of the 1999 Blue Ribbon Schools Awards, the President will point out that targeting our education dollars -- on 100,000 highly-qualified teachers to reduce class sizes, and on turning around schools that are failing -- is the best way to achieve results.

Blue Ribbon Schools are tangible proof of the effectiveness of high standards, school accountability and targeted investment. These 266 schools from urban, rural and suburban communities in 37 states have demonstrated sustained success over time or have overcome obstacles to make significant advances in student achievement. The Blue Ribbon Schools Awards were established in 1982.

REPUBLICAN EDUCATION BILL FAILS MAKE THESE KEY INVESTMENTS IN WHAT WORKS. President Clinton will note that the Republican appropriations bill shortchanges children and teachers by gutting the class size reduction initiative and failing to provide funds to turn around failing schools. The bill also underfunds after-school and summer school programs and underinvests in the recruitment and training of high-quality teachers. The President believes that the prosperity generated by years of fiscal discipline and the hard work of the American people should be invested wisely in their top priorities. Unfortunately, Republican plans continue to defy common sense and the public interest. The Republican education spending bill:

- Reneges on the class size reduction initiative that both parties agreed to last fall, and provides no guarantee that the 29,000 teachers hired for this year can continue teaching in smaller classes throughout the country. It also provides no funding for the additional 8,000 teachers the President's plan would support this year.
- Fails to hold low-performing schools accountable for results by not funding the President's plan for a \$200 million Title I accountability fund to fix schools identified as failing. The President believes that we must invest more in our schools and demand more from them. The current appropriations bill does not provide funding for turning around failing schools.
- Underfunds after-school and summer school programs, denying at least 800,000 students access to a safe place to learn during the after school hours when most juvenile crime and drug and alcohol abuse occur.
- Undercuts efforts to improve teacher quality, by shortchanging teacher quality and recruitment programs, and eliminating the successful Troops to Teachers program that enables retired military personnel to teach in high-need areas.
- Underinvests in the GEAR-UP program and in education technology, denying more than 130,000 disadvantaged young people the help they need to get into college, and undermining crucial investments in education technology.



Paul D. Glastris
10/27/99 03:31:34 PM

Record Type: Record

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

cc:

Subject: latest Blue Ribbon draft

Draft 10/27/99 3:30 p.m.

Glastris

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS AT AWARDS CEREMONY
BLUE RIBBONS SCHOOLS
WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL
September 28, 1999**

Acknowledgments: Sec. Riley; Beaufort Elementary Principal Ruth Summerlin;

Before I begin, let me take a few moments to pass on some good news we have received today. **Tk topper on GDP and homeownership numbers.**

The Founding Fathers believed two things that were quite radical at the time. They believed democracy could be made to work, and they believed all citizens could and should be educated. In fact, their faith in democracy rested on their faith that all citizens could learn. "Educate and inform the whole mass of the people," Thomas Jefferson said, because "an enlightened citizenry is indispensable for the proper functioning of a republic."

I think Ruth Summerlin's story demonstrates the wisdom of the Founder's belief. All students can learn. The 266 schools we honor today prove that. Your schools are located in every region of America, and in every kind of neighborhood. Yet in each of your schools, students are learning—and learning at quite a high level. Every school in America can do what your schools have done. Getting every school in America to follow your path is truly one of the great challenges we face as a nation.

We have already made real progress in education. The idea of standards, which we championed with our Goals 2000 legislation, is now taking root around the country. In 1996, only 14 states had measurable standards for student performance. Today there are 50. That may be one reason why reading and math scores are up nationwide, including in some of our most disadvantaged urban areas.

More and more schools, including Blue Ribbon Schools, are reducing class sizes with

the help of the initiative we began last fall to provide 30,000 of what we hope to be 100,000 new highly trained teachers. Greenwood Elementary in Newport News, VA, a Blue Ribbon winner, hired new teachers this fall, bringing class sizes down in 1st and 2nd grades from 27 children per teacher to 20.

Other Blue Ribbon schools are using the Vice President's E-rate program to connect their classrooms and libraries to the Internet. With the help of the E-rate, 7th graders at Whitebread Elementary school in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma are communicating directly with scientists who are conducting research in Africa, and the students are writing papers based on that research. Every 7th grader should have the opportunity to do challenging and interesting assignments like that.

All this represents impressive progress. But if our goal is to get every school in America to follow the path of our Blue Ribbon schools and attain your level of excellence of our Blue Ribbon schools—and that should be our goal—then we have a great deal more work to do.

That is why the budget debate we're having here in Washington is so important. To many Americans, it may seem like nothing but a lot of numbers and a lot of noise. But beneath all the rhetoric, there is an important debate going on, about values and priorities and the right way to provide all children with a world class education. It's not just about how much we spend--but about how we spend it.

Last year, we reached an agreement with Congress to begin hiring 100,000 new, highly-trained teachers to lower class sizes in the early grades. Congressional Republicans agreed to it; they went home and campaigned on it; they bragged about what a good, non-bureaucratic program it was. We disbursed the money and schools have gone out and hired new teachers. And now, suddenly, the Republicans in Congress have voted to abandon their commitment. So one of the key things this budget debate is all about is whether we will keep our commitments to help our schools hire 100,000 well-qualified teachers.

This budget debate is also about accountability. When students and teachers and principals and elected officials are held accountable for meeting higher standards—and when they are given the resources they need to meet those standards, from smaller classes to afterschool programs--we have seen real progress. Whole schools can be turned around in relatively short order.

You heard Ruth Summerlin explain how her school was selected by the state, given more resources, and turned itself around in just a few years. This is no isolated incident. Two years ago, North Carolina drew up a list of the state's 15 worst-performing schools, and sent assistance teams to each school. One year later, 14 of them had improved their performance enough to be taken off the list. Last year, I went to one of the poorest neighborhoods in Chicago, near the large Cabrini-Green housing project, to an elementary school with terrible performance. In just two years, they doubled their math scores and tripled their reading scores. A few weeks ago, I visited a school in New Orleans that is just

beginning this same process.

Our budget has \$200 million to help states and school districts all over America identify, turn around or shut down the lowest-performing schools. Yet the Republican budget bill doesn't put a dime into the strategy of turning around low-performing schools.

I honestly do not understand this. We know accountability works—not based on what someone in Washington thinks works, but based on what on what you proved works at the grassroots level. We know that there are millions of disadvantaged children in this country whose future chances in life could be substantially improved if their schools are turned around, as you've proven they can be. We know that the National Governors Association, made up primarily of Republican governors, supports our \$200 million accountability initiative. Yet the Republican Congress is against it.

Why is the Republican Congress against an accountability measure that we know can turn around failing schools and that they know their own Republican governors favor? Why is the Republican Congress against hiring more good teachers to bring down class sizes when last year they favored it and campaigned on it as if it was their idea?

The Republican Congress knows that many of our nation's schools are falling apart and are so overcrowded that children are being taught in trailers and broom closets. Why are they unwilling to fund our plan to build or fix 6000 schools? The Republican Congress knows we have the largest, most diverse group of student in our schools in history, and that we'll need to hire 2 million new teachers over the next decade. Why are they against funding our Troops to Teachers program, to recruit potentially great teachers from among our nation's 2 million veterans? You'd think Republicans would be for that.

We all agree that public schools are primarily a state and local responsibility. But we also know that they are a national priority. The federal government shouldn't micromanage the schools. In fact, under Sec. Riley, we've scrapped more rules and regulations than all the previous administrations that railed about the federal government put together. But what we have not done is to abandon our responsibility to target our limited resources on what you, at the grassroots level, have shown works: more teachers, higher standards and accountability, and the tools that you need to meet those standards.

So this budget battle is about more than dollars. It's about direction. It's about whether we have the vision and the will to adapt to the demands of this new information age, in a way that honors our oldest values.

For over 200 years, the bedrock American value has been equal opportunity. If we want equal opportunity to be a vital reality in America in the Information Age then we must make sure that every child in America receives a high-quality education. We can make that happen. The Blue Ribbon schools have shown us the way. That's what this education budget debate is all about. And with your support, and the support of the American people, I believe we will prevail.

Thank you and God bless you.

Message Sent To:

Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP@EOP
Cathy R. Mays/OPD/EOP@EOP
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Eric P. Liu/OPD/EOP@EOP
Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP@EOP
Bethany Little/OPD/EOP@EOP
John B. Buxton/OPD/EOP@EOP
Karin Kullman/OPD/EOP@EOP

Beaufort County School District Federal Funding

Title I

IDEA - Children with Disabilities

Handicapped Preschool Grant

Vocational Education

Drug and Violence Prevention

Title I - Migrant

Aids, Arts & Action

Master Teacher Program

Title VI

Even Start

Adult Education

Title II Eisenhower Professional Development

Goals 2000

Class Size Reduction



Sean P. O'Shea

10/22/99 01:13:53 PM



Record Type: Record

To: Karin Kullman/OPD/EOP@EOP, Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP@EOP, Loretta M. Ucelli/WHO/EOP@EOP, Kris M Balderston/WHO/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: Blue Ribbon Schools

Here is a summary of the questions and concerns the school had in response to the Blue Ribbon School's informal survey.

1. Given the continuous problems of safety, discipline, and family involvement issues and the need to create a life-long love for learning as the primary focus of the school, how can the Department help schools put curriculum as our main goal of the school day?
2. What direct role can the U.S. Department of Education play in local school reform, teacher professional development, technology technical assistance, or any other school reform issue? Can individual school districts access any of these services?
3. Does the Department's regional offices provide assistance for the establishment and/or support of school consortia?
4. What can the Department do to promote the importance of the teaching profession and of the excellent efforts that teachers make to help students?
5. Where does the Department stand on the question of phonemic awareness and phonetics in the teaching of reading?
6. What should be the role of the Department and the Federal Government in the construction of a technology infrastructure in the country?
7. What is the Department's stand on its developing a norm-referenced, mandatory test for elementary school students?
8. What is the Department doing to help reduce class sizes and provide adequate money or classroom teachers?
9. How does the Department evaluate the progress of Goals 2000? Will they be revised or expanded as we move into the new millennium?
10. How does the Department help schools convince parents that comprehensive school reform takes time and money? How can it help make these same parents aware that improvements are being made now in the face of low funding and teacher shortages?
11. How can the Department help local schools get adequate funding for Special Education Federal mandates?

Taking the Blue Ribbon Challenge

About the Program:

Since 1982 the Blue Ribbon Schools Program has celebrated many of America's most successful schools. A Blue Ribbon flag waving overhead has become a trademark of excellence, a symbol of quality recognized by everyone from parents to policy-makers in thousands of communities.

The emerging secret of the Blue Ribbon Schools Program is its power to stimulate and focus school improvement initiatives. "The Blue Ribbon nomination package pulls together what is cutting edge in education today," says one educator. "The school that goes through the process is examining itself in terms of what works in the best schools in the country."

"Regardless of the direction you're going with in school improvement, the Blue Ribbon program gives you a vehicle to get on track. It gives you a framework and standards so you know where you stand," says one principal. Schools are finding that the richness and scope of the Blue Ribbon nomination process allows them to reflect, "not just on the surface level, but down deep." One educator says, "If you want a tool for school improvement, there's nothing out there better than the Blue Ribbon Schools Program. It's the best you can find."

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program promotes and supports the improvement of education in America by:

- identifying and recognizing schools that are models of excellence and equity, schools that demonstrate a strong commitment to educational excellence for all students,
- making research based, self-assessment criteria available to schools looking for a way to reflect on how they are doing,
- encouraging schools, both within and among themselves, to share information about best practices which is based on a shared understanding of the standards which demonstrate educational success.

The Blue Ribbon Program has something to offer every school.

- For the school that has reached a high level of success, the program offers a way to acknowledge the achievements of the school and reflect on areas of potential improvement for the future. It is away to celebrate the hard work of students, staff members, families, and the community and to build awareness in the broader community of the school's excellence.
- For the school that aspires to win the Blue Ribbon Award in three or four years, the program, through its nomination package, offers the most comprehensive framework for identifying areas that need improvement. The Blue Ribbon process can sharpen and invigorate a promising school's improvement initiative.
- For the school trying to get a school improvement process off the ground, the Blue Ribbon nomination package offers a challenging place to begin. It immerses the school in a climate of deep assessment through data collection, discussion, and problem solving. It also gives a positive starting point by providing access to successful Blue Ribbon schools that are willing to share information about what works for them.
- And for all schools, the Blue Ribbon program re-energizes the school community, bringing a sense of pride, confidence, focus, and shared agenda for change and improvement.

Are you eligible?

Public and private schools serving grades K-12 from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as Bureau of Indian Affairs and Department of Defense Schools, are eligible for the Blue Ribbon award. A school must have been in operation for at least five full years

before submitting its nomination.

Elementary and secondary schools participate in alternate years. Middle schools participate in the program with secondary schools. Previously recognized schools must wait five years to reapply.

How Are Schools Chosen?

Each state education agency administers its own program for selecting public schools to be nominated to the national level. Chief State School Officers make their nominations to the U.S. Department of Education. The Council for American Private Education nominates private schools, and officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Department of Defense nominate their schools. Each of these nominating agencies has an assigned Blue Ribbon Schools Program Liaison. These liaisons provide application materials to schools and inform schools about their agency's procedures on accepting applications.

The Department convenes the National Review Panel that evaluates the nominations. The panel consists of approximately 100 outstanding public and private school educators from the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels. Based on the quality of the application, the most promising schools are recommended for site visits. The purpose of a visit is to verify the accuracy of the information the school has provided in its nomination form and to gather any additional information the panel has requested. Experienced educators, including principals of previously recognized schools, visit and observe the schools for two days and submit written site visit reports. The panel considers the reports in its final review of applicants and makes recommendations to the U.S. Secretary of Education.

The Selection Criteria:

In their nominations, schools describe successes in the following criteria. Details about these categories appear in the nomination package.

- Student Focus and Support
- School Organization and Culture
- Challenging Standards and Curriculum
- Active Teaching and Learning
- Professional Community
- Leadership and Educational Vitality
- School, Family, and Community Partnerships
- Indicators of Success

How to Apply:

The nomination package and instructions on how to apply to the program are available online and can be found on this website under the "How to Apply" section.

National-State-Private Partnerships:

Acknowledging the value of recognition as a school improvement strategy, 18 states have developed their own recognition programs. These state programs use criteria similar to the national Blue Ribbon Schools Program. Schools in these states generally achieve state recognition prior to national recognition. States with their own recognition programs include: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, and West Virginia.

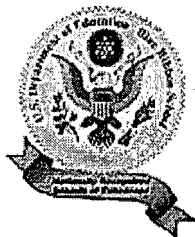
The education associations' partnerships with the U.S. Department of Education have also contributed greatly to the high success of the Blue Ribbon Schools Program. The partners are the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Middle School Association, and the National

Association of Secondary School Principals. The program also cooperates with the National Regional Educational Laboratories and the National Research and Development Centers, and with Nova Southeastern University in Miami, Florida to increase the opportunities Blue Ribbon schools have to share best practices.

Contact Information:

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This page last modified -- September 10, 1999 (glc)



EVALUATION OF THE BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program (BRSP) was established in 1982 by the U.S. Department of Education to identify and recognize schools that have exemplary education programs and student achievement. It is administered by the Knowledge Applications Division of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), in partnership with state education agencies, the Department of Defense, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Council for American Private Education. Since its inception, approximately 3,000 schools have been recognized.

The BRSP's goal historically has been to increase public awareness of good schools and the practices that make them effective. However, in recent years, the BRSP also has emphasized (1) its potential power for stimulating schools' efforts to improve student achievement, and (2) the importance of encouraging schools to share good ideas and practices.

The evaluation of the BRSP began in September 1996 and was completed in Spring 1998. The study addressed questions in five program areas:

- **Program design and implementation.** How is the program administered, and how do program design and administration affect its efficiency and impact? Where might changes in program administration enhance benefits to participants, and what opportunities exist for improving program efficiency?
- **Impact of recognition.** To what extent does BRSP recognition exert positive and/or negative effects on participating individuals, schools, school districts, and communities? How does it exert these effects, and how can positive impacts be optimized and negative ones minimized?
- **Extent and impact of self-assessment.** How do schools prepare Blue Ribbon Schools applications, what is the extent of self-analysis, and how does the process benefit participants? What factors influence the extent and impact of self-assessment process, and how can the benefits be enhanced?
- **Extent and impact of sharing opportunities.** To what extent do Blue Ribbon Schools share their best practices and ideas as a result of recognition, how does this occur, and what are the benefits and drawbacks?
- **Extent and impact of interaction with other programs.** To what extent and how does the program complement or enhance other school improvement or recognition programs, and what are the benefits to participants? What is the value added by the Blue Ribbon Schools Program to other programs and activities at the school?

In addressing these questions, the evaluation collected and analyzed qualitative data from several different sources: focus groups held with principals, teachers, parents, and district representatives from a sample of 68 recently recognized Blue Ribbon schools in 9 states; interviews with individuals involved in the nomination, review, and selection process; a document review of previous application forms, site visitor and review panel training materials, and materials developed by state liaisons; and a working meeting convened with experts in the field of dissemination and the BRSP.

Policy Studies Associates, Inc. conducted the evaluation for OERI at the U.S. Department of Education. For further information, contact:

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Last updated -- December 29, 1998 (tca)

FOR RELEASE
May 20, 1999

Contact:
Melinda Ulloa
(202) 205-8811

RILEY NAMES 266 BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley today announced the selection of 266 public and private elementary schools as the 1998-99 Blue Ribbon Schools.

Since its inception in 1982 the Blue Ribbons Schools Program has honored 3,800 of America's most successful schools. These schools have met the U.S. Department of Education's rigorous, research based criteria for overall excellence. They excel in all areas of academic leadership, teaching and teacher development, and school curriculum. In addition, they exhibit exceptional levels of community and parental involvement, high student achievement levels and rigorous safety and discipline programs within their schools.

"These schools are examples of the good things happening in education nationwide," Riley said. "They reflect the hard work of dedicated parents, teachers, students and staff and serve as models for providing students with the high quality learning opportunities they need to be successful in the 21st century."

This year, 221 public and 45 private schools in 37 states and Puerto Rico will be recognized. The schools were nominated by state education agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Department of Defense, and the Council for American Private Education. Each of these nominating agencies has an assigned Blue Ribbon Schools Program Liaison which provides materials and information during the application process. Elementary and secondary schools participate in alternate years with middle schools participating in the program with secondary schools. This year's winners are elementary schools.

Schools were selected for recognition by a national review panel which conducted a thorough evaluation, involving administrators, teachers, students, parents and community representatives in the completion of the nomination forms. This process included assessing schools' strengths and weaknesses and developing strategic plans for the future.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: A list of recognized schools is available upon request and at our website at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/BlueRibbonSchools/frames/states.html>.

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**U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
1998-99 Blue Ribbon Schools Elementary Program**

Overview of National Participation

Total # of Schools Nominated to the Program	470
Total # of Public Schools Nominated	382
Total # of Private Schools Nominated	88
 Total # of Nominated Site Visited	 273
Total # of Nominated Public Schools Visited	228
Total # of Nominated Private Schools Visited	45
 Percentage of Nominated Schools Site Visited	 58%
Percentage of Nominated Public Schools Visited	60%
Percentage of Nominated Private Schools Visited	51%
 Total # of Nominated Schools Selected for Recognition	 266
Total # of Nominated Public Schools Selected	221
Total # of Nominated Private Schools Selected	45
 Percentage of Nominated Schools Selected for Recognition	 57%
Percentage of Nominated Public Schools Selected	58%
Percentage of Nominated Private Schools Selected	51%
 Percentage of Site Visited Schools Selected for Recognition	 97%
Percentage of Site Visited Public Schools Selected	97%
Percentage of Site Visited Private Schools Selected	100%
 Number of States with Schools Selected for Recognition	 37
District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Department of Defense Dependents Schools	3
 Total # of Schools Recognized 1982-83 through 1997-98	 3,784
Total # of Public Schools	2,971
Total # of Private Schools	813

Additional Information: Number and percentage of recognized schools (266)

Rural 17 (6%)	Low-income (25% or more) 91 (34%)
Small City 34 (13%)	Low-income (50% or more) 38 (14%)
Suburban 143 (54%)	Minority (25% or more) 65 (24%)
Suburban with urban characteristics 29(11%)	Minority (50% or more) 24 (9%)
Urban 43 (16%)	Smallest Public School 170
Private Schools:	Largest Public School 1,673
Catholic 30	
Independent 8	
Christian 1	
Episcopal 2	
Jewish 4	



Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Last updated May 15, 1999 (tca)

BEAUFORT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO: *Andy Rotcherham* FROM: *Ada McDonald*

FAX NUMBER:
202) 456-5581

DATE: *Oct 27 '99*

COMPANY:
*Special Dist of Education
for President Clinton*

TOTAL NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING
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**U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
1998-99 Blue Ribbon Schools Elementary Program**

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Independent 8	
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Episcopal 2	
Jewish 4	



Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Last updated May 15, 1999 (tca)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 29, 1996

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS AWARDS CEREMONY

South Lawn

1:54 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you so much. Secretary Riley, thank you for the wonderful job that you do and your clear, strong voice for education. Mr. Vice President, thank you for the work you have done in advancing our technology initiative. I forgive you for mentioning all those Tennessee schools. (Laughter.) We're always doing this. You know, there's a school from Arkansas here -- from Bentonville, Arkansas. And I have spoken at the high school graduation there more than once. Now, have you spoken at all those Tennessee schools' graduation? (Laughter.) We'll do this for three or four more days until -- (laughter.)

And I want to say to Jill Mahler how very much we appreciate not only the excellent work being done in your school -- and I think I -- they are so proud of her, I think I'd like to ask the representatives from Mainland High School in Daytona Beach to stand up here, and thank you very much. (Applause.)

But it also reminds us that teaching and learning are a lot more than technology. And this fine young lady is also the captain of her cross-country team and obviously very well-spoken. And we were honored to have her here on the stage with us today to remind us about what all these endeavors are truly all about.

In Mainland High School, which is, as Jill said, a model technology school, the students can actually download images from satellites from the space shuttle, from weather satellites. I wish they had downloaded better weather for us today. (Laughter.) But, nonetheless, it's an exciting prospect to think about what young people are doing.

Let me say to all of you here in the Blue Ribbon schools, from all across America, you are, as the Secretary said, a living textbook of the best lessons American education has to offer. I am filled with hope as I look around this tent -- there's not a classroom problem anywhere in America that somebody somewhere hasn't solved. In the 21st century, America must have -- must have -- the best-educated citizens in the world. If we keep doing what you are doing, that is exactly what we will have.

One of the things that has always perplexed me, having spent a great deal of time in public school classrooms in the 12 years I served as governor of my state and since I've been President, going around the country, is that we don't do enough learning from each other. So Secretary Riley makes all the Blue Ribbon schools work when they come up here and learn from each other. But it is a model that I think if that were followed in every other state, every state in our country across this great land, we'd have even more rapid improvements in

education.

I also want to point out that today this ceremony is honoring not just a single student, or even a single teacher, but entire schools and the communities that sustain them. The Blue Ribbon Awards are rooted in the belief that schools work only if everyone does his or her part -- if principals set high standards, if teachers teach well, if students work and learn, if parents and other community leaders stay involved and stay supportive.

If you read through list of the schools honored today, it is truly amazing what you have been able to accomplish by working together. In some schools, revolutionary science and math curriculums have been developed. In others, parents are volunteering in the classroom and students are helping out in child care centers. In others, the whole community has joined together to kick gangs and drugs out of the schools, to wipe away graffiti, to restore safety to the classrooms and the learning environment.

You are literally making learning a jump off the dusty shelves of libraries and into the imaginations of our children, our leaders of tomorrow. So to every single one of you, more than anything else, we wanted you to be here today on the lawn of the White House so that I could say on behalf of all the American people, we thank you, we are proud of you, and we hope that today you'll all be very proud of yourselves. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

You know, I've had the chance, as I've said, to be in a lot of different schools -- elementary, middle and high schools all across the country; public schools, parochial schools. I've seen science classes and English classes and history classes and economics classes. I've been in schools that were well over 100 years old in their physical facilities and schools that had been opened just a few days. I have seen in all the schools that really work, clearly, one uniform characteristic. It was the schools, every one of them, had high standards and high expectations. They actually believed that students could learn and that they would learn if given the right kind of standards, the right kind of support, the right kind of environment.

I told the country's governors at their Education Summit in March that we have to have those kinds of expectations for all of our students. And somehow we have to make sure that they have those expectations of themselves. We have to make every child in this country believe in himself or herself -- believe they can learn difficult things. We have to hold them accountable, but we also need to reward them and pat them on the back when they do well.

This is more important than it has been ever in our country's history because at this peculiar moment we are moving at a rapid rate toward a new century and a new millennium. We are already into an entirely different sort of economy than that which most of us in this tent have lived most of our lives in. We are moving away from a national economy into a global economy and a global society. We are moving away from the Industrial Age to the Information and Technology Age. We are moving into an era where most people will be working with their minds far more than their hands, and many of them will be working in businesses and industries that have not even been invented yet.

I am -- I suppose it's not too strong to say -- literally obsessed with making sure that our country will do well in the next century; that we'll continue to be the world's strongest force for peace and freedom; that we'll continue to be a beacon within our own land of the ideals that have made this country great; and that every person will have a chance to live out his or her dreams. I believe that we can do that.

We spent a lot of time here working on things to get our economic house in order -- cutting the deficit by more than half and opening trade to new countries and new products and new services and trying to get ahead of the technology curve and trying to generate more jobs from small businesses, where so many of the new jobs are being created. But nothing -- nothing -- is as important as preparing the American people and our young people for the 21st century world in which they will live. And that means they have to not only learn things today, but be able to learn for a lifetime. And nothing -- nothing -- will replace that.

As long as we have a well-educated citizenry, as long as we have people who can learn whatever they need to learn whenever they need to learn it, and who understand that this is related to the work of citizenship, this country will do just fine. If you succeed, America succeeds. That is the ultimate lesson of today. (Applause.)

You know, if you ask most citizens, well, what do we really need to do in our schools, they might say, well, we ought to get back to the basics. You've heard it a thousand times, I'm sure. And at one level it's quite true; that is, if you look at any human endeavor, it's very difficult to succeed unless you're quite good in the basic requirements of whatever the activity is.

But what I'd like to say today is that there are at least some new basics, as well as the old basics. For the better part of the last 15 years the United States has been working hard to get back to doing a better job at the old basics. Half of all of our four-year-olds are now in preschool. When the kids gets to elementary school they will find a much better Title I program back on course, with a more focused, more rigorous curriculum that challenges our children to meet high standards. (Applause.) The number of young people taking core courses has jumped from just 13 percent in 1982 to 52 percent in 1984, and math and science scores have risen by one full grade.

So there's been a great emphasis on the basics, but more needs to be done. Unfortunately, the reading scores for our young children have stayed about flat. That may be because there's a higher and higher percentage of our students whose first language is not English and we haven't factored that into account, and we need to do a better job of moving them through the bilingual programs into the main stream. But, nonetheless, by any standard, we haven't done as well as we should.

I think every American child should be able to read independently by the third grade. I believe every American middle or high schooler should be able to spend an afternoon with Mark Twain or Willa Cather or Nathaniel Hawthorne. I believe every American looking for a job should be able to read and fill out an application. And we all know the kinds of things we need to do. Here's just one of them: This summer, Secretary Riley's Read, Write Now Challenge will encourage one million young people to keep up their reading straight through summer vacation. That's the sort of thing that would enable us to close the book on low reading scores for good. And we all need to do more of that until we can close that book once and for all.

We are also committed to educational excellence in other core academic courses like physics and chemistry and biology and American history and geography. But we know even that is not enough in this day and time. We have to imagine what the world is like today with its problems and its promise, and ask ourselves whether there ought not to be some new basics. I would like to mention just two that I think have to be incorporated into the fabric of every educational curriculum in America: citizenship and computer literacy -- new basics that build

up and strengthen our traditional educational effort, that give our young people the tools they need to succeed, and to make a contribution to our country.

If you think about basic literacy and citizenship, it may be something that we think we can take for granted. But clearly, it's not -- especially since we are becoming once again, just as we were 100 years ago, more and more a nation of immigrants. In our largest county today, Los Angeles County, there are children from 150 different racial and ethnic groups. And all over America, in all school districts, you see a greater and greater need for people to understand exactly what it means not only to be a learner in school, but a good citizen. At this time of tremendous change, must of it, but not all of it, is positive, and we needed to do what we can to

help our children stay true to a course in a world that often seems to spin off-course.

I've done what I could. We've offered two White House conferences on character education; we've had grass-roots character education programs that the Secretary of Education has funded and promoted. We've done what we could to clarify the confusion that existed about the role of religion and people's religious convictions in the schools. We have provided our schools with guidelines that tell them how they can protect the religious rights of their students without turning their schools into religion-free zones. We have worked with those schools who are trying experiments like school uniforms. We have done the things that we could do. But in the end, the magic of citizenship is a learned -- a learned characteristic. And you have to help your students to do that.

I know you do or you wouldn't be successful in other ways. But every school should, without apology, teach its students to be responsible for themselves, to respect other people and be concerned about them, to love our country and be willing to do what it takes to contribute to our country.

Schools can help parents teach children right from wrong through good rules, teach the value of hard work through homework, teach the importance of resolving conflicts peacefully by having zero tolerance for all forms of violence. We have to teach these young people to turn away from that. (Applause.)

We have to teach our young people to define themselves in terms of what they are and what is good about them, not what is bad about someone else. We have to be able to do that. We can teach our young people to become voters and good neighbors and good citizens and good advocates and good servants. We have to be able to do that. I will say again, without that, the learning cannot occur.

I look around at all these bright-eyed students behind me, right before I got up here I tried to look at every one of them and think, you know, I feel pretty good about my country's future. It would be hard not to feel good about your country's future looking at them. Every one of you can think about the work you do in your schools. But there's something wrong with an America where we have all these wonderful things going on, but violence among children under 18 is still going up. There's still too many of these kids out here raising themselves. There's too many of these kids that don't have support. And I know that too many of you have been asked to do too much in the past. And sometimes you were judged by someone else's failure -- the people at home, the people in the church, the people in the community that might have done more.

But you are sometimes the only thing that stands between these young people and the opportunity to have a good, wholesome,

constructive life. And we have got to turn around these trends of violence and destructive conduct. The number of young people coming into our schools is going up again. Soon the schools will be full of people, so full that the years will be even larger -- the classes will be even larger than they were in the peak baby-boom years. By the time that happens, we must have turned around this trend toward destructive behavior and violence among our young people. And we can only do it by teaching them to live in an affirmative way, as good responsible citizens.

We need you on this. This is something that cannot be done unless it can be done by our teachers and our schools, with the support of caring parents and a community. And we're pulling for you. You have to understand that we must not let the largest group of school children in the history of the United States come into our classes without doing something about the violence and the other destructive behavior. We can build a generation of good citizens and I'm determined to see us do it. (Applause.)

The other thing I'd like to talk about very briefly is the issue the Vice President discussed -- our technology literacy challenge, to bring information and technology to every classroom in this country by the year 2000. We got off to a good start. Many of you -- many of you -- are part of that. And when we had Net Day in California and hooked-up 20 percent of the classrooms in the state in one day, it started off a chain reaction of a lot of things like that happening in other places throughout the country. Much has already been done. But there is more that has to be done.

One of the things that we know -- I was just talking to the Governor of West Virginia, where they have done a lot of work in bringing computers into the schools -- he said he was very proud of the fact that they spent one-third of their money on teacher training -- one-third, one full third -- because no computer, no aide in learning is worth anything without the magic of learning between the teacher and the student.

Today I am pleased to announce a remarkable initiative in our education community. Working with our administration, leading organizations in education, from the national PTA and the NEA, to the AFT and the national school boards associations, have joined together to make sure America's teachers are as comfortable with computers as they are with chalk boards.

They call themselves "21st century teachers." And to launch their effort they will do what they do best -- teach. This fall these groups will mobilize 100,000 teachers to teach 500,000 other teachers how to teach using computers, software and networks. When they are done, we will have a half a million more teachers who are computer and technology literate, and an infinite number of new learning opportunities. The teachers will have new and exciting ways to teach traditional subjects. They'll be able to exchange lesson plans with other teachers, communicate more frequently with parents, help students unfamiliar with computers, and keep up with students who already are.

Through this enormous effort, teachers will be doing what they have always done -- dedicating themselves to a brighter future, joining together to say that computer and technology literacy is truly a new basic for our time, just as they continue to teach our other fundamental basics. They are helping to create opportunity, assuming responsibility, working together as a community.

To every one of these groups and the 100,000 teachers who will be involved in this, I say thank you. The rest of America is deeply in your debt. This is a very great project. (Applause.)

Now as we close this formal ceremony, let me say again to each and every one of you, I'm proud of you, I'm grateful to you. What you are doing is building America's future. Because of the nature of the economic and social changes going on in the world today, your work is more important to America's success than ever before.

I ask you to leave here with one idea in mind. I ask you to do what you can back in your home towns, back in your home districts, back in your home states to make sure that every single school in America works to be a Blue Ribbon school.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

2:16 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 7, 1994

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT THE VICE PRESIDENT'S BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS CEREMONY

The South Lawn

12:15 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much for that wonderful welcome. (Laughter.) Increasingly rare around here these days. (Laughter and applause.) I just wanted to hear the Vice President say those lines from "A Man For All Seasons." (Laughter.) They're wonderful, aren't they?

Let me say, as you know, we're about to wind up this session of Congress today, tomorrow, sometime in our lifetime, it will end -- that's why I couldn't be here earlier today. But I did want to come by and say a heartfelt congratulations to all of you. The Vice President and the Secretary of Education have already talked about what we're trying to do here. But I would like to put in a couple of sentences what I think is very important. It's hardly ever discussed in the common discussion, at least, of what goes in Washington. But we have been quietly, but effectively, trying to create a dramatic change in the relationship of the national government to the schools of this country and to the teachers, and to what is going on in education. It is a change rooted in the experiences that Secretary Riley and Deputy Secretary Kunin and I had as governors, and the hours and hours that we all spent in public schools, listening to teachers, watching people work in the schools, listening to parents.

We have made the federal government both more active in education and, yet, less meddlesome in trying to support what you are trying to do. We have tried to put the national government on record in favor of globally competitive national standards of excellence in education, but also in favor of getting out of the way and letting you achieve those standards of excellence in education. (Applause.) And this is a substantial departure. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act that just passed the Congress, overcoming the perennial filibuster problem, does just that -- it provides targeted funding, more directed toward the areas of real need, but also provides for an enormous amount of flexibility for the schools so that every school can be a blue ribbon school. That, in the end, ought to be our objective in America. (Applause.)

So we will keep trying to do our job here. It will make a real difference that no child should ever walk away from going to college because of the cost, because under this new student loan program, you can have lower interest rates and longer repayment terms, and it can be geared to your salary so that if you want to be a schoolteacher or a police officer -- something where you're not going to be rich, you can still afford to pay back that student loan. That will make a difference. (Applause.) It will make a difference in hundreds of thousands of more kids are in Head Start; that, by

1996, every child in this country under the age of two will be immunized; that'll make it easier for the kindergarten and the first grade teachers to do their job. (Applause.) Those things will make a difference.

But, in the end, we know what will make the difference is you -- the teachers, the parents, the principals, the people at the grass-roots level. All the magic of education is still in the human interplay that is a long way from Washington, D.C. So we'll keep trying to do our job, but a big part of our job is making sure that you have -- to use the new Washington buzzword -- the empowerment necessary to do your job. That is our commitment to you; we will keep it, and I am glad to see your smiling faces here today. Bless you all, and thank you very much. (Applause.)

END12:20 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 14, 1993

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN BLUE RIBBON CEREMONY

The South Lawn

9:51 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you, Secretary Riley. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

I want to welcome you all to the White House today on this gorgeous day. I hope you've enjoyed yourselves. The Marine Band has been in especially fine form this morning. I woke up to them; I went jogging to them. (Applause.) I almost felt like a President this morning for sure when I was walking over to the Oval Office -- they were playing a march that was written for the coronation of a British monarch, so I almost got myself confused. (Laughter.)

There are 228 schools here represented today, the winners of the Blue Ribbon Awards this year. And all of you are winners representing what is best in American education and public and private schools and urban and suburban and rural schools. You all share some common features with all your differences: Visionary leadership; a sense of shared purpose; a climate conducive to learning; impressive academic achievement brought on not only by gifted teachers but also by responsible and open student behavior; and real involvement of parents and often the broader community in the life of the school.

I spent a lot of time thinking about these educational issues over the last 12 or so years. I spent more of my time as a Governor on education than on any other single issue except for the economy of my state. I spent hundreds of hours, I suppose, in schools in my state and around the country over the last 12 to 15 years and some time in one of the schools from Arkansas that's being honored today.

A hundred years ago the key to a strong economy was our raw material base. Fifty years ago it was mass production. Now it is clearly the trained human mind. We live in a world where the average person will change work seven or eight times in a lifetime, when the volume of knowledge is doubling every few years. When people in Silicon Valley making new computers and new computer programs tell me their average product life is now down to 18 months, clearly the reasoning, creative, facile but also deep mind is key to the future of the United States. We also live in a time when hardly anybody can get and keep a decent job without more education than too many of our people lack today.

If we could multiply the grade schools here represented on this lawn all across the country, we could really revolutionize education in America. I must tell you that the most challenging -- (applause) -- give yourselves a hand. That's a good idea. The most

challenging thing I ever faced as Governor and the most continually frustrating was going into our schools and realizing that virtually every challenge in American education has been met successfully by somebody somewhere.

There are people succeeding against all the odds and producing magnificent results in extremely difficult circumstances. There are schools producing world class results by any rigorous measure. The problem with American education is that we have never found an effective way to help replicate success, partly because the magic of education is always what happens in the individual classroom between the teacher and the student, supported by the parents, strengthened by the culture of a school that is set overwhelmingly by a gifted principal. I know that.

But there have to be ways to recognize the plain fact that notwithstanding the funding problems, notwithstanding the inequalities, notwithstanding all the problems that American education, you can find virtually every problem in our country solved by somebody somewhere in an astonishingly effective fashion if you look at enough schools. So the challenge for us here is to figure out how to replicate that. That is what Secretary Riley and I are trying to do with the Educate America Act, the Goals 2000 Act that we presented to the United States Congress, a bill we believe will lead to the creation of world-class learning standards, and also help to promote the idea that, clearly, all reforms must occur school by school.

Goals 2000 will, in effect, enshrine the national education goals in the law of the land, raise expectations for all students, and help to enrich the content of our courses, the training of our teachers, and the quality of our textbooks and our technology.

Finally, the bill will challenge our schools to show real results. We believe students and schools should have more flexibility in dealing with federal programs and should be shooting toward real results and clear standards. Goals 2000 is the framework for that educational effort in this administration. It will facilitate fundamental reforms in our schools, and I must say that's probably why some people don't like it all that well, including some members of my own party in the Congress.

But we can't raise standards and achievement either by leaving things the way they are, or simply by piling on more particular governmental programs and mandates from Washington. After all, we're only providing about seven percent of the total financing of public schools today, and while I hope to reverse that trend and, over the next five years, get the percentage back up to somewhere to where it was over the last several years -- (applause) -- still the lion's share of the financing and the lion's share of the learning reforms must come from you and people like you. And that means we have to have a different approach in the way the national government relates to our schools.

I hope that the Congress will not dilute the package that I sent to them. I hope we can pass the bill in a way that will represent a real change in the way the national government relates to the schools and a real increase in confidence in proven local leaders.

I'd also like to say that the private sector in this country has shown an astonishing willingness to become more involved in education ever since the issuance of The Nation at Risk Report 10 years ago. The New American Schools Development Corporation, on which Governor Baliles serves on the board and which Governor Riley

and now Secretary Riley mentioned, has already raised millions of dollars from public spirited business leaders. It has path-breaking design teams which are providing us with valuable lessons about how school innovations all around America can help us to reach world class standards. And it is trying to help replicate what works, which I still believe is our most urgent task.

Through these new designs they will be able to provide promising alternatives for schools and states as they work to reinvent their schools with the help of Goals 2000 and other reform efforts that this administration will make. I ask all of you to support this legislation and the work of the New American Schools Corporation. I ask you to support it in the larger context of what we must do as a nation.

Think of what has happened to bring us to this point where we have come to 17 months in a row with unemployment rate at seven percent or higher in every month, even though we are allegedly in an economic recovery. What has happened to bring us to a point where most American families are spending more hours on the job than they were 20 years ago with lower real incomes than they made 10 years ago, including some of the families represented in this audience?

What has caused that? Our lack of ability to be continuously productive, our lack of ability to create more and more new jobs that will stand the test of the rigorous global economy. What we have to do in our administration, and what I earnestly ask for your support in doing is to reverse the trends that have brought us to this past.

Let us first of all bring down the government deficit that has gotten our debt from \$1 trillion to \$4 trillion in the last 12 years simply by telling people at election time what they wanted to hear: I'll cut your taxes and write you a check. All the arithmetic teachers in this audience could have figured out that sooner or later that would get us in trouble. Nobody could have passed math in this town in any of your schools in the last 12 years who with a straight face said I've got you a deal, I'll cut your taxes and I'll send you a check. (Applause.)

So it fell to me to try to change that ratio. And the House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means yesterday reported out a bill which does a lot of that. It restores both spending cuts and tax increases to a proper balance. It will bring the deficit down by \$500 billion over the next five years. It will provide important new incentives for small businesses and for larger businesses to continue to invest, to create jobs in our country. It provides a real tax break for working families with children with incomes of under \$29,000 to offset the impact of the energy tax and reward work so there will never be an incentive for people with families not to work. Because if this tax bill passes, for the first time in our country's history, because of the changes in the tax code, we'll be able to say that if you work 40 hours a week and you've got a child in the house, you will not live in poverty. These are important things. And over 70 percent of the money comes from people with incomes above \$100,000. (Applause.)

The budget package also over the next five years will increase our commitment to Head Start, to apprenticeship training, with partnerships with our schools and our post-high school programs, and opens the doors of college education to everyone through a radical reform in the student loan program and national service. (Applause.) It focuses on, in other words, increasing investment, bringing down the deficit, and bringing us together as a country

again. This Goals 2000 legislation is an important part of that. It is our effort to do our job here as well as you do your job back home. If we did our job here as well as you've done yours, then America could celebrate and give itself a blue ribbon in just a few years. (Applause.)

Thank you very much, and God bless you all. (Applause.)

END10:02 A.M. EDT

Document No. _____

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

Date: 10/27/99 ACTION / CONCURRENCE / COMMENT DUE BY: ASAPSubject: Remarks Blue Ribbon Schools Ceremony

	ACTION	FYI		ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	☒	☐	LOCKHART	☐	☒
PODESTA	☒	☐	MARSHALL	☒	☐
ECHAVESTE	☒	☐	MOORE	☐	☐
RICCHETTI	☒	☐	NASH	☐	☐
LEW	☒	☐	NOLAN	☐	☐
BAILY	☐	☐	REED	☒	☐
BERGER	☐	☐	SOSNIK	☒	☐
BLUMENTHAL	☐	☐	SPERLING	☒	☐
BURSON	☐	☐	STEIN	☒	☐
CAHILL	☐	☐	STRETT	☐	☐
EDMONDS	☒	☐	TRAMONTANO	☒	☐
FRAMPTON	☐	☐	UCELLI	☒	☐
IBARRA	☐	☐	VERVEER	☒	☐
JOHNSON, B.	☐	☐	<u>Andy Rotherham</u>	☒	☐
JOHNSON, J.	☒	☐	_____	☐	☐
LANE	☐	☐	_____	☐	☐
LEWIS	☒	☐	_____	☐	☐

REMARKS:

Comments to Paul Glastri's 65716

RESPONSE:

'99 OCT 27 PM 7:05

Draft 10/27/99 6:30 p.m.
Glastris

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS AT AWARDS CEREMONY
BLUE RIBBONS SCHOOLS
WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL
September 28, 1999**

Acknowledgments: Sec. Riley; Beaufort Elementary Principal Ruth Summerlin;

Before I begin, let me take a few moments to pass on some good economic news. I am pleased to announce new economic numbers, which show that our economy continues to grow strongly and steadily. In the third quarter of this year, our economy grew at tk percent, the highest rate of growth since tk, with the lowest rate of inflation in tk years. This is good news for America's working families. There is no better sign of that than new housing numbers also released today, which show that more Americans now own their own homes than at any time in history. The percentage of Hispanic and African-American families who own their own homes has also broken new records.

This good news follows on the heels of my announcement yesterday--that we have the highest budget surplus in history, and that America's debt is now \$1.7 trillion lower than it was projected to be when I took office. All this is further proof that the economic strategy that we began in 1993--of fiscal discipline, expanded trade, and investment in our people--is working. It proves that putting our fiscal house in order helps every American household.

The prosperity we now enjoy gives us an opportunity that few generations since the dawn of our Republic have enjoyed: the ability to truly shape the future. The people who founded our nation believed two things that were quite radical at the time. They believed democracy could be made to work, and they believed all citizens could and should be educated. In fact, their faith in democracy rested on their faith that all citizens could learn. "Educate and inform the whole mass of the people," Thomas Jefferson said, because "an enlightened citizenry is indispensable for the proper functioning of a republic."

I think Ruth Summerlin's story amply demonstrates the Founder's wise belief, that all Americans can learn. All 266 Blue Ribbon schools we honor today demonstrate that same truth. Your schools are located in every region of America, and in every kind of neighborhood. Yet in each of your schools, students are learning--and learning at quite a high level. One of the great challenges we face as a nation is getting every school in America to follow the path that the Blue Ribbon schools have paved.

We have already made real progress in education. The idea of standards, which we championed with our Goals 2000 legislation, is now taking root around the country. In 1996, only 14 states had measurable standards for student performance. Today there

are 50. That may be one reason why reading and math scores are up nationwide, including in some of our most disadvantaged urban areas.

More and more schools, including Blue Ribbon Schools, are reducing class sizes with the help of the initiative we began last fall to provide 30,000 of what we hope to be 100,000 new highly trained teachers. Greenwood Elementary in Newport News, VA, a Blue Ribbon winner, hired new teachers this fall, bringing class sizes down in 1st and 2nd grades from 27 children per teacher to 20.

Other Blue Ribbon schools are using the Vice President's E-rate program to connect their classrooms and libraries to the Internet. With the help of the E-rate, 7th graders at Whitehead school in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma are communicating directly with scientists who are conducting research in Africa, and the students are writing papers based on that research. Every 7th grader should have the opportunity to do challenging and interesting assignments like that.

All this represents impressive progress. But if our goal is to get every school in America to follow the path of our Blue Ribbon schools and attain your level of excellence—and that should be our goal—then we have a great deal more work to do.

That is why the budget debate we're having here in Washington is so important. To many Americans, it may seem like nothing but a lot of numbers and a lot of noise. But beneath all the rhetoric, there is an important debate going on, about values and priorities and the right way to provide all children with a world class education. It's not just about how much we spend--but about how we spend it.

Last year, we reached an agreement with Congress to begin hiring 100,000 new, highly-trained teachers to lower class sizes in the early grades. It's common sense: smaller classes and quality teachers mean higher achievement. Congressional Republicans agreed to it; they went home and campaigned on it; they bragged about what a good, non-bureaucratic program it was. We disbursed the money and schools have gone out and hired new teachers. And now, suddenly, the Republicans in Congress have voted to abandon their commitment—and abandoned common sense. So one of the key things this budget debate is all about is whether we will keep our commitments to help our schools hire 100,000 well-qualified teachers.

This budget debate is also about accountability--about making sure we get real results for our education dollar. When students and teachers and principals and elected officials are held accountable for meeting higher standards—and when they are given the resources they need to meet those standards, from smaller classes to afterschool programs--we have seen real progress. Whole schools can be turned around in relatively short order.

You heard Ruth Summerlin explain how her school was selected by the state, given more resources, and turned itself around in just a few years. This is no isolated incident. Two years ago, North Carolina drew up a list of the state's 15 worst-performing

schools, and sent assistance teams to each school. One year later, 14 of those schools had improved their performance enough to be taken off the list. Last year, I went to one of the poorest neighborhoods in Chicago, near the large Cabrini-Green housing project, to an elementary school with terrible performance. In just two years, they doubled their math scores and tripled their reading scores. A few weeks ago, I visited a school in New Orleans that is just beginning this same process.

Our budget has a dedicated \$200 million fund set aside to help states and school districts all over America identify, turn around, or shut down the lowest-performing schools. Again, common sense. Yet again, the Republican budget bill doesn't put a dime into the strategy of turning around low-performing schools.

I honestly do not understand this. We know accountability works—not based on what someone in Washington thinks works, but based on what on what you proved works at the grassroots level. We know that there are millions of disadvantaged children in this country whose future chances in life could be substantially improved if their schools are turned around, as you've proven they can be. Yet the Republican Congress refuses to put a dime into this effort. I never thought I would see the day that Republicans in Washington would be against accountability.

Can they possibly explain why they have yet to fund an accountability measure that we know can turn around failing schools and that they know their own Republican governors favor? Can they possibly explain why this year they're against more good teachers to reduce class sizes when last year they favored it and campaigned on it as if it was their idea?

The Republican Congress knows that many of our nation's schools are falling apart and are so overcrowded that children are being taught in trailers and broom closets. Why are they unwilling to fund our plan to build or fix 6000 schools? The Republican Congress knows we have the largest, most diverse group of student in our schools in history, and that we'll need to hire 2 million new teachers over the next decade. Why are they against funding our Troops to Teachers program, to recruit potentially great teachers from among our nation's 2 million veterans? That's been a bipartisan issue for years.

We all agree that public schools are primarily a state and local responsibility. But we also know that they are a national priority. The federal government shouldn't micromanage the schools. In fact, under Sec. Riley, the Department of Education has scrapped more rules and regulations than all the previous administrations that railed about the federal government put together. But what we have not done is to abandon our responsibility to target our limited resources on what you, at the grassroots level, have shown works: more quality teachers, higher standards and accountability, and the tools that you need to meet those standards.

So this budget battle is about more than dollars. It's about direction. It's about whether we have the vision and the will to adapt to the demands of this new information age, in a way that honors our oldest values.

For over 200 years, the bedrock American value has been equal opportunity. If we want equal opportunity to be a vital reality in America in the Information Age then we must make sure that every child in America receives a high-quality education. We can make that happen. The Blue Ribbon schools have shown us the way. That's what this education budget debate is all about. And with your support, and the support of the American people, I believe we will prevail.

Thank you and God bless you.